



Transition from School to Adult Life

A Guide to Navigating the Leap from School to Adult Programs and Services in Northern Virginia





This guide is one of six developed for parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities under the auspices of The Arc of Northern Virginia's Transition POINTS program. Transition POINTS focuses on key life decision points: receiving a diagnosis and having a child with a disability enter an early intervention program; school and special education; transitioning out of the school system; securing employment or day services; finding a place to live outside the caregiver's home; and aging with a disability.

All of the guides can be found at https://thearcofnova.org/program/transition-points.

As information changes, updated content and resources may be found in the Resource Library on our website at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library.

This is not a legal document and does not spell out your or your child's rights and responsibilities under the law. Every effort has been made to verify the information in the document, but please be aware that items such as program regulations, deadlines, and contact information can change. Referrals to organizations and individuals are for informational purposes and do not constitute an endorsement of their services.

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www.thearcofnova.org

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a journey full of love, challenges, and hope, and when your child has intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), that journey may follow paths less traveled—but no less meaningful. As a parent, you've already demonstrated immense strength and care by seeking ways to support your child's growth and well-being. Planning for their future might feel overwhelming at times, but it's also an opportunity to dream, prepare, and create a foundation for their happiness and security.

The Arc of Northern Virginia's Transition POINTS Guides are here to walk with you through this process and navigate crucial decisions across the lifespan. It's not about predicting every step ahead, but about equipping you with knowledge, resources, and a sense of empowerment. Transition from School to Adult Life explores practical strategies for education, employment or meaningful day activities, financial planning, independent living, and building a support network that honors your child's unique potential.

The path may come with challenges, but it's important to remember that you are not alone. Countless parents, caregivers, professionals, and communities are on this journey alongside you, offering guidance and support. Every step forward—no matter how small—can make a meaningful difference in your child's future.

This guide aims to be realistic but hopeful, grounded in the knowledge that your love and commitment are the most powerful tools you have. With thoughtful planning and determination, you can help your child thrive and navigate a world full of possibilities.

Transition from School to Adult Life provides an overview of the life planning topics you should consider at this stage. For most of the topics covered in this guide, including Social Security and Medicaid, we offer handouts in the Resource Library https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library on our website that provide additional detailed information to better understand and navigate these complex topics.

ABOUT TRANSITION POINTS

Families need realistic, actionable information with which they can make a wide range of decisions as their child grows. Providing this information is the mission of The Arc of Northern Virginia's Transition POINTS program (Providing Opportunities, Information, Networking and Transition Support).

Transition POINTS focuses on six key decision points in the lifetime of an individual with an intellectual disability:

- Receiving a diagnosis and having a child enter an early intervention program.
- 2. Starting school and entering the special education system.
- **3.** Transitioning out of the school system to adulthood.
- **4.** Entering the world of work.
- 5. Finding a home.
- 6. Aging with a disability.



Providing Opportunities, Information, Networking and Transition Support

For each transition point, we provide materials in both print and digital formats, online resources, workshops, and webinars. All of these materials can be found on our website at www.thearcofnova.org. The Arc of Northern Virginia maintains a library of informative life-planning videos and webinars on our YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/user/VideosatTheArcofNoVA.

The Arc of Northern Virginia holds an annual Transition Series. The webinars, slides, and transition related resources can be found on our website at https://thearcofnova.org/transition-series.

The information found in this guide is applicable to all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, although much of the contact information for resources are particular to the Northern Virginia area. To explore resources specific to your local community, contact the Community Services Board (CSB) in your region. You can find your local CSB by visiting DBHDS (Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services) at https://dbhds.virginia.gov/community-%20services-boards-csbs/. The CSB is the point of entry into the public funded system of services for people with mental health needs, intellectual and developmental disabilities. Also, visit The Arc of Virginia at www.thearcofva.org to find the local Arc chapter in your community. To find the local Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services in your area, visit https://www.dars.virginia.gov.



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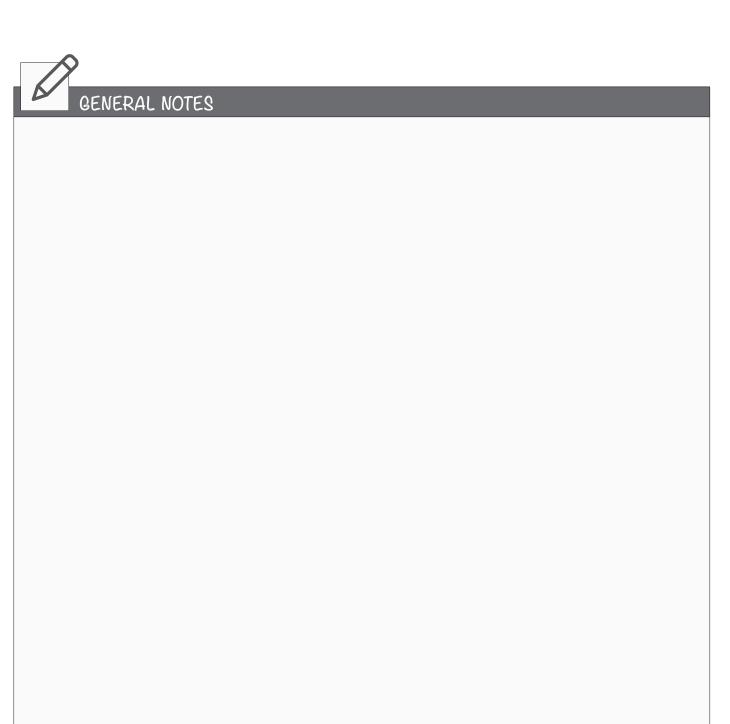
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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

When you first open Transition from School to Adult Life, it's natural to feel overwhelmed by the amount of information it contains. This guide is meant to be a resource you can return to again and again—not something you need to read or act on all at once. Every family's journey is different, and not every section will apply to your child or your situation right now. Think of it as a toolbox: use the pieces that are most relevant today, and know that you can come back later as your child grows and your family's needs change. Take it step by step, focus on what feels most important, and allow this guide to support you rather than add pressure.





A CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE

A CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

| STEP TO TAKE BY AGE | CHECK IF DONE | NOTES |
|--|---------------|-------|
| ASAP | | |
| Organize key documents pg. 24 | | |
| Create a will pg. 25 | | |
| Establish a Special Needs Trust pg. 54 | | |
| Apply for a Medicaid DD Waiver to get on the waitlist pg. 40 | | |
| Determine if your child is eligible for Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid pg. 45 | | |
| AGES 12-14 | | |
| Keep record of child's aptitudes, vocational & leisure interests pg. 76 | | |
| Discuss child's needs with local therapeutic recreation department pg. 104 | | |
| Have child begin to attend IEP meetings | | |

| STEP TO TAKE BY AGE | CHECK IF DONE | NOTES |
|--|---------------|-------|
| AGE 14-16 | | |
| Include transition goals in IEP, as well as transportation, post-secondary, and independent living goals | | |
| If using public transit, apply for Metro reduced-fare card or MetroAccess. Explore travel training. Fare for local public transportation (ex. Cue Bus, DASH,ART is free for high school students. Apply at your local high school) pg. 107 | | |
| Contact your local DARS office to apply for Pre-ETS (Employment and Transition Services) pg. 11 | | |
| Explore eligibility for adult services with school or CSB; complete application and release of information forms pg. 40 | | |
| Attend The Arc of Northern Virginia's virtual Transition Lunch & Learn sessions and/ or our Annual Transition Series, or join our Transition Parent Support Group pg. 21 | | |
| Learn about The Arc of Northern Virginia's Tech for Independent Living Program to build independent living skills pg. 70 | | |

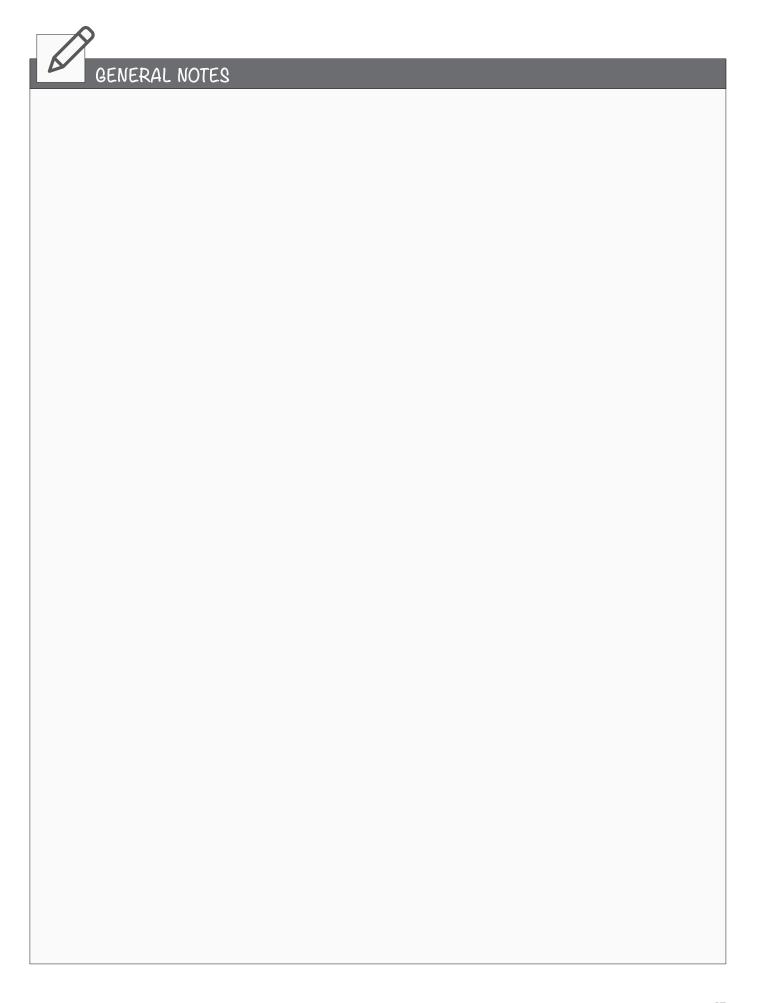
| STEP TO TAKE BY AGE | CHECK IF DONE | NOTES |
|---|---------------|-------|
| AGE 16-18 | | |
| If college-bound, research colleges & visit campuses; meet w/ disability support services pg. 35 | | |
| If not yet done, contact your local DARS office to apply for Pre-ETS Services pg. 32 | | |
| Research employment and/ or day support services; If the goal is independent, competitive employment then contact your local DARS office to apply for Vocational Rehabilitative (VR) Services pg. 84 | | |
| Determine eligibility for adult services through appropriate local agency (CSB) pg. 40 | | |
| Build a Supported Decision Making team. Visit our SDM Library to learn more and get started https://thearcofnova.org/sdm pg. 60 | | |
| AGE 17 (OR 12-18 MO. BEFORE LEAVING SCHOOL) | | |
| For college-bound, take required tests; arrange interviews and tours. Meet with office of disability services & determine eligibility for on-campus services pg. 35 | | |
| Research and do informational interviews with employment & day support providers pg. 84 | | |

| STEP TO TAKE BY AGE | CHECK IF DONE | NOTES |
|--|---------------|-------|
| FALL OF SENIOR YEAR | | |
| Apply to post-secondary schools pg. 35 | | |
| NO EARLIER THAN 17 YRS., 6 MONTHS | | |
| Explore legal options such as powers of attorney, limited guardianship, guardianship. Contact attorney if needed pg. 62 | | |
| 90 DAYS BEFORE 18TH BIRTHDAY | | |
| If your child has Medicaid before their 18th birthday, start the Disability Determination Process. For more information visit the Medicaid section in our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library pg. 48 | | |

