

# EMBRACING THE FUTURE



## UNION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRANSITION PLANNING TIPS FOR PARENTS

Linda Little – Transition Specialist

(704) 289-2543 -[linda.little@ucps.k12.nc.us](mailto:linda.little@ucps.k12.nc.us)

## **EMBRACING THE FUTURE**

Prepare your child at home for the new challenges he or she will face in adult living. Above all, foster as much independence as your child is capable of achieving. Here are some suggestions for helping your child to become as independent as possible.

- Devise realistic household chores and insist upon completion. A small child can dust chair legs, baseboards, and wash windowsills.
- Teach basic cooking skills. Microwaves and easily prepared foods make simple cooking possible for practically everyone.
- Expect children to accept consequences. Excuses are not going to help when they reach adulthood. Children need practice in accepting responsibility for their behavior.
- Allow children to take risks. Give them the joy of accomplishment, of living with the results of their own decision-making. Help them to cope with the results of an error in judgment and don't penalize them by saying "I told you so."
- Don't set a double standard for children in the family. Expect all of the children, disabled or not to conform to certain basic rules for courtesy and moral behavior.
- Don't allow the child with disabilities to think he or she deserves special treatment. Try to make his or her routine as much like that of the rest of the family as possible.
- Teach social skills to your child with a disability. Remember that it is hard to be a friend of someone who doesn't have appropriate social skills.
- Encourage the child to work at a community job or a job in the home or neighborhood (volunteer work is helpful as well as paid employment).
- Stress good work habits like being on time, completing tasks, and doing work neatly.
- Be sure that your child socializes with nondisabled individuals as well as individuals with disabilities. Have your family interact with families who do not have children with disabilities.
- Allow your child to develop as many practical skills as possible, including such things as driving (even if it takes extra lessons), music appreciation, or sports.
- Help your child to set realistic goals.
- Let your child make as many decisions for himself or herself as possible. This will give the child personal management skills necessary for adulthood.

- Don't allow your child to manipulate you. Manipulative behavior interferes with achieving maturity as an adult.
- Involve your child in ordinary activities of running a home like mowing the lawn, taking out the trash, learning to fix a lamp, hanging pictures, doing the laundry. The child may not be physically able to do all of these tasks, but knowing how they are done is important.
- Encourage money management, budgeting, and saving.
- Encourage your child's sense of humor. Make laughter part of every day.
- Help your child to develop leisure time skills like participation in sports, daily exercise, hobbies, computer or table games.
- Teach your child to think of others, remembering birthdays, saying thank you, volunteering to help, listening to others.
- Develop your child's conversational skills. People are boring who can only talk about their disability or who keep bringing the conversation back to themselves.
- Provide sex education.
- Concentrate on the child first and the disability second.
- Model and monitor good grooming habits.
- Teach as many personal care skills as your child can learn and teach them when your child is young. If your child is going to require personal care services for a lifetime, allow another person, outside the family to care for his or her personal needs as the child becomes a teenager.
- Make a determination about guardianship.
- Plan financially, including making a will, getting a Social Security number for the child, and applying for Supplemental Social Security and Medicaid when the child reaches 18.

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### WEBSITES

**Youthhood.org** - Youthhood is provided at no charge as a resource and transition planning tool for teachers, community service providers, mentors, parents, guardians, youth with and without disabilities, and anyone else who may benefit from utilizing this site to plan for the transition from high school to adult life. The only requirement to utilize all interactive features of Youthhood is that you register with our site.

**Pepnet.org** – iTransition is a free, online transition curriculum to help students who are deaf or hard of hearing prepare for life after high school. There are four separate trainings with activities to help students learn about themselves, their career goals, and the skills they need to be successful in the future.

- Career Interests and Education Choices: It's My Plan!
- First Year College Success: Be the One!
- Essential Skills for College Living: It's My Life!
- eFolio: My Online Portfolio!

**NICHCY.org** – National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities -NICHCY is very pleased to offer you a wealth of information on disabilities! We serve the nation as a central source of information on disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth. Here, you'll also find easy-to-read information on IDEA, the law authorizing early intervention services and special education. Our [State Resource Sheets](#) will help you connect with the disability agencies and organizations in your state. Read and freely share our many articles and publications, sign up for our newsletter, and write or call us for more personalized assistance. We are here to help.

