Transition Planning for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Individuals

1. Be Actively Involved in Transition Planning

- **Attend IEP Meetings Regularly:**
  - Participate in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and express your family's goals and aspirations for your child's future.
  - If English is not your first language, ask for an interpreter to ensure you fully understand and can contribute to the process.
- **Share Your Cultural Values:**
  - Help the transition team understand your family's cultural views on education, work, and independence. This information will help create a transition plan that aligns with your values and expectations.
- **Advocate for Your Child's Needs:**
  - Be vocal about what services or supports your child may need based on your family's experiences, cultural background, and knowledge of your child's strengths.

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2. Learn About Postsecondary Options and Services

- **Explore Different Career Paths:**
  - Learn about the wide variety of career opportunities available to your child, including those that might align with your cultural values, such as family-owned businesses, community leadership, or helping professions.
- **Research Postsecondary Education and Training:**
  - Familiarize yourself with various postsecondary options, such as college, vocational training, or apprenticeships, and how they may benefit your child.
- **Visit Schools or Programs:**
  - Visit local community colleges, trade schools, or universities to meet with staff and see what services and supports are available for students with disabilities, especially those that can help CLD students transition smoothly.
- **Utilize the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR):**
  - Connect with OVR, which helps students with disabilities prepare for employment and independent living. Request information in your preferred language if needed.

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3. Encourage Your Child to Develop Self-Advocacy Skills

- **Teach Your Child to Speak Up for Their Needs:**
    - Encourage your child to communicate their needs and preferences in school and other settings. Practice self-advocacy skills by role-playing conversations they might have with teachers or future employers.
- **Explore Disability Rights:**
    - Help your child learn about their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which protect their right to accommodations in education and employment.

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4. Build Connections with Your Community

- **Find Role Models or Mentors:**
    - Look for individuals from your cultural or linguistic background who have successfully transitioned to adulthood and can serve as role models for your child.
- **Engage with Community Organizations:**
    - Reach out to local community organizations or cultural groups that offer resources, workshops, or support for transition planning. Many organizations can help bridge gaps between schools and families and offer culturally relevant services.
- **Involve Family and Friends:**
    - Engage extended family members and trusted friends in the transition planning process. Their input and support may be valuable as your child moves toward postsecondary goals.

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5. Access Language Support Services

- **Request Translation and Interpretation:**
    - Ask the school to provide translated documents and interpretation services for IEP meetings, college information, and vocational services. These resources ensure you and your child can make informed decisions.
- **Attend Workshops in Your Preferred Language:**
    - Look for workshops, webinars, or transition events that offer sessions in your preferred language, either hosted by the school or local community organizations.

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6. Plan for Financial Aid and Resources

- **Learn About Financial Aid:**

    - Investigate financial aid options early. Many colleges and vocational programs offer scholarships and grants for CLD students. Attend financial aid workshops, and ask for materials in your preferred language.
- **Apply for FAFSA:**
    - Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to access financial aid for your child's postsecondary education. You can get assistance in completing the application in your language.
- **Seek Community Scholarships:**
    - Explore scholarships from community organizations that support students from diverse backgrounds. Many organizations offer financial support for students pursuing higher education or vocational training.

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7. Explore Adult Service Providers

- **Connect with Adult Service Agencies:**
    - Work with agencies that offer support for adults with disabilities, such as job training, independent living resources, and employment opportunities. Ensure the agency has culturally sensitive services or staff who speak your language.
- **Understand Independent Living Resources:**
    - If independent living is part of your child's transition plan, research housing and support services that may be available for culturally diverse individuals transitioning to adulthood.

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8. Maintain Flexibility and Open Communication

- **Keep Communication Open:**
    - Stay in regular communication with your child's teachers, counselors, and transition coordinators. Provide updates on your child's progress and address any concerns you may have about their transition plan.
- **Be Open to Adjustments:**
    - Transition planning is an ongoing process. Be open to changes in the plan if new opportunities arise or if your child's needs evolve. Continue advocating for adjustments to meet their unique cultural, educational, and vocational goals.

Conclusion

By staying informed, engaging with the school, and accessing community and cultural resources, CLD families can play an active and empowered role in the secondary transition

process. Creating a plan that honors both cultural values and future aspirations will help your child transition successfully into adulthood.