| STEP TO TAKE BY AGE | CHECK IF DONE | NOTES |
|---|---------------|-------|
| 1 MONTH BEFORE 18TH BIRTHDAY | | |
| If necessary, have attorney prepare final documents for new legal relationship pg. 62 | | |
| AT AGE 18 | | |
| If establishing Power of Attorney, this can be completed beginning on the 18th birthday pg. 62 | | |
| Apply for Supplementary Security Income (SSI) the month after your child turns 18 pg. 45 | | |
| If your child is male, register for the Selective Service https://www.sss.gov/register | | |

| STEP TO TAKE BY AGE | CHECK IF DONE | NOTES |
|---|---------------|-------|
| AGE 18-22 | | |
| Update will. Inform family about wills, trusts, and other legal supports pg. 53 | | |
| Create a Letter of Intent pg. 25 | | |
| Explore adult recreational & social opportunities pg. 104 | | |
| Prepare resume, do situational assessments, go on job interviews pg. 77 | | |
| Once approved for SSI, apply for Medicaid pg. 45 | | |
| If working, learn about managing income and Social Security benefits pg. 48 | | |

| STEP TO TAKE BY AGE | CHECK IF DONE | NOTES |
|---|---------------|-------|
| AGE 18-22 (CONTINUED) | | |
| If not already done, determine eligibility for Medicaid Waivers and contact CSB for an intake pg. 40 | | |
| If not yet done, contact your local DARS office to apply for Pre-ETS and/or Vocational Rehab Services pg. 32 | | |
| If not yet done, obtain Metro reduced-rate transit fare cards/ID card. Apply for MetroAccess if needed pg. 107 | | |
| Explore housing resources as you plan for the future pg. 97 | | |
| AGE 20-22 | | |
| Before graduating, determine the service provider that best suits your child's needs for either employment or day support services pg. 84 | | |
| Determine potential use of public transportation or specialized transportation services. Explore travel training. pg. 107 | | |







MAKING A PLAN FOR SUCCESSFUL ADULTHOODS

When children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) transition out of the school system, it marks a significant shift in how services are accessed and provided. Unlike the entitlement-based supports offered through schools under federal laws like IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), adult services are not guaranteed. Instead, families must navigate a complex system of providers, eligibility requirements, and funding sources. This transition can feel overwhelming, but understanding the options and planning ahead can help ensure continued support for your child's needs as they move into adulthood in the areas of employment, meaningful day supports, recreation, and housing.

The Center on Transition Innovations at VCU offers Tips on Transition Planning for Parents at www.centerontransition.org. Visit their website for virtual courses, guides, videos and webcasts on transition planning.

- 1. Love your child unconditionally, believe in him or her, provide encouragement, dream big! You are your child's biggest advocate. Support and love them as only parents can in this exciting time. Throw a graduation party that highlights your child's strengths and dreams. Create a "Dream Board" to show their goals college, a job, living independently, etc.
- 2. Insist on student voice. The student's voice should be present whenever he or she is the subject of conversation. Redirect people to speak to your child instead of you, and allow them time to respond. If your child uses alternative communication, ensure the tools are ready and used.
- 3. Increase student involvement with the transition process. A great way to build self-determination for a young adult with a disability is through the IEP process. Prepare your child for the IEP meeting and have them attend. Have your child create slides or a poster presentation about themselves for the IEP meeting, and include their strengths, needs, preferences, and future goals.
- **4. Research resources and do your homework.** It is easy to become overwhelmed with emotions during the transition process. Researching best options and practices provides a powerful tool to advocate for your child. Create a binder or digital folder with resources and contact information. Participate in a support group with other parents to share information.
- **5.** Be open-minded and think outside the box. Just because it's never been done, doesn't mean that it can't be done. It can never hurt to discuss an idea concerning transition. If your child dreams of something unconventional, explore alternatives such as creating small business opportunities like pet-sitting, art creation, etc.
- 6. Collaborate with adult services. Community adult services provide valuable support and programming once your child exits school services. Learning about the various services and building relationships with providers early will ease the transition to adult services. Talk with the Transition Coordinator at your child's high school and the Transition Case Manager at the CSB. Talk with other parents and conduct informational interviews with providers.
- 7. Increase family involvement in the transition planning process. Your child is the center of the IEP and you know your child best! The more the family is involved, the more your child's voice will be heard. Hold a family vision meeting and build a circle of support and/or a supported decision-making team. Identify ways each family member can support them whether it is helping teach a life skill, participate in a recreational activity or being a cheerleader.

Consider connecting with other parents who are on similar paths to learn from one another, build community, and discover resources as you navigate this transition. The Arc of Northern Virginia offers virtual monthly Transition Lunch and Learn sessions and monthly alternating in-person and virtual Transition Parent Support Group meetings. To learn more and register, visit our website at https://thearcofnova.org/workshops. Social Grace https://socialgrace.com offers monthly parent support groups. Join the Northern Virginia's Developmental Disability Group, a free online community started by families for families at https://novaddgroupgenius.com.

| NOTES |
|---|
| FIRST IEP MY CHILD JOINED? |
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| DATE I FIRST OPENED THIS GUIDE? |
| |
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| |
| TWO IDEAS I WANT TO EXPLORE OR MAKE SURE WE DO? |
| |
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| |
| |
| FAMILY MEMBERS INVOLVED IN PLANNING? |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| ONE CREATIVE THING I WANT TO TRY? |
| |
| |
| |
| |

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CHARTING THE PATH FORWARD

VISION PLANNING

Transitioning from school to adulthood is a significant milestone for individuals with disabilities, and having a vision for the future is essential to ensuring a successful and fulfilling life. A strong vision serves as a roadmap, guiding decisions about education, employment, independent living, and community involvement. Equally important is building a Circle of Support—a network of family, friends, mentors, and professionals who can provide encouragement, advocacy, and practical assistance. By taking a proactive approach to planning and fostering meaningful connections, families can empower their loved one to navigate adulthood with confidence, independence, and a sense of belonging.

