

TRANSITION TO ADULthood – A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES
HAVERHILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DECEMBER 2018



Matthew Scanlon M. Ed – Transition Coordinator
Deb Ibanez – HHS Special Education Supervisor

2018 – 2019

TRANSITION INFORMATION NIGHTS

- April, 2019
 - Presentation in coordination with Haverhill SEPAC Chair: Anne Rosa
 - Presentation by Haverhill ARC: Andrea Morris & HPS Transition Coordinator: Matt Scanlon
- Spring, 2019
 - Resource Fair with community agencies
 - Facilitated by Haverhill SEPAC Chair: Anne Rosa + Matt Scanlon: Transition Coordinator
- Fall, 2019
 - The ARC is looking for host schools to sponsor a regional resource fair. I have put our name in.
- December, 2019
 - Parent Panel

MASSACHUSETTS LEADS THE WAY

BILL H.3720 *187TH (2011 - 2012)*

- “An Act to promote the successful transition of students with disabilities to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.”

THE 190TH GENERAL COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

WHAT IS A TRANSITION COORDINATOR?

- In response to the House Bill 3720, the Transition Leadership program is designed to prepare initially or professionally licensed professionals who wish to obtain an education specialist endorsement in transition services.
- Through this advanced training, students in the program will gain the skills necessary to focus on employment, college preparation, and independent living skills for students with disabilities ages 14–22. They will also develop the leadership skills necessary to promote system-wide transition supports and services in their school district.



This logo means that the information was provided by professors at UMass Boston.

OUTCOME OF PRESENTATION

- Families will be introduced to the Transition process.
- Families will receive paper and digital resources to further their understanding.
- Families will leave with contact information to numerous local and state agencies.
- Presentation will be printed out with note taking option next to each slide.
- There will be time for questions.

ACCORDING TO IDEA

- **Family involvement:** collaboration across families & service providers
- **Family partnership:** parents as equal partners with schools in:
 - Helping the school understand their child
 - Participating on the IEP team
 - Helping to design the IEP
 - Working with the IEP team to design & implement appropriate evaluation & services
 - Becoming meaningfully involved in the school community
- Students with involved parents are more likely to...
 - Earn higher grades & test scores
 - Pass their classes, & earn credits
 - Attend school regularly
 - Have better social skills & improved behavior
 - Graduate and go on to postsecondary education



ACRONYMS WE WILL USE...

- IEP – Individual Education Plan
- TPF – Transition Planning Form
- IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Act
- DDS – Department of Developmental Services
- SEPAC – Special Education Parent Advisory Council
- MRC – Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- FCSN – Federation for Children with Special Needs



This logo means that the information was provided by:
The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

WHO IS PART OF THE IEP/TRANSITION TEAM?

- “During the transition years, a group of people who discuss the TPF and write the IEP together. The student, parents, special education and regular education teachers, a district representative, and evaluators all working together to help a student achieve their postsecondary goals. If appropriate, employers, other agencies including those serving adults with disabilities, and others with knowledge or expertise about the student.”
– [IDEA § 300.321]

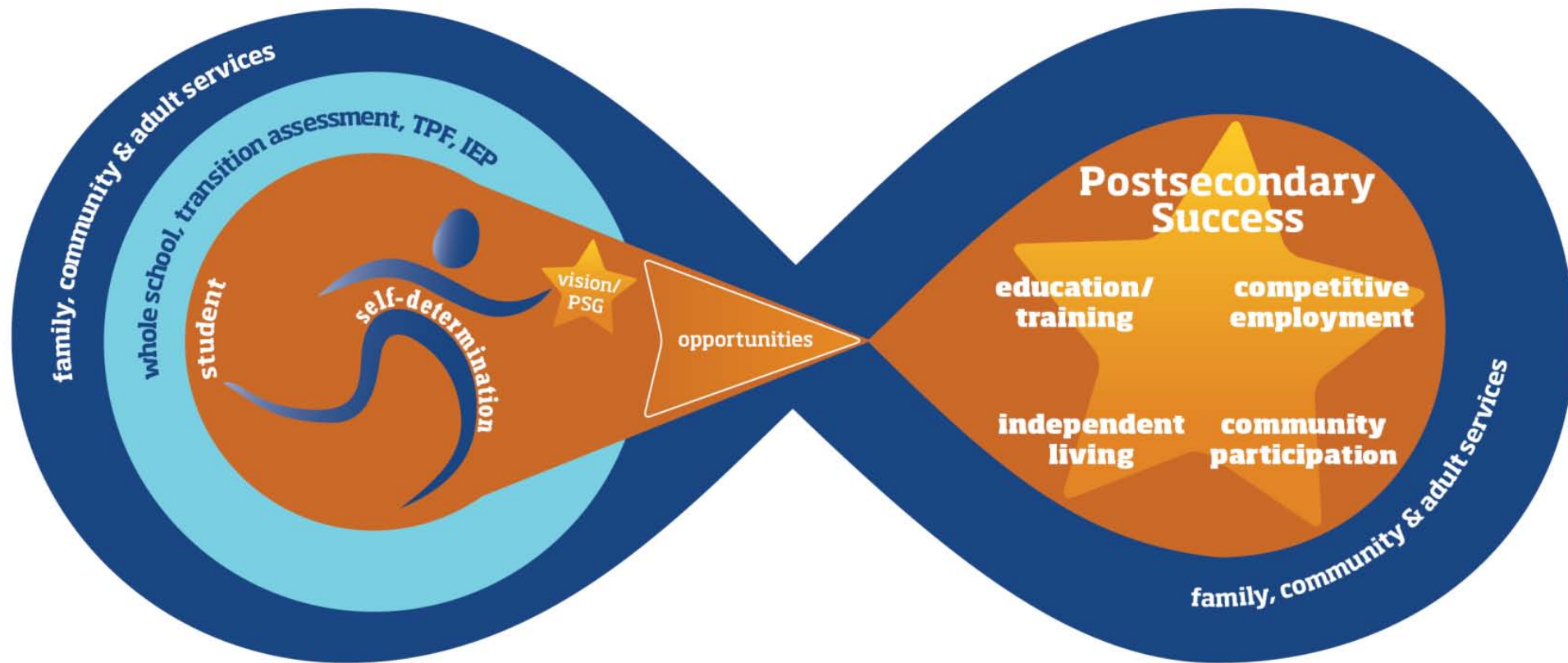


WHAT IS TRANSITION?

- “For all students with IEPs aged 14-22, secondary transition services are a *coordinated* set of activities based on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do. These activities are designed to help them achieve their vision for adult life.”
 - [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34 C.F.R. § 300.43.]



Massachusetts Student-Driven Secondary Transition Model



WHAT ARE TRANSITION SERVICES?

