

Preparing for the Transition to Adult Life

For many parents, the thought of their child “transitioning” from secondary schooling into the world of post-secondary adulthood is daunting, even frightening. After much effort made over many years of navigating the secondary school world, the post-secondary world includes many new choices for parents and more importantly for their child. The best advice is to start early in preparing. Consider many possibilities and work with your children to discuss and guide them in decision making concerning their future. For many parents this is a challenging change of roles as a dependent child transitions into an independent adult.

Independence and Life Skills

Special needs students are best served by years of experience in daily life lessons that lead toward living independent lives, helping them take ownership of their future. Life lessons include: social understanding, social skills, safety, hygiene, communication, decision making, consequences, boundaries, self-management, self-advocacy and much more. There are many community-based resources to help supplement these lessons learned and examples observed at home.

Completion of Secondary Education

Completion of high school is very important as it sets the foundation for progress into post-secondary education as

well as vocational employment. Many supplemental programs are not available to students without the completion of high school. The development of a portfolio during the academic years is ideal in preparing for a future which aligns with the student's skills, abilities and desires. The successful completion of secondary education cannot be overemphasized.

Legal Considerations

As a legally independent adult, the student has new considerations with regard to: driver's license, healthcare, guardianship, banking matters, financial trusts & support programs, tax preparation, insurance, privacy and other matters. Consulting legal counsel is highly encouraged.

Housing, Residential Support and Community Living

Choosing the right type of living arrangements and community include a variety of options and considerations. Factors could include: distance from school, work of parents, types of community housing and costs, physical and traffic safety, ease of access to transportation, etc. Residential support could also include safety nets to prevent abuse and fraud.

Post-secondary Education Considerations

Today many schools provide considerations for highly functioning students with learning disabili-

ties. Effective use of past IEPs and portfolios can dramatically improve the chances of discovering a student's aptitudes, abilities and interests. Helping a student understand the differences between high school and college is critical in terms of academic expectations and the campus environment. Careful determination as to the type of school and the administrative support for special needs students is important for successful assimilation. Parents and students should research financial options through scholarships, grants and other available assistance.

Vocational Employment Options

The successful matching of a student's skills, values and interests, along with a realistic understanding of their strengths and weaknesses with a vocation and work environment, requires careful consideration. Orlando boasts a wide range of organizations devoted to developing all the skills students need to find and succeed in a vocation suitable to their abilities. Such organizations include: ASD Achievement (which offers 10 courses for up to 60 graduated students) and RAISE. See Page 27 for more information. 



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ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

THE GLENHOLME
SCHOOL

A TRADITION OF LEARNING EXCELLENCE

The Glenholme School, a Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health program located in Connecticut, is a specialized independent boarding school for students ages 10-21, living with emotional and/or academic differences. Transitional housing and support available for students beginning college/university coursework.

The Glenholme School is accredited by the CT Department of Education and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

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Helpful Resources

- www.fyitransition.org
- www.floridahats.org
- www.gottransition.org
- www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/transition.pdf
- www.nichcy.org/schoolage
- www.fddc.org
- www.autismspeaks.org