There are several resources to help map a path for the future and by leveraging these resources, families can take an intentional approach to creating and sustaining a circle of support that will help their child thrive in adulthood.

CHARTING THE LIFECOURSE

https://www.lifecoursetools.com is a framework designed to help individuals with disabilities and their families plan for a meaningful and fulfilling life beyond school. It provides tools and strategies to explore possibilities, set goals, and develop a vision for the future. This approach encourages families to think about various life domains—including employment, independent living, relationships, and community engagement to ensure a well-rounded transition into adulthood. By using the LifeCourse framework, parents can identify strengths, resources, and needed supports, empowering their child to navigate the path toward greater independence and inclusion in society.

THE ARC'S CENTER FOR FUTURE PLANNING

https://futureplanning.thearc.org offers "Build Your Plan"®, a tool that enables families to create accounts and begin to build their plans within the Center.

DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The first step is to establish an organization system that works for you, then copy or scan important documents for easy access and keep originals in a safe place. Be sure family members and your attorney know where these documents are. Check out The DaniPlan https://daniplan.com a subscription service created by parents of a child with a disability that provides a centralized hub to organize and consolidate all information needed to care for an individual with special needs. Visit The Arc of Northern Virginia's YouTube Channel to see our webinar on this service at https://www.youtube.com/@VideosatTheArcofNoVA. PEATC (Parent Education Advocacy and Training Center) offers a free Digital Portfolio at https://peatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FINAL-PEATC-Portfolio.pdf to keep track of important documents. It can be downloaded to a thumb drive. A version for military families is also available at https://peatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FINAL-PEATC-Military-Portfolio.pdf?ct=t(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_8_17_2023_13_45_COPY_01).

| NOTES | |
|---|-------------------|
| PLAN SYSTEM YOU CHOSE (Digital or Binder) | COMPLETED? |
| | WHERE IS IT KEPT? |

DOCUMENTS

LETTER OF INTENT

An important document to have is a Letter of Intent in which you describe your child's current life and express your values, wishes and vision for his or her future. Although not legally binding, a Letter of Intent is invaluable to those who will support the care of your child. For a free Letter of Intent template go to https://www.specialneedstrustsonline.com/letter-of-intent/form.

What goes into the document will vary with the individual but would probably include:

- Your vision of your child's future: what goals you have for your child's life, where they would live and with whom, and what activities to maintain.
- Your child's vision of his or her future. Include your child's ideas and desires in the document, such as ensuring that a favorite family remains a strong presence in their life, keeping a pet, or working in a specific industry or worksite.
- Description of personal qualities. Future caregivers would benefit from knowing the unique aspects of your child: overall personality and mood, talents and strengths, degree of independence, medical or behavioral challenges, and sense of humor.
- Specifics on the individual's daily life: school or work schedules; weekend activities, including religious education or attendance; bedtime routines; food and clothing preferences and sensitivities; preferred toys, games, and exercise routines; and typical outings, for example.
- Medical history: This section can be brief (diagnosis, current treatment and medication regimes) but then should state where to find more detailed information.
- Living expenses. Consider including annual costs of items such as food and rent, medical visits and equipment, health insurance, recreational activities and vacations, etc., to give future caregivers an idea of how the individual's special needs trust and benefit monies might have to be spent.
- Contact information: family members, friends, doctors/therapists, preferred pharmacy, school or employer information, lawyers, trustees and backup guardians, insurance agents, banker and financial planners, etc.

DOCUMENTS TO KEEP ON FILE

In addition to a Letter of Intent, create and/or collect and keep on file:

Basic identification documents: Birth certificate (often need the original), Social Security card, driver or non-driver's license, passport, Medicaid card, health insurance card.

Tip: Create a system to track important deadlines for updating documents. Use a digital calendar, reminder app, or physical planner to set alerts at least a month before each due date. Keep a master list of documents with their renewal timelines in one place, and review it at least twice a year to stay ahead of deadlines.

Bank information, including any accounts opened for the benefit of your child, Representative Payee accounts, ABLE Account numbers, any debit or credit cards your adult child uses and associated PIN numbers.

Legal documents such as wills, special needs trusts, power of attorney, guardianship or conservatorship papers. Names of backup guardians and trustees can be kept here as well as named in the Letter of Intent.

Medical history, including diagnosis, evaluations, past and current treatments and therapies (including providers' contact information, dates of treatment, and facility where treated), and prescription records.

Financial records, including any evidence relating to assets or resources of the person with a disability, tax returns, pay stubs or other evidence of income, and payments for medical services and equipment.

| NOTES | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| LETTER OF INTENT CREATED? | WHERE IS IT KEPT? | | |
| | CALENDAR REMINDER TO UPDATE ANNUALLY? | | |
| DISCUSSION WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR DREAMS? What are their dreams/goals? | | | |
| CHECK TO ENSURE BIRTH CERTIFICATE, ACCOUNT INFO, MEDICAL DOCUMENTS, ETC. ARE UPDATED. Where are they kept? | | | |
| HAVE STATE ID? | | | |
| WILL CREATED? | | | |
| SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST CREATED? | | | |
| WHERE ARE TAX DOCUMENTS AN | ND RELATED PAPERS KEPT? | | |
| | | | |



WORKING WITH YOUR HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL BASED TRANSITION SERVICES

All localities offer transition and employment services to students aging out of the school system and into the adult world. Ask the transition coordinator in your student's high school about how the transition process works and for recommendations to both school-based and public vocational programs.