- “Transition Services: *A coordinated* set of activities based on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do. These activities are designed to help them achieve their vision for adult life.”

[Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) § 300.43].

SERVICES IN MASSACHUSETTS

- Starting at age 14 – “Secondary transition services give students the instruction and experiences they need to set and achieve goals and to gain skills that will help them become successful adults.”



OK, BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

- Transition services means ... a *Coordinated* Set of Activities for a student with a disability that
 - Are designed to be within a results-oriented process that facilitates movement from the school to post-school activities, including:
 - Postsecondary education;
 - Vocational education
 - Integrated employment (including supported employment)
 - Continuing and adult education
 - Adult services
 - Independent living
 - Community participation.



TRANSITION SERVICES

- The *coordinated* set of activities must be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, and include the following:
 - Instruction
 - Related services
 - Community experiences
 - Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives
 - The acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational
 - evaluation, when appropriate.



SECONDARY TRANSITION

- “For students with IEPs, the time between ages 14 and 22 when they work with their IEP team to create and carry out a plan that will help them learn the skills they need to achieve their vision for adult life.”
 - TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs (Ages 14-22)
https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/wpcontent/uploads/sites/25/2016/06/dese_brochure_Vision-FINAL.pdf

POST-SECONDARY GOALS

- The student's vision for adult life.
[IDEA § 300.320]
- This is their future!
- We should be encouraging them to make their own, attainable goals.

TRANSITION ASSESSMENT

- “The ongoing process of collecting data on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do related to work, education, living, and participation in the community.”

TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs (Ages 14-22)

https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2016/06/dese_brochure_Vision-FINAL.pdf



WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION?

- “a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self regulated, autonomous behavior. As such, self-determination includes an understanding of one's strengths and limitations, together with a belief of oneself as capable and effective.”

Students who are self-determined are “causal agents in their own lives.”



WHAT DOES SELF DETERMINATION MEAN?

- Speaking up for yourself
- Asking for what you need
- Negotiating for yourself.....working with others to make sure you get what you need
- Knowing your rights and responsibilities
- Using the resources that are available to you
- Being able to describe your disability



SELF-DETERMINATION INVOLVES:

- Knowing yourself
- Knowing your strengths and weaknesses
- Knowing what you like
- Knowing what you want and what you need
- Knowing your disability



Students who are self-determined
know themselves,
know how to interact effectively with others,
and know how to purposefully set goals and attain them.





Students who feel empowered to express their preferences, who feel their voice is heard, and who understand themselves to be causal agents in their own lives, are students who are forward-looking and engaged.



THE TRANSITION PLAN OF AN IEP OR “TPF”

- Outlines **Transition** goals and services for students.
- Based on a high school student’s individual needs, strengths, skills and interests.



The TPF and Transition Planning in Massachusetts

School districts must use the Transition Planning Form (TPF) for secondary transition planning with all students with IEPs who are 14 - 22 years of age, or younger if appropriate.*

The form was developed for transition planning that occurs either prior to or at the time of the annual development of the IEP.

*Massachusetts requirement:

http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/09_1ta.html



The TPF and IDEA 2004

The TPF helps districts meet the requirements of secondary transition planning in IDEA 2004 and is part of required documentation for districts to demonstrate compliance for Indicator 13 of the federal State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report,

www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/





- ★ The IEP is a roadmap for the student to achieve his/her vision through specially designed instruction, related services.

The IEP is Different from the TPF.

- ★ The IEP is a legal document spelling out what the district will do.



TPF and IEP

The TPF and IEP, used together, provide a framework for the Team to comprehensively discuss the student's

- ★ postsecondary goals, strengths, preferences, interests;
- ★ transition assessments;
- ★ disability-related needs and annual IEP goals;
- ★ action plan, including transition services, that will be needed to assist the student to develop skills necessary to achieve his/her postsecondary goals.

Once the TPF is complete, it informs the development of the IEP.



Complementary Documents

The TPF and IEP, working together, document the student's "**coordinated set of activities...** within a **results-oriented process,**" to ensure that each student enjoys a planful, stepwise, individualized transition process from ages 14 – 22.

The TPF allows the Team to "think outside of the box," and to document actions to be taken by multiple stakeholders in the student's life. The IEP is the legal contract spelling out what the school has agreed to do.



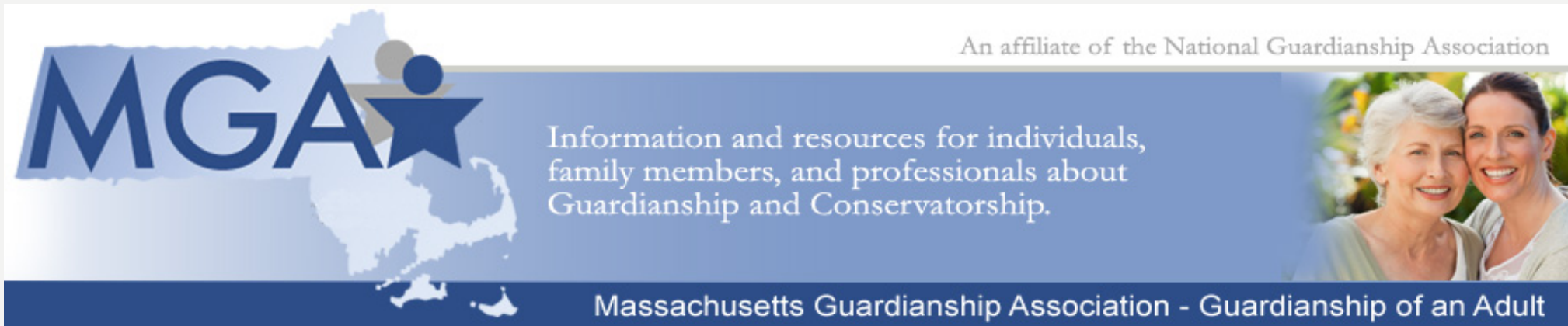
THE 688 REFERRAL PROCESS

- Massachusetts Transition Planning law enacted in 1983 that provides two-year transition planning process for students with severe disabilities who will need adult services upon graduation/turning 22.
- Based on the student's identified needs, the local school district will send the 688 Referral to the appropriate state agency that can best meet those needs, referred to as the Transitional Agency. If the school district cannot identify an appropriate agency, the 688 referral is sent to the Bureau of Transitional Planning (BTP) at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EHS). The BTP will then designate a Transitional Agency. This state agency is responsible for developing the student's Individual Transition Plan (ITP) with the student and/or parent/guardian prior to the student's graduation/turning 22.

https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2018/04/transition_guide_int.pdf

GUARDIANSHIP & ALTERNATIVES

- Guardianship is a legal process in which the court appoints a person or agency to make decisions on behalf of another person and is the most restrictive form of legal protection for an individual. Only individuals with mental health, intellectual, or medical disabilities so severe that they cannot make informed decisions for themselves would meet the criteria for guardianship. The process begins with a petition to the court to create a guardianship. It is recommended that an attorney with expertise in this area be consulted if there is a need for guardianship to explain the various guardianship options. Advocacy organizations also offer specific trainings on this topic.
- **You can obtain a court appointed attorney!**



ALTERNATIVES CONSERVATORSHIP VS. GUARDIANSHIP

- A Conservator handles only the Protected Person's financial affairs, allowing the ward to make personal decisions.
- Conservatorship should be considered for persons who are intellectually challenged who are too disabled to manage their finances and who have income from sources other than benefit checks.