**NCSET.org** - The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) coordinates national resources, offers technical assistance, and disseminates information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities in order to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures.

**[www.washington.edu/doi/](http://www.washington.edu/doi/)** - **DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology)** serves to

- increase the success of people with disabilities in challenging academic programs and careers.
- promote the application of universal design to physical spaces, information technology, instruction, and services.
- freely distribute publications and videos for use in presentations, exhibits, and the classroom.
- provide resources for students with disabilities, K-12 educators, postsecondary faculty and administrators, librarians, employers, parents, and mentors.

**[www.thinkcollege.org](http://www.thinkcollege.org/)** - Think College is an initiative of the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston. ICI has been a leader in the area of postsecondary education for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities for over fifteen years. ThinkCollege focuses on three primary areas in postsecondary education for people with intellectual or /developmental disabilities. The primary areas are research, training and technical assistance and dissemination,.

## **What Should I Do If My Child with Disabilities Wants to Go to College?**

Many students who have been served in special education decide to continue their education past high school. For a student to become successful in postsecondary settings, the high school program can contribute valuable opportunities, such as the following:

- Developing student's study skills and learning strategies.
- Arranging job try outs allows students opportunities to evaluate different career and vocational options.
- Arranging needed accommodations for college entrance exams. Students are entitled to assessments that do not penalize them for their specific disabilities. These accommodations include extended time, a reader, a scribe, a separate testing area, or shorter test sessions. The important thing is for the students to learn which accommodations work best for them and gain the needed documentation to support their requests for the accommodations in standardized testing, and, later, college classes. For help with documentation, your child can consult with the high school guidance counselor.
- College admission does depend on having at least the minimum qualifications for entrance. Because a student has a disability does not mean that all typical entrance requirements will be waived for him or her. Just like everyone else, students with disabilities can go to college if they have the intellectual capacity and educational background that prepares them to do well. Students who do not meet the minimum entrance requirements can enroll for college courses on a noncredit or pass/fail basis. Such students can audit classes or participate in nonacademic college activities as a way to gain experience or be involved in age appropriate activities.
- Identifying colleges that provide educational programs relevant to career interests. For any student seeking college admission, the planning should begin early in high school. For the student with disabilities, the choice might be more difficult because of issues related to special admissions and ensuring

that the needed support services are available. Matching the desired educational program and level of needed support services is an important step in college selection. College directories typically list the types of student supports available. Most campuses have student support centers where eligible students can go to take tests orally, receive assistance with notetaking or reading textbooks. Many campus libraries have screen readers available for blind or print impaired students to use. Computer laboratories will sometimes also have available adapted keyboards and other access devices.

- Identifying the types of accommodations and support services that the student needs because of his or her disability. Colleges do not provide special education, but they do provide support services to assist students with disabilities. Provision of services is based on the individual institution's own choice of models. For this reason, it is very important for a student with disabilities to find out the specific supports offered in any particular postsecondary school. Typical supports include registration priority, notetakers, interpreters, tutoring, special classes, liaison with faculty, community liaison, and support groups. To be eligible for these services and accommodations, a student must have proof of disability, such as a recent psychoeducational assessment or special education records.
- Assistance in the application process. Applying to colleges and for financial aid packages can be a daunting task, especially for students with disabilities. High school guidance counselors and resource teachers can be helpful in assisting students with filling out applications and writing the required essays. There are some college scholarships available for students with specific disabilities, especially sensory impairments like blindness or deafness. Directories of college scholarships provide information about disability-related financial aid.
- Assistance in preparing the documentation that the student can carry to the college. The high school setting provides many protections and coordinated services that are greatly reduced, if not eliminated, once the student graduates from high school. Documentation of the history of the disability and effective interventions represents a valuable resource that can guide college administrators and counselors in working effectively with students and reducing the apprehension and frustration they encounter in learning a new system. This documentation should include results of a recent

comprehensive evaluation, a summary of previous evaluations, and, most important, information on the type and extent of services that have been provided.