Localities vary in the services they offer to transitioning students. Ask if your school system offers any of the following:

Functional life skills programs to provide various skill development activities to increase career/technical integration, social competence, community integration, personal growth, health and fitness, independent living, and functional academic skills.

Job coaching services for students who display job-readiness skills for independent employment, but who will need specialized, short-term support and training.

School-based career assessments to provide simple career interests and aptitude reviews to assist students in selecting fields of exploration or training.

Individualized career assessments, which may include an individualized set of interest inventories, standardized tests and exploration activities designed to build a comprehensive picture of a student's interests, aptitudes, employability behaviors and career decision-making skills.

ALEXANDRIA CITY

For more information on transition services available in Alexandria City Public Schools, visit https://www.acps.k12.va.us/departments/teaching-learning-leadership/office-of-specialized-instruction

ARLINGTON COUNTY

PROGRAM FOR EMPLOYMENT PREPAREDNESS (PEP)

https://www.apsva.us/special-education/transition-services

703-228-8000

PEP is a transition program, located at the Arlington Career Center. PEP opportunities are based on current business trends and needs so that students may gain relevant skills for obtaining employment in today's market, including the requisite social skills necessary to secure and maintain long-term, meaningful employment. The program is designed for students to receive internship/apprenticeship experiences and may lead to trade certifications, licenses, college credit, networking connections, and/or employment directly upon graduation.

PEP aims to increase students' work readiness skills to enhance the possibility of their obtaining and maintaining work as an adult. Depending on student's needs, job experiences may range from a fully supported on-campus program to a fully independent work experience at a local business. Certain students will participate in Career Technical Education (CTE) courses as an adjunct to their job site experiences. PEP teachers and administrators coordinate with DARS and Arlington County IDDS case managers to support transition into adulthood. Arlington students aged 18-21 with IEPs may be eligible for PEP. Contact your high school transition coordinator for more information.

FAIRFAX COUNTY

CAREER AND TRANSITION SERVICES

https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/careerand-transition-services

571-423-4150

Fairfax has Employment and Transition Representatives (ETRs) at each of its 29 high schools and centers. ETRs facilitate students' transition to post-secondary life by providing transition and employment services while the student is still in school. Employment services include job-seeking skills, job development and job placement, job maintenance and work-based learning. Transition services include information sharing about postsecondary options and resources, referrals to school-based services, support to students in their final year of school, and referrals to adult service agencies upon graduation.

Career and Transition Services (CTS) also provides a number of services and instructional programs to enhance career and college readiness. These include Career Assessment, Work Awareness and Transition (WAT) class, Education for Employment (EFE) class, Education for Employment Opportunities class, Job Coaching, and Academy Support Services.

For students choosing to continue their education up to age 22, Career and Transition Services (CTS) offers a number of programs focused on employability and life skills, including the Davis and Pulley Career Centers and the Secondary Transition to Employment Programs (STEP) which are based at Chantilly, South Lakes, Marshall, and Mount Vernon High Schools.

LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CAREER AND TRANSITION SERVICES

https://www.lcps.org/o/doss/page/career-transition-services 571-252-1200

Career and Transition Services offers post high school programs for students aged 18-22 who require additional training and support, LCPS offers two post-Applied Studies Diploma programs:

Community and Schools Together (CAST): This program provides real-world experience and skill development in a variety of community settings. Students work with transition teachers and job coaches to learn workplace readiness, independent living skills, and more. CAST offers approximately 50 placements each year. Applications are due in the spring.

Project SEARCH: This intensive one-year program, offered in partnership with DARS, provides on-the-job training and experience at a local business. Students must be eligible for competitive employment to qualify. Applications are typically due by March 1st.

PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CAREER AND TRANSITION SERVICES

https://www.pwcs.edu/academics___programs/special_education/career_and_transition/index 703-791-7200

If your student is attending a private school rather than participating in the public school system, visit our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#transition to learn about transition resources.

Exploring School Resources and Adult Service Providers

All of the Northern Virginia public school systems host transition related resource fairs throughout the year to help families learn about adult providers and resources. High school transition representatives can also give you more information on the following adult service events held throughout the year. All school systems also operate a family or parent resource center that offers free webinars, confidential consultations, a lending library, and resources to help adults support the success of all students, including those with learning challenges, special needs, and disabilities.

Moving on to Life Resource Fair – for students and their families transitioning from high school to adult services. It is held annually in the fall hosted by FCPS.

Flash Forward – focuses on Post-Secondary Education & Employment Options. Held annually in the spring and hosted by FCPS.

Middle School Transition Fair - held annually in the spring and hosted by FCPS. This event provides information to elementary and middle school students and their families as they prepare for the transition to high school. Students and families can explore CTS elective courses, programs, services, and postsecondary supports.

Arlington, Alexandria, Loudoun, and Prince William County Public Schools also hold transition fairs during the school year. Contact the Parent Resources Center in your city or county to learn more.