ALTERNATIVES HEALTH CARE PROXY

- A health care proxy should be considered for individuals who presently are capable of making decisions about their health care and wish to anticipate possible future incompetency.
- A health care proxy is a legal document that enables a competent individual, (the “principal”), to designate a health care agent to make health care decisions should the individual become incompetent to make them.

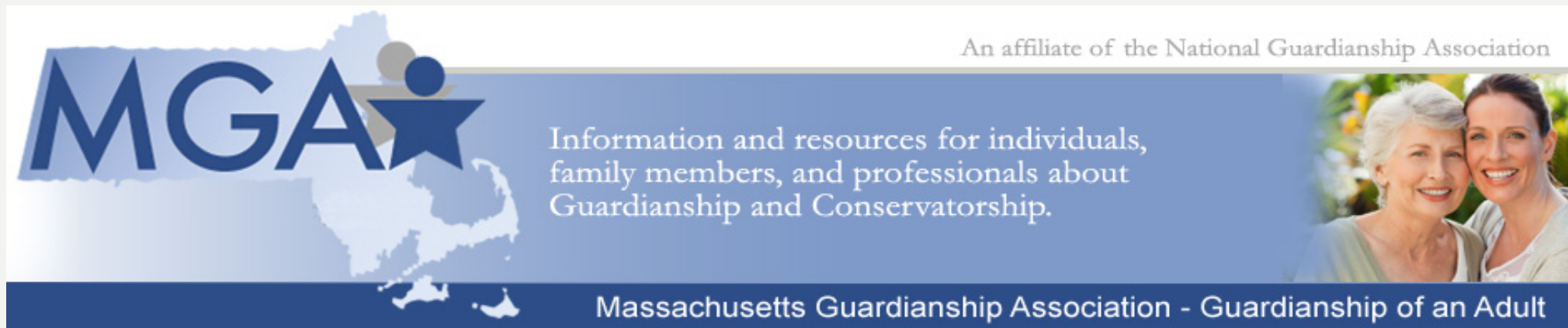
ALTERNATIVES

DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

- A durable power of attorney for property is useful where the person is mildly or moderately incapacitated, and is capable of choosing another to handle his/her money.
- A power of attorney (P.O.A.) is a legal document that grants one person the legal authority to handle the financial affairs of another.
- A durable P.O.A. continues the authority in the event the individual becomes disabled or incapacitated.
- Both a drawback and an advantage is the fact that the incapacitated person still has the legal power to make decisions.

- Before you begin a legal process for Guardianship and/or Conservatorship, consider whether an adult has the capacity to sign a **Health Care Proxy** and a **Durable Power of Attorney**.

<http://www.massguardianshipassociation.org/information/alternatives-to-guardianship-and-conservatorship/>



AGE OF MAJORITY

- Under Massachusetts law 18 years of age is the “age of majority.” Unless there has been court action giving guardianship to another adult, at 18 years of age students are considered adults legally competent to make their own decisions, regardless of the severity of their disability. Parents and students must be notified by the school district about this transfer of rights to the student and the educational impact on the student and the parents at least one year before the student turns 18. If the student is not ready to take on full decision-making responsibility when he/she turns 18, there are other options such as shared decision-making that can be explored.

https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2018/04/transition_guide_int.pdf

PUBLIC BENEFITS SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

- Individuals may be eligible for SSI if they do not have "substantial gainful activity" (SGA) and a disability. SGA is defined as earning less than \$1170/month (or \$1950/month if blind).
- SSI payment is up to \$735/month. It can be less for various reasons such as the individual living at home.
- We do have a benefits specialist for the region.

ELECTRONICALLY REPRINTED FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 2017



EXCEPTIONAL PARENT MAGAZINE
www.ep-magazine.com

PUBLIC BENEFITS

MEDICAID

- Comprehensive healthcare for low-income individuals and those with disabilities.
- Like SSI, individuals in many states usually cannot have more than \$2,000 in their name.
- Medicaid covers much more than just health insurance; various home and community-based services are only available via Medicaid. For this reason, even if other health insurance is available through a parent, etc., it is often recommended to qualify for Medicaid if possible.

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www.ep-magazine.com

MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAID

- Massachusetts Medicaid (MassHealth) pays for health care for certain low and medium income people living in Massachusetts. MassHealth offers health-care benefits directly or by paying part or all of your health-insurance premiums.
- MassHealth offers different types of coverage based on your age, whether you are a parent, pregnant, disabled, HIV positive or have breast or cervical cancer, and whether you work for a small employer.
- MassHealth will decide if you are eligible and give you the most complete coverage that you qualify for.



COMPETENCY DETERMINATION GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

- **Competency Determination Graduation Requirement**
- Students must earn a scaled score of at least 240 on the grade 10 MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests, **or** earn a scaled score between 220 and 238 on these tests, or earn a score of *Needs Improvement* on a competency portfolio, and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP).
- Students must also earn a scaled score of at least 220 on one of the high school MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests: Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering, or a score of Needs Improvement on a competency portfolio in one of these STE disciplines.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>



POLICY AND CRITERIA FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF ATTAINMENT

- Not a certificate of attendance.
- The purpose of the state-endorsed credential is to provide school committees with the option of providing a certificate of attainment, based on specified criteria, to students who have completed local requirements but who do not yet qualify for the high school diploma because they have not yet earned a competency determination. Students who earn the state-endorsed credential have made a good faith effort to meet the state standards in English language arts and mathematics. These students will have completed all local graduation requirements, including attendance, course completion, and satisfactory grades.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cert-attainment.html>



PUBLIC BENEFITS ABLE ACCOUNTS

- Result of the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act in December 2014.
- Investment account for eligible individuals with special needs for “qualified disability expenses” (QDE) such as housing, education, transportation, and many other items.
- Funds grow tax-free and are distributed tax-free.
- Disability onset must have occurred before individual turned 26.
- Accounts up to \$100,000 do not impact a person’s SSI benefits.
- Maximum contribution per year is \$14,000 from all sources.

Individual can only have one ABLE account.

