

Transition – Education

Taking Charge of Your Health Care:

A handout for adolescents and young adults with special health care needs and disabilities

Get to know your rights

- Learn about your rights. You are your best advocate. Call the Federation for Children with Special Needs for information.
- You are in the driver's seat. Make sure your transition planning is driven by you!!
- Attend school team meetings. Consider asking to start the meetings by telling people about your goals, dreams and by sharing examples of your work.
- At age 14 the law says that you have a right to participate in school team meetings. You may even attend at a younger age, with the permission of your family and school staff.
- Ask about accommodations. You may be entitled to accommodations in school because of your special health care need or disability, even if you are not eligible for special education.
- Be aware that if you leave high school or graduate before you are 22, you will stop receiving special education services. Special education services end for everyone at age 22.
- Know that when you reach age 18, you have the right to approve your own Individualized Education Program (IEP). You and your family may decide to share decision-making or to have your family continue to approve the plan until you reach age 22.
- Start talking to agencies that might help you as you get older.

Start thinking about whether you want or need more schooling after high school

- Think about the kind of job you would like to have as an adult. The earlier you begin to think about this, the more steps you can take to reach your goals.
- Talk with your family, your guidance counselor, and other adults you trust about your dreams, and the kind of preparation that you need. What types of classes should you take in high school? Will you need more schooling after high school?
- Even if you don't want a degree, you can learn a lot by attending classes at a community college.
- Find out about different educational programs after high school: vocational programs; colleges; technical training programs; and adult and continuing education programs. Learn what it takes to get into one of these programs or schools.
- Arrange to visit different school to make sure they meet your needs and physical challenges.

Put paperwork together that will help you reach your goals

- Keep your own notes and records from school team meetings that you attend.
- Save examples of your schoolwork and other items that show the kind of work you have been doing, your interests and strengths. Include examples of your life in your community, clubs/organizations.
- Make a list of disability organizations and other places that can help you in planning and paying for any future education.

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