Northern Virginia's Developmental Disability Group (NOVA IDD) is a free online community started by families for families at https://novaddgroupgenius.com/ and offers an online resource to connect to school and service providers.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS:

ALEXANDRIA CITY PRC

https://www.acps.k12.va.us/departments/teaching-learning-leadership/office-of-specialized-in-struction/special-education-parent-resource-center

Anne R. Lipnick Special Education Parent Resource Center

Alexandria City High School Minnie Howard Campus 3801 West Braddock Road, Room 134 Alexandria, VA 22302

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRC

https://www.apsva.us/parent-resource-center 2110 Washington Boulevard Arlington, VA 22204 703-228-7239 prc@apsva.us

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

https://www.fcps.edu/frc

DUNN LORING CENTER FOR PARENT SERVICES

2334 Gallows Road, Rm 105, Dunn Loring, VA 22027 frc@fcps.edu **703-204-3941**

LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENT RESOURCE SERVICES

https://www.lcps.org/o/lcps/page/parent-resource-services 21000 Education Court, Ashburn, VA 20148 571-252-1000

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

https://www.pwcs.edu/academics___programs/special_education/parent_resource_center/index
Kelly Leadership Center
Second Floor, Suite 2200, 14715 Bristow Road, Manassas, VA 20112

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703-791-7935

30 TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE | WORKING WITH YOUR HIGH SCHOOL

DARS (DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES) WHILE IN SCHOOL

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION REHABILITATION AND TRANSITION PROGRAM (PERT)

The Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) offers PERT, a school-to-work transition initiative administered through the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC).

WILSON WORKFORCE AND REHABILITATION CENTER (WWRC)

https://www.wwrc.virginia.gov/PERT.htm

Admissions Phone: **540-332-7065**Tour Requests Phone: **540-332-7065**

The PERT program provides public high school students with disabilities comprehensive evaluations to assess vocational strengths and abilities, independent living skills, and social and interpersonal skills; situational assessments to assess vocational interests, refine vocational skills, develop work habits, and determine objectives to achieve vocational and independent living skills goals. To apply for PERT, contact the transition coordinator in your high school. You would need to have an open case with Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to be considered. Eligibility requirements include that students must be age 16 and older, with a full scale IQ of 60 or evidence of good adaptive skills; the student must be returning to school the fall after the PERT session (in other words, your student cannot be in the last year of school). For a full list of admission requirements, go to https://www.wwrc.virginia.gov/PERT.htm.

To see the full list of PERT Programming Options and Specialized Programming Offerings, visit https://www.wwrc.virginia.gov/downloads/22.9.22%20PERT%20Program%20Options.pdf.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS)

While in school, contact your local DARS office https://www.dars.virginia.gov to apply for Pre-Employment and Transition Services (ETS). The Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) expanded opportunities to provide more services to students with disabilities at an earlier age to better prepare them for employment after transitioning from the school system to adult life.

There is no eligibility determination process to access Pre-ETS. The only requirements are that the student must be enrolled in secondary, post-secondary, or other recognized education programs and be between the ages of 14-22, receiving special education or related services, OR an individual with a disability for the purposes of Section 504.

Pre-ETS consists of a set of 5 Core Services, including: Job Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Education and Training Options, Workplace Readiness Training, and Instruction in Self-Advocacy. Many of these services are offered by DARS Community Partners. For a list of community partners, visit our Resource Library that includes a handout on Understanding and Connecting to Adult Service Providers https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#transition

TO ACCESS PRE-ETS:

- · Contact your student's Transition Specialist at their high school or contact your local DARS office
- There must be a need for one or more of the five pre-ETS
- Signed consent from parent, guardian, or adult student
- Provide documentation identifying that the individual meets the definition of a student with a disability (ex: IEP, 504)
- · Satisfactory progress: availability and ability to participate in services being offered

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| NOTES PRIMARY TRANSITION GOALS? | ASSESSMENTS DONE AND BY WHOM? |
| PRIMARY TRANSITION GOALS? | ASSESSMENTS DONE AND BY WHOM? |
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| LIFE SKILL GOALS? | CAREER GOALS? |
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| TRANSITION EXPERTS YOU SPOKE WITH? | YOUR TRANSITION COORDINATOR? |
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HIGH SCHOOL VS. COLLEGE

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

| HIGH SCHOOL (IDEIA) | COLLEGE (ADA) |
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| An IEP drives all accommodations and services, involves the teachers and counselors, and always requires a parent's signature for students under age 18. | There is no educational plan, and instructors are not contacted except by the student. Parents often may not receive a student's grades without written permission from the student. |
| A student qualifies for public education because he/she is the appropriate age and has a disability. | Otherwise qualified means that a student must meet all entrance and academic requirements, whether or not they receive accommodations. |
| Under IDEA, children with disabilities are entitled to a "free and appropriate public education." | Students have civil rights for which they must advocate to ensure equal access to higher education. No one is entitled to anything. |
| Public schools are responsible for appropriate assessment of a student's disabilities. | Colleges are not required to assess students, but can expect students to provide proof of disabilities with accepted guidelines. |
| Student placement is determined by the student's IEP team. Placement must be in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate for the student. | Students are integrated in the college community, and the environment may be adjusted through accommodations. Colleges do not deliberate to select an environment in advance. |
| A student's disability and needs are documented in his/her IEP. This information is available for staff involved with the student. | Need to Know: Students must give express permission for college professors to be notified of their disabilities. Students must initiate all actions toward receiving accommodations with each individual professor, for each course, for each semester. Students have the civil right to refuse accommodations they do not want or need. |
| Assessment, physical or occupational therapy, speech and language services, personal care and/or any other therapy is provided by the school, as outlined in the student's educational plan. | College students are responsible for any and all personal services, such as personal or medical care, just as if they were living independently and not attending college. |
| A student may receive untimed tests if the need is documented in his/her educational plan. | Untimed tests are not considered reasonable. Time extensions may be reasonable (typically time and one-half, but no more than double time). |

For more information on the ADA visit The Mid Atlantic ADA Center's website at https://www.adainfo.org.

The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center provides guidance and resources to help families understand the rights of students with disabilities as they transition from high school to adult life. They offer information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), how it applies in postsecondary education, employment, and community living, and can help families navigate accessibility and accommodation issues. Their staff can answer questions, provide training, and connect you with tools to support your child's independence and inclusion.