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EXCEPTIONAL PARENT MAGAZINE
www.ep-magazine.com

MAICEI PROGRAM

- Funded by the Commonwealth since 2007, the **Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI)** offers grants to college-school partnerships to support eligible public high school students with intellectual disabilities, ages 18–22, to increase their academic and career success by being included in a college or university community of learners.
- Students with intellectual disabilities who are eligible for the program must be between the ages of:
 - 18 to 22, have not passed MCAS, and are eligible for special education services as documented through an Individualized Education Program (IEP); or
 - 20 to 21, have passed MCAS, but are still eligible for special education with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) because of significant functional disabilities, transition needs, etc.

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

MAICEI PROGRAM

- **What is the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative?**
- The state-funded Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) funds partnerships between local school districts and two- and four-year public colleges and universities in Massachusetts. The term “Concurrent Enrollment” means that participating students are still eligible for special education services, even though they have finished four years of high school. So, they are concurrently enrolled in college while still being eligible for special education services.

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
I.D.E.A. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)	A.D.A. (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)
Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
I.D.E.A. is about SUCCESS	A.D.A. is about ACCESS

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan and/or 504 Plan)	High School I.E.P. and 504 are not sufficient. Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category of disability.
School provides evaluation at no cost to student	Student must get evaluation at own expense
Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in I.D.E.A.	Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations, and demonstrate the need for specific accommodations

WHAT HAPPENS AT AGE 22?

- Adult eligibility for services is not an entitlement so students who are eligible for services from an adult agency are not guaranteed access to services. Unlike special education, human services for adults with disabilities are contingent upon program availability and funding, and there may be waiting lists for services.
- That is why it is important to start the application process for agency eligibility early.

Note: if your child has been receiving children's services from an agency such as DDS or DMH, you will need to re-apply because the criteria for adult services can be different from the criteria for children's services.

https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/wp-content/uploads/sites/25/2018/04/transition_guide_int.pdf



COMMUNITYBASED DAY SUPPORTS

- DDS defines CBDS as follows:
- Community-Based Day Supports- (Activity Code 3163) - This program of supports is designed to enable an individual to enrich his or her life and enjoy a full range of community activities by providing opportunities for developing, enhancing, and maintaining competency in personal, social and community activities.

https://employmentfirstma.org/files/DDS_CBDS_web_F.pdf



SKILL BUILDING ACTIVITIES

- Travel training •
- Health and wellness programs •
- Employment skill development for specific occupations •
- Vocational training and certifications (One-Stop Career Centers and similar organizations can provide guidance and connections) •
- Classes/workshops on job seeking (interviewing, resume writing, etc.)
- Job preparation and soft skill development: dressing for work, social interactions at work, schedule management, time management, etc.
- Managing public benefits and benefits issues

https://employmentfirstma.org/files/DDS_CBDS_web_F.pdf



ENSURING EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED DAY SUPPORTS: A GUIDE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS AND STAFF

By David Hoff, Cori Di Biase, and Genni Sasnett

DECEMBER 2015

DAY SERVICES - SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Skill Development
 - - Communication
 - - Socialization
 - - Self-care
 - - Cooking
 - - Household Chores
 - - Sensory Motor Development
 - - Behavior Management
 - - Independent Living
 -

<http://www.crc-mass.org/day-services/>



DAY SERVICES - SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- CRC offers customized, goal-oriented programs that promote independence and community membership. Clinical interventions such as nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, and behavioral supports are offered in combination with our daily activities- based on assessed needs. People may choose from a combination of Day Supports (CBDS, Day Hab, and Vocational), often selecting one or more services to create a meaningful program, tailored to their needs and interests.
- Services are available for adults (ages 22+) who are seeking employment and life skills. Persons with developmental disabilities and brain injuries are supported based on their individualized needs. Day services can also be added as a supplement to employment if someone is not working full time.

<http://www.crc-mass.org/day-services/>



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- Families are an integral part of the transition process. I have been working with Haverhill families for many years. I am always curious to see how they feel about the process. As we approach their son/daughters 22nd birthday, there are 2 common themes that I hear:
 - I wish I had started this process sooner.
 - The years go by much quicker than you expect them to.

Matt Scanlon

HPS Transition Coordinator

WHAT CAN PARENTS/GUARDIANS DO?

- “Parents have an important role to play in the transition process as collaborators with their disabled child, schools and community. It is the parents who can often provide essential information regarding their child's strengths, weaknesses, needs, preferences and interests crucial to developing effective transitional components. Parents often are the key individuals who can articulate clear and realistic outcomes for the child's future.”

– Disability Studies Quarterly

Fall 2000, Volume 20, No. 4

www.dsqsds.org

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WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GET INVOLVED?

- Attend EVERY IEP meeting
- Be an active member of the IEP team
- Stay in contact with the student's IEP Liaison
- When you get stuck, nervous, overwhelmed – REACH OUT!
 - We are here to help you and your family.
 - Every question deserves an answer.
- Many transition assessments require parent/guardian input.
 - If we ask you to fill something out, please do your best! We can help.

WHERE CAN MY ELIGIBLE SON/DAUGHTER GO?

- List of Merrimack Valley Agencies you could visit:



Please note: This is short list of the 4 agencies we work closest with. There are many more out there!

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?



- <http://www.thearcofghn.org/web/>
- Andrea Morris, Education & Outreach Manager
andrea.morris@thearcofghn.org
(978) 373-0552 x211

DDS INFORMATION

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services

500 Harrison Avenue

Boston, MA 02118

Phone: (617) 727-5608



Area Office Information:

DDS Area Office Merrimack Valley

280 Merrimack Street

Lawrence, MA 01843

Phone: 978-521-9432

Fax: 978-521-9439

TTY: 978-521-4391

Turning 22 Human Services Coordinator

Information: Haruko Dustin

Email: Haruko.Dustin@state.ma.us

Phone: 978-521-9432 x314

MRC INFORMATION

“The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) helps individuals with disabilities to live and work independently. MRC is responsible for Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Living and eligibility determination for the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefits programs.”

Transition Pathways Services

Massachusetts Transition Pathway Services (TPS) is a new initiative to enhance the competitive integrated employment and post-secondary enrollment outcomes for high school students with significant disabilities. The initiative will utilize a transition service model that coordinates vocational rehabilitation services, high school career planning, independent living peer model supports, and business engagement strategies throughout the last two years of the student's high school experience.

Contact: Aisha Nakazibwe 978-685-1731 x636 or Aisha.Nakazibwe@MassMail.State.MA.US

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

600 Washington Street

Boston, MA 02111

1-800-245-6543 (Voice/TDD) or (617) 204-3600

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-rehabilitation-commission>

MRC Area Office

280 Merrimack Street

Lawrence, MA 01843

978-685-1731



FCSN INFORMATION

The Federation for Children with Special Needs “Provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities. We are committed to listening to and learning from families, and encouraging full participation in community life by all people, especially those with disabilities.”

The LINK Center connects families, professionals and individuals with disabilities who are of transition age (14-26) with information, supports, and services to achieve students’ future visions. Transition can be an overwhelming process as one plans for life after high school. The LINK Center and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission have developed an overview of available Transition services and procedures in Massachusetts. - <https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/>

Helpful Transition Brochures:

<https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/transition-resources/brochures/>

The Federation for Children with Special Needs Administrative Offices

529 Main Street, Suite 1M3 Boston, MA 02129 1-800-331-0688 (Voice/TDD) or (617) 236-7210



NAVIGATING YOUR FOLDER

Contents:

- This PPT with notetaking section for each slide
- The ARC Transition from School to Adult Life - Time Lines
- Turning 18 Checklist
- Public Benefits Guide
- 4 Brochures
 - The Secondary Transition Planning Process
 - Decision Making and The Age of majority
 - Secondary Transition Services
 - Self Determination
 - Transition Assessment
- Guardianship & Alternatives
- The Road Forward
- Differences between High School and College Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Federal Law: IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – 2004

The provisions of this act became effective on July 1, 2005.

- Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16 and updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include:
 - Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills;
 - The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals; and
 - Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under IDEA, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under Section 615(m).
- The purpose of IDEA is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasized special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. [601 (d)(1)(A)]
- The term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:
 - Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education; vocational education; integrated employment

- (including supported employment); continuing and adult education; adult services; independent living or community participation;
- Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and
- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. [602(34)]

In addition, Massachusetts has a transition law, Chapter 688, also known as "Turning 22." The law requires the school special education administrator to make a referral for eligible students with disabilities to an adult service agency, which it deems to be the most appropriate agency to serve the student after special education ends. Chapter 688 requires that an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) be developed for eligible students, which describes the types of programs and supports the individual will need upon leaving special education.

STATE STREET
FOUNDATION

Walmart

The Arc
For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

Achieve with us.

The Arc
Massachusetts
For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

The Arc
Greater Haverhill–Newburyport

Transition from School to Adult Life - Time Lines

What is transition?

Transition is about planning for life!

The transition your son or daughter will make from school to adult life in the community is a long journey. This journey can be difficult for anyone, but for a child with a disability, determining where to go, the best way to get there, and then completing the journey can be especially challenging. This is why it is so important for you to think, as early as possible, about the important steps your child will need to make and to develop a plan for his/her future.

There are federal and state laws that guide the delivery of transitional educational services to children with disabilities. It is important for parents to understand these laws.



Achieve with us.

TURNING 18 CHECKLIST

School

- ☐ If this hasn't been done yet, work on creating a **Post-Secondary Vision**, or a plan for life after high school.
- ☐ Make sure the **Transition Planning Form (TPF)** has been completed. Schools should be using the TPF as well as relevant Transition Assessments to guide decisions about IEP goals and objectives during transition years.
- ☐ Explore **Age of Majority** (turning 18/becoming a legal adult) issues related to school. If you are not pursuing guardianship, decide who will make educational decisions (the student, the parent(s), or both).
- ☐ See the **Schools Fact Sheet** from the Autism Program Transition Clinic for more information about what schools should be doing regarding transition. Use this sheet to guide your conversations with the school.

Legal

- ☐ If the adolescent is male, register for the **Selective Service (the Draft)**. This is required by the government (but does not mean that the individual would actually be drafted) and failure to register can affect eligibility for services.
 - ☐ Apply for a **Non-driver ID Card** if the adolescent does not have a driver's license. This will provide him/her with a convenient form of government ID.
 - ☐ Decide if legal **Guardianship** makes sense for your family, or if you want to pursue a less restrictive option, such as:
 - **Health Care Proxy**: for medical decisions and communication
 - **Power of Attorney**: for legal decisions
 - **Representative Payee**: for management of government benefits
 - **Conservatorship**: for financial decision-making and management
- If you choose one of these options, try to have it in place just before the adolescent turns 18 so there is no gap in protection.

Services

- ☐ Make sure the school has done a **Chapter 688 referral** for adult services. This is a referral to one service agency, which will most likely be one of the following:
 - **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)**: provides employment support and services; short-term.
 - **Department of Developmental Services (DDS)**: provides services in areas of employment, residential, daily living, and family support; long term.
- ☐ Independently apply to the agency not covered by the Chapter 688 referral. While the Chapter 688 referral will only cover one agency, individuals can be found eligible for both. See the **Schools Fact Sheet** for more information.
- ☐ Assist the adolescent with applying for **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**. Make sure he/she has less than \$2000 in independent assets (e.g., money in his/her own bank account(s), savings bonds, etc.).
- ☐ Receiving SSI automatically makes an individual eligible for **MassHealth Standard (Medicaid)**. You should receive an insurance card by mail after being accepted for SSI – if not, contact MassHealth.
 - ☐ If the adolescent does not receive SSI, apply for MassHealth coverage independently, and be sure to fill out **Supplement C (Accommodation)**. Depending on the individual's income, this may be *MassHealth Standard* or *MassHealth CommonHealth*. Even if he/she has private insurance (e.g., through a parent until age 26), MassHealth can cover copays and other expenses not covered by the primary insurance.
- ☐ Apply for a **Section 8 Housing Voucher**. Even if you are not thinking about independent housing yet, the waitlist for vouchers can be up to 10 years long, so it is important to get on the list early.
- ☐ If no guardianship is in place, or if there is a family member/someone living with the adolescent who is not the guardian (e.g., if only one parent has guardianship, if there is a sibling over 18, etc.), look into eligibility for **Adult Family/Foster Care**. This program is funded through MassHealth and provides a tax-free stipend to a family member/caregiver living with an individual with a disability to help with their care. Applications and eligibility determinations are done through an AFC provider.



PUBLIC BENEFITS

A HOLISTIC GUIDE FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE A LOVED ONE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Many important benefits are outlined below, but not all. Also, effort has been made to point out important aspects of the programs, but outlining every detailed exception, rule, etc., is beyond the scope of this informational guide. For context, most of these programs are “means-tested,” which means they are usually not available until the child turns 18 because up until that point the parents’ assets and income are taken into account, which is often too high to qualify.

BY CALEB HARTY CFP®

1) SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME

- Individuals may be eligible for SSI if they do not have “substantial gainful activity” (SGA) and a disability. SGA is defined as earning less than \$1170/month (or \$1950/month if blind).
- SSI payment is up to \$735/month. It can be less for various reasons such as the individual living at home. Some states also have a state supplement program (SSP) which gives the SSI recipient a smaller additional payment.
- Individual usually cannot have more than \$2,000 in their name to qualify (there are certain items not counted, such as a car, home, burial plot, and other permitted items).
- Note: \$20 of unearned income (a gift from a parent for example) is permitted and the first \$65 of earned income also does not reduce benefits, per month. There is a \$1 reduction in benefits for every \$2 earned (after the \$65 exclusion).
- Rent subsidies and food assistance does not count against SSI.
- Qualifying for SSI can provide automatic eligibility for Medicaid in some states.