COLLEGE RESOURCES & EDUCATION SUPPORTS

Preparing for college can be an exciting yet complex journey for families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). With the right information and support, students with IDD can access higher education opportunities that align with their strengths, goals, and needs. This section provides guidance on researching and navigating available resources, including inclusive college programs, disability support services, and advocacy organizations. By understanding these pathways, families can empower their children to pursue higher education with confidence and success.

CAMPUS DISABILITY RESOURCE (CEDAR) DATABASE

Search disability-related information from degree-granting colleges and universities across the United States. This is an online clearinghouse on post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities.

https://www.cedardatabase.org

NATIONAL COLLEGE CENTER FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The NCCSD is a federally-funded national center with information and resources for future and current college students with disabilities, including those in part-time programs and graduate students. NCCSD works with students, their families, teachers, professors, and anyone with questions about disability and higher education. https://nccsd.ici.umn.edu

THINK COLLEGE

Provides resources, technical assistance and training related to college options for students with intellectual disabilities and manages a national listing of college programs for students with intellectual disabilities in the United States. www.thinkcollege.net

LOCAL PROGRAMS

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Disability Services

https://www.nvcc.edu/student-resources/accessibility/index.html

NOVA hosts supplemental, fee for service programsat selected NOVA campuses that provide specialized resources and supports for students with disabilities.

COLLEGE STEPS

www.collegesteps.org

Annandale, Loudoun, Prince William, and Manassas NOVA Campuses

This program partners with NOVA to support students with disabilities, ages 17-26, with their college pursuits through peer coaching and on-campus support services. Hourly fee for service model.

1-888-732-1022 or contactus@collegesteps.org

ADAPTIVE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (ACE) PROGRAM

https://www.neuroscience-inc.com/adaptive=college-experience/

The ACE program supports students with Autism. The focus is on adaptive skills for a college setting, including organization, self-regulation and social skills.

703-787-9090

THE MASON LIFE PROGRAM AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

https://masonlife.gmu.edu

is a 4-year post-secondary comprehensive transition program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who desire a university experience in a supportive academic environment.

703-993-3905

MASON AUTISM SUPPORT INITIATIVE (MASI) AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

https://ds.gmu.edu/masil

Is a comprehensive, fee-based program that provides additional support services to students on the Autism Spectrum beyond typical higher education accommodations. MASI uses a teambased approach to assist students in achieving their goals in college.

MASON EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING PROGRAM

https://ds.gmu.edu/efp

is a program offered through Disability Services that provides individualized services beyond standard accommodations for students diagnosed with disabilities related to executive functioning. Through the program, students have access to weekly meetings with a Learning Coach. Learning Coaches are typically graduate students or professionals with experience in a related field and provide up to 3 hours a week of support.

COLLEGE LIVING EXPERIENCE

www.experiencecle.com

Provides post-secondary supports to young adults with varying disabilities.

Montgomery College, 401 North Washington Street, Suite 420

Rockville, MD

COLLEGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (CIP)

www.cipworldwide.org

A comprehensive post-secondary support program for young adults on the autism spectrum and for those with learning differences.

Below are local one-on-one fee-based support options available to assist families in the transition to higher education. Personalized resources, such as coaches and mentorship programs, provide tailored guidance to help students build independence, navigate academic and social expectations, and access necessary accommodations.

BASS EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, LLC

www.basseducationalservices.com

Provides educational consultation for families and students with learning differences.

SPECTRUM TRANSITION COACHING

https://spectrumtransitioncoaching.com

Offers one-on-one support to families and young adults with Autism to navigate the transition from school to college and adult life.

ACCESSIBLE COLLEGE

https://accessiblecollege.com

Provides college preparation and transition support for students with physical disabilities and health conditions.

| NOTEO | |
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| NOTES COLLEGES EXPLORED? | DECISIONS? |
| | DECISION SUBMITTED? |
| TOURS? | MOVE-IN DATE? |
| | ACCOMMODATIONS NEEDED? |
| APPLICATIONS DUE? | MET WITH OFFICE OF DISABILITY? |
| APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED? | ACCOMMODATIONS REQUESTED? |

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PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SERVICES BEYOND SCHOOL

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY MEDICAID WAIVERS

This section provides a basic overview of Medicaid Waivers. For more comprehensive information, watch recorded webinars on our YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/@VideosatTheArcofNoVA and visit our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#waivers. You can also call Virginia's Waiver assistance hotline at 1-844-603-9248 or visit the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services' website at http://www.mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/.

WHAT IS A WAIVER?

A Waiver is a long-term support system for someone who will have long-term care needs. Once you're awarded a Waiver, you will have access to a menu of services offered by your Waiver. Frequently used services include attendants who work one-on-one with the person with a disability, respite care so parents can have a break from care provision, group home supports where a person with a disability lives in a home shared by other people with disabilities, long term employment or meaningful day services, assistive technology, environmental modifications, nursing, and more. These services are offered at no or very low cost.

Waivers are funded by Medicaid and are often called Medicaid Waivers. The person with a disability must qualify for long-term care Medicaid to use a Waiver. As of 2025, this means that the person with a disability cannot have more than \$2,000 in assets in their name (no cap if under 18 years old), unless those assets are in a Special Needs Trust or ABLE Account, and they cannot earn more than (in 2025) \$2,901 per month. The income limit generally increases each year due to Cost-of-Living Adjustments. The person with a disability will get Medicaid once they get an active Waiver (not when they are placed on a waiting list).

WHO NEEDS A WAIVER?

People who need assistance with taking care of themselves, managing their environment, working toward greater independence, or maintaining a job because of a disability should consider Waivers. It is the only public funding for long term developmental disability supports.

WHY SHOULD I APPLY?

Anyone with a developmental disability should apply. You will need a psychological evaluation with an IQ score to apply. Submit the evaluations that you have already on hand and if a new evaluation is requested and you need a practitioner, reach out to The Arc of Northern Virginia's Information and Referral Portal at https://thearcofnova.org/program/info-referral/#portal.