2) MEDICAID

- Comprehensive healthcare for low-income individuals and those with disabilities.
- Like SSI, individuals in many states usually cannot have more than \$2,000 in their name.
- Medicaid covers much more than just health insurance; various home and community-based services are only available via Medicaid. For this reason, even if other health insurance is available through a parent, etc., it is often recommended to qualify for Medicaid if possible.

3) SECTION 8

- Also called federal “Housing Choice Voucher” program (HCV).
- Housing vouchers for low-income individuals.
- To qualify, the individual must have an income of 50% of the “area median income”. If already qualified for SSI, he/she will most likely also be eligible for Section 8 based on income.
- No asset limits for qualification, but interest earned on assets counts towards income limit.
- Several different variations of the program, but the most common is when the individual pays approximately 1/3 of

Important Words to Know

Annual IEP Goals: Targets that the IEP Team sets to describe which skills the student will gain by the end of one year, so that the student moves one year closer toward achieving their postsecondary goals.

IEP Team: During the transition years, a group of people who discuss the TPF and write the IEP together. The student, parents, special education and regular education teachers, a district representative, and evaluators all working together to help a student achieve their postsecondary goals. If appropriate, employers, other agencies including those serving adults with disabilities, and others with knowledge or expertise about the student. [IDEA § 300.321]

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A formal agreement about the services a school will provide for the student's special education needs.

Postsecondary goals: The student's vision for adult life. [IDEA § 300.320]

Secondary Transition: For students with IEPs, the time between ages 14 and 22 when they work with their IEP team to create and carry out a plan that will help them learn the skills they need to achieve their vision for adult life.

Transition Assessment: The ongoing process of collecting data on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do related to work, education, living, and participation in the community.

Transition Planning Form (TPF): Every year from age 14 onward, the IEP Team uses this state-required form to brainstorm and write down the student's plan for transition to adult life. [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/28MR/28m9.pdf]

Transition Services: A coordinated set of activities based on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do. These activities are designed to help them achieve their vision for adult life. [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) § 300.43].

Resources

The LINK Center, a transition project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
www.fcsn.org/linkcenter

MA ESE Special Education Secondary Transition
www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2013-1: Postsecondary Goals and Annual IEP Goals In the Transition Planning Process
www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/13_1ta.html



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Elementary and Secondary Education**
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148
781-338-3000 | www.doe.mass.edu



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Federation for Children
with Special Needs**
The Schrafft Center
529 Main Street, Suite 1M3
Boston, MA 02129
800-331-0688 | www.fcsn.org

TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs

(Ages 14-22)



The Secondary Transition Planning Process

A series of brochures produced by
The LINK Center - a project of the
Federation for Children with Special Needs,
and the Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE)

What is the Age of Majority?

When any young person turns 18 in Massachusetts, they reach the “age of majority.” This means they are legally considered adults, with adult rights and responsibilities. For example, they can sign their own IEPs, vote, or take out a loan.

Why is the Age of Majority Important?

All decision-making shifts from parents to the student at the age of majority. Students and families should plan ahead and discuss the students’ options before age 18. Students can decide to:

- make all legal, financial, and medical decisions for themselves,
- share responsibility with their parents or with another designated adult,
- or leave all decision-making to a court-appointed guardian, usually their parents.

If no other plans are made in advance, on their 18th birthday – no matter what the disability is – the student becomes their own full legal guardian.



Resources

The LINK Center, a transition project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
www.fcsn.org/linkcenter/home/getting-started/age-of-majority/

MA ESE Special Education Secondary Transition Website: www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2011-1: Age of Majority: www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_1.html

When you turn 18: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Office of the Attorney General: www.mass.gov/ago/consumer-resources/your-rights/18/whenyouturn18.pdf

Massachusetts Law about Guardianship and Conservatorship: www.mass.gov/courts/case-legal-res/law-lib/laws-by-subj/about/guardian.html



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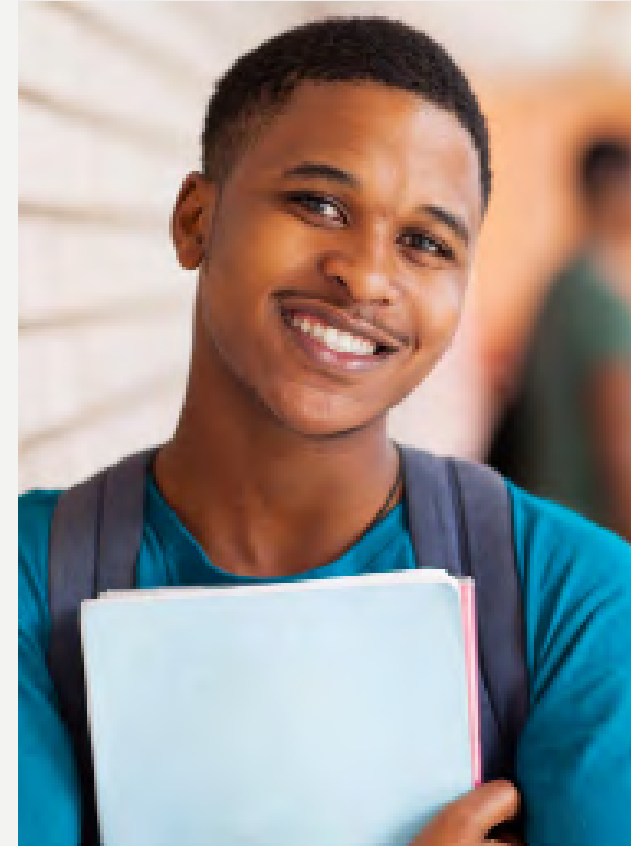
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TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs

(Ages 14-22)



Decision-Making and the Age of Majority

A series of brochures produced by
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Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE)

What are Secondary Transition Services?

For all students with IEPs aged 14-22, secondary transition services are a coordinated set of activities based on what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do. These activities are designed to help them achieve their vision for adult life. [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34 C.F.R. § 300.43.]

Secondary Transition Services Should Start at Age 14 and be:

- Thoughtfully planned and documented every year at the IEP Team meeting by the school, the student, the family, and partners such as adult agencies or employers.
- Implemented every year to build the student's skills and move them closer towards success in postsecondary education or training, competitive employment, independent living, and community participation.

Why are Secondary Transition Services Important?

Secondary transition services give students the instruction and experiences they need to set and achieve goals and to gain skills that will help them become successful adults.



Resources

The LINK Center, a transition project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs:
www.fcsn.org/linkcenter/

MA ESE Special Education Secondary Transition Website: www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition/

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2017-1: Characteristics of High Quality Secondary Transition Services: www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2017-1ta.pdf

Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan: www.massconnecting.org/content/overview-work-based-learning-plan

Massachusetts Guide for Implementing Individual Learning Plans: www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/schoolcounseling/ilpguidance2014.pdf

Massachusetts One-Stop Career Centers: www.mass.gov/massachusetts-one-stop-career-centers



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TIPS: Transition Information for Students with IEPs and their Parents



Secondary Transition Services

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What is Self-Determination?

- Skills, knowledge, and beliefs that allow a person to:
 - Believe in themselves
 - Know their own strengths and weaknesses
 - Manage their own feelings and behavior
 - Work with other people
 - Make choices and solve problems
 - Set goals and achieve them
 - Be a leader in their own lives

Why is Self-Determination Important?

- Everyone communicates, and that voice should be heard and respected
- Regardless of ability or disability, everyone has the need and the right to make decisions for themselves
- Everyone has strengths, and everyone should be given the opportunity to try to reach their own goals
- Self-determined students are more likely to be motivated, persistent, and optimistic about their own lives

Resources

The LINK Center, a transition project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
www.fcsn.org/linkcenter

MA ESE Special Education Secondary Transition Website
www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-2: Promoting Student Self-Determination to Improve Student Outcomes
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2016-2ta.pdf>

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities, www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure

The I'm Determined Project from the Virginia Department of Education, <http://www.imdetermined.org>



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TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs

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Self-Determination

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What Are Transition Assessments?

- Transition assessments are for students with an IEP who are aged 14-22 (or earlier if decided by the IEP Team)
- Transition assessments are any assessment that takes place after a student turns 14
- Transition assessments help the IEP Team understand what a student needs, what they are good at, what they like, and what they want to do related to work, education, living, and participation in the community
- Transition assessment is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Transition assessments inform decisions for an IEP team around the need for transition supports and services

Formal Assessment: A professionally developed test that is used to help understand a student's progress in comparison to other students from their age group, school district, state or country, such as the MCAS, an intelligence test, life skills inventory or functional academic skills inventory.

Informal Assessment: Observations or parent/educator developed materials to learn about how the student functions in the classroom, at work, at home, and in the community. Informal assessments help gain an understanding of what a student wants or needs to make progress in school, such as interviews, assessments of class work, surveys about self-determination, functional behavioral assessments, or vocational interest assessments. There are no comparisons to other students in informal assessments.

Resources

The LINK Center, a transition project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
www.fcsn.org/linkcenter

MA ESE Special Education Secondary Transition Website
www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2014-4: Transition Assessment in the Secondary Transition Planning Process
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2014-4ta.html>

Massachusetts Postsecondary Transition Planning: Transition Assessments Example Sheet
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/transition-assessments-example-sheet.pdf>



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TIPS: Transition Information for Parents and Students with IEPs

(Ages 14-22)



Transition Assessment

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The Road Forward

*A DDS Guide for
Transition Planning*

Guardianship & Alternatives to Guardianship in Massachusetts

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- What is Guardianship?
- Legal Documents
- Alternatives
- Conservatorship vs. Guardianship
- Legal Procedure for Obtaining Guardianship

The subject of guardianship for an adult child who is disabled is of concern to most parents. Parents of children who are intellectually challenged or have other significant physical or mental disabilities often assume that they continue to be their child's legal guardian during their entire lifetime.

Although one's child may not have the capacity to make informed decisions, legally, the adult individual is presumed competent unless otherwise adjudicated in an incompetency proceeding. In other words, once your child reaches the age of 18, you, the parent, are no longer his/her legal guardian.

The act of giving reasoned and well informed consent when making a decision may be beyond your child's ability. Although your child may not have the actual capacity to understand a legal contract, unless s/he has been adjudicated incompetent, there is a legal presumption that s/he is competent. In order to protect one's child from unscrupulous individuals who may exploit your child's inability to make informed choices, it is necessary for families to familiarize themselves with the various options of legal protection for their disabled adult child. Following is a brief description of guardianship and alternatives to consider.

Guardianship is a legal means of protecting children and incompetent adults who cannot take care of themselves, make decisions that are in their own best interest or handle their assets. When the court determines that a person is incapable of handling either their personal or financial affairs, the person who is disabled is thereafter referred to as a "Protected Person".

WHAT IS GUARDIANSHIP?

Guardianship is just one means of protecting an adult who is not fully competent.

Trusts

Trusts may be an appropriate alternative to guardianship or conservatorship. A trust is a legal plan for placing funds and other assets in the control of a trustee for the benefit of an individual. A trust will be less expensive in that no bond is required, it will keep the courts out of one's life (permission of a court is not needed to

make disbursements from the trust or to make investments), and it protects the ward's assets without him/her having to be declared incompetent. Trusts for the benefit of a person who is disabled should be established with the help of a lawyer experienced in wills and trusts and familiar with the law relating to government disability benefits. A trust set up without regard to the eligibility laws may disqualify a person who is disabled for SSI and Medicaid which may be critical benefits.

Special Bank Accounts

Joint bank accounts can be created to prevent rash expenditures. Arrangements can be made with most banks for a disabled person's benefit check, such as Social Security or SSI, to be sent directly to the bank for deposit. Additionally, a permanent withdrawal order can be arranged with the bank, authorizing the bank to send certain sums of money on a regular basis to a specified party, such as the landlord or the person who is disabled for pocket money, thus providing structure to allow for budgeting and money management.

Representative Payee

For persons with a disability who receive benefit checks from Social Security, SSI, or Veteran's pensions, considers obtaining a representative payee to manage these funds. Benefit checks are sent to the representative payee who manages them and spends them for the benefit of the individual with the disability. The representative payee has authority only over income from the particular checks for which she is payee. The person who is disabled would still make personal decisions.

CONSERVATORSHIP VS. GUARDIANSHIP

Conservatorship

Conservatorship should be considered for persons who are intellectually challenged who are too disabled to manage their finances and who have income from sources other than benefit checks. It is not as broad a form of control as guardianship; a conservator handles only the Protected Person's financial affairs, allowing the Protected Person to make personal decisions. The court may appoint a conservator if by reason of "mental weakness" the person is "unable to properly care for his property." Physical incapacity

A Conservator handles only the Protected Person's financial affairs, allowing the ward to make personal decisions.