Even though some Waivers have waiting lists, if you qualify for a Waiver, you will eventually receive services. As you grow and change, you can use more or fewer Waiver services to meet your needs. The Waiver should grow with you over time and provides the supports you need to be as independent as possible in your community. You can apply for both Waivers if you think you may be eligible for both. Then, you'll move from one to another with more services as they're made available.

Also, as a result of a Department of Justice settlement agreement with Virginia in 2012, if you're on the waiting list for either an ID or DD Waiver, you can apply for up to \$500-\$1,000 each year to purchase supports you need to be independent and safe. This is called the **Individual and Family Supports Program (IFSP)**. Information, applications, and instructions can be found at https://mylifemycom-munityvirginia.org/resources. You can go to https://dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/ifsp to receive routine emails from DBHDS to stay updated on when the program opens each year.

HOW DO I GET A WAIVER?

Virginia currently has two main types of Waivers. One type, the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waivers, are most commonly used by people with developmental disabilities. They're called the Community Living Waiver, the Family and Individual Supports Waiver, and the Building Independence Waiver. People with disabilities and medical support needs often use the Commonwealth Coordinated Care (CCC) Plus Waiver. The DD Waivers are far more robust and offer many more services than the CCC Plus Waiver. Follow the general guidelines below to figure out which Waiver(s) may be right for you, how to apply, and what to expect.

SERVICES COVERED UNDER THE WAIVERS

THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (DD) WAIVERS

There are 3 DD Waivers:

- 1. Community Living
- 2. Family and Individual Supports
- 3. Building Independence Waivers

These waivers cover support in a variety of residential settings, including hourly staff at the home of a child's family. The Community Living Waiver is the only waiver that provides 24 hour staffed group home settings. These three waivers also cover a variety of employment and meaningful daytime supports for people no longer in school. Some additional services include respite care, in-home supports, companion care, assistive technology, environmental modifications, therapeutic consultation, non-emergency medical transportation, private duty nursing, skilled nursing, and Personal Emergency Response System (PERS).

The Community Living Waiver is a comprehensive waiver that includes 24/7 residential services for those who require that level of support. It also includes services and supports for adults and children, including those with intense medical and/or behavioral needs.

The Family and Individual Supports Waiver is designed to support individuals living with their families, friends, or in their own homes. It supports individuals with some medical or behavioral needs and is available to both adults and children.

The Building Independence Waiver supports adults 18 and older who are able to live in the community with minimal supports. This waiver does not include 24/7 residential services. Individuals will own, lease, or control their own living arrangements and supports may need to be complemented by non-waiver funded rent subsidies.

Individuals receiving waiver services are assessed every two years (as a child) and every three years (as an adult) with an assessment called the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) to measure the intensity of their support needs. People can move between these three DD Waivers if their needs change over time.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are criteria everyone must meet to be eligible for a Medicaid DD Waiver:

- 1. Functioning ability: This is determined by the Virginia Intellectual Developmental Eligibility Survey (VIDES). The VIDES has one test for children aged 0-3, one for children ages 3-18, and one for adults. The surveys assess the person's need for assistance with a variety of daily living and independence skill activities. Families are encouraged to review the VIDES assessment available on our website prior to the intake. You can review copies of the VIDES assessment in our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#waivers
- 2. Diagnosis: Persons applying for a Waiver must meet the diagnostic eligibility requirements for the DD Waivers. This means that a person must have a developmental disability as defined in 37.2-100 of the Code of Virginia.
 - a. "Developmental Disability" means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, or a combination of mental and physical impairments, other than a sole diagnosis of mental illness; (ii) is manifested before the individual reaches 22 years of age; (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely; (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independence living, or economic self-sufficiency; and (v) reflects the individual's needs for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic services, individualized support, or other forms of assistance later are lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated. An individual from birth to age nine, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting three or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) if the individual without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.
- 3. Financial: If the functioning and diagnostic criteria are met, then the child's income and assets are considered. Special Needs Trusts and ABLE Accounts are not considered when testing financial eligibility. People over 18 have an asset cap of \$2,000. Everyone receiving a Waiver has a monthly income cap of 300% of the current Social Security Supplemental Security Income amount (SSI is \$967 in 2025), so max monthly income is \$2,901. The income limit for SSI generally increases each year due to Cost-of-Living Adjustments.

If you qualify, you will be put on a Waiting List. You will be given one of the of the three disability Waivers based upon the type of services you need.

HOW LONG IS THE WAIT?

The Developmental Disability Waivers have a waiting list based upon urgency of need. People in Priority One of urgency need services within the year, people in Priority Two need services in 1–5 years, and people in Priority Three need services several years out. Wait time is unpredictable and many people on the priority one list wait many years for a waiver. As your life circumstances change, for example, behavioral or medical needs change, you or your spouse become ill, become unemployed, etc., notify your support coordinator, as these situations will increase your urgency of need for support services.

You can be on the waiting list for a Developmental Disabilities Waiver and apply for the CCC Plus Waiver, assuming you are eligible for the CCC Plus Waiver as well. Many people do this because the CCC Plus Waiver has no waiting list and can provide some interim supports.

Visit our Resource Library https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#waivers for a handout on "Navigating the DD Waiver Waiting List"

THE COMMONWEALTH COORDINATED CARE (CCC) PLUS WAIVER

Covers personal care, respite care, medication monitoring, private duty nursing, assistive technology, environmental modifications, and the Personal Emergency Response (PERS) system. Personal care support hours may be approved up to a maximum of 56 hours per week and cannot exceed 480 hours per state fiscal year.

To see if you may be eligible for the CCC Plus Waiver, you can utilize a self-assessment on-line eligibility tool offered by Mom's in Motion at https://momsinmotion.net/commonwealth-coordinated-care-