Differences between High School and College Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Applicable Laws

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
I.D.E.A. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)	A.D.A. (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)
Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
I.D.E.A. is about SUCCESS	A.D.A. is about ACCESS

Required Documentation

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan and/or 504 Plan)	High School I.E.P. and 504 are not sufficient. Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category of disability.
School provides evaluation at no cost to student	Student must get evaluation at own expense
Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in I.D.E.A.	Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations, and demonstrate the need for specific accommodations

Self-Advocacy

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents and teachers	Student must self-identify to the Office of Disability Services
Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school	Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance

Parental Role

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Parent has access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process	Parent does not have access to student records without student's written consent
Parent advocates for student	Student advocates for self





AFTER Program

Activities, Fun, Trainings, Enrichment & Recreation

December 2018 Activities

Gingerbread House Party

Sunday, December 2nd, 12:00-2:00pm at The Arc of GHN, 57 Wingate Street, Suite 301, Haverhill

Pick your pre-built house and get creative. Music with light snacks are provided. This will be a fun social activity.

Minimum participants: 8, Maximum participants: 20

Cost: \$20.00 per person, Staffing Ratio: 2-3

Bowling (Ages 16-26)

Monday's 6:30-8pm at Leo's SuperBowl, Amesbury; Thursday's 6:30-8pm at Academy Lanes, Haverhill

Come and join this fun weekly bowling group for our youth and young adults ages 16-26!!

Minimum participants: 4, Maximum participants: 8

Cost: \$15.00 per person, Staffing Ratio: 2:4

Kickboxing (Ages 16+)

Tuesday, December 6th & 20th, 3:30-4:15pm at 5 Dragons Karate, 57 Wingate Street, Lower Level, Haverhill

Learn simple self-defense moves in a fun atmosphere, while gaining a greater sense of empowerment and self-confidence. A cardio workout never felt more effortless.

Minimum Participants: 5, Maximum Participants: 13

Cost: \$15.00 per person; Staffing Ratio: Varies

FAMILY TIES

- A Network For Families & Professionals Supporting Children & Youth With Special Needs.
- Family TIES of Massachusetts provides information and referral services, emotional support, and trainings to parents of children and youth with special needs - just like you, we are caring for our children and aim to light your way.

The DPH Community Support Line offers support for families.

Call 1-800-882-1435 to learn more.

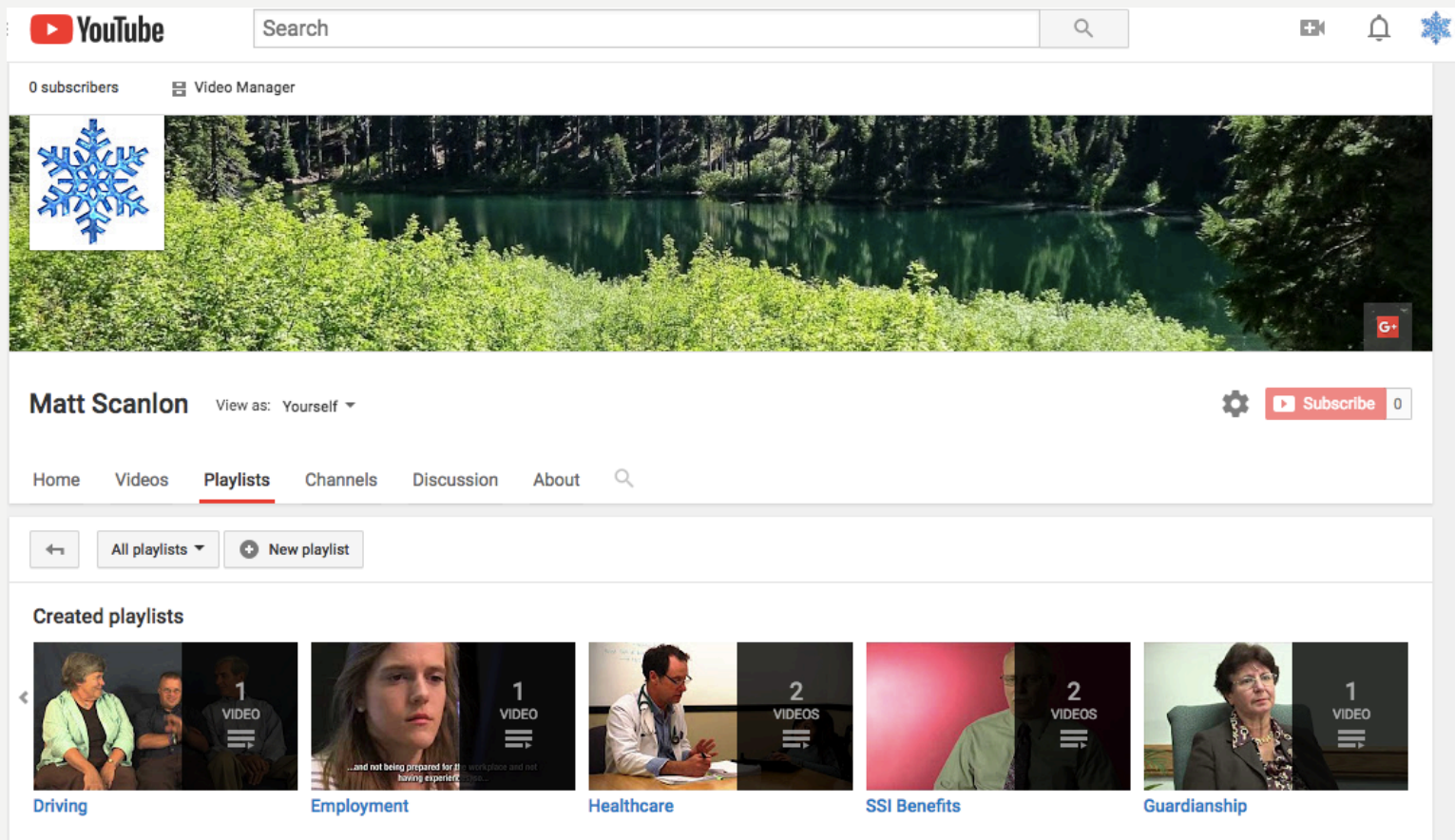
<http://www.massfamilyties.org/>



YOUTUBE CHANNEL

- I have been saving/adding helpful videos. Feel free to email me for the link.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrnlheRPnXVihyI8i7gZ8zg/playlists?disable_polymer=1





E-MAIL LIST



- Until our website is up and running, add your name to a confidential list to stay in the loop.
 - Regional, social activities and outings
 - Changes in SPED, particularly the transition process
 - Useful articles
 - Inspirational stories
 - Seasonal Newsletter (Fall, Winter and Spring)
 - Rollout date Spring 2019
 - RESOURCES, REOURCES, RESOURCES!
 - Sign up tonight!
 - E-mail Mscanlon@Haverhill-PS.org with the subject: “Transition Emails”



Know who your ETF is.



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TO
HELP**

KeepCalmAndPosters.com



Know who your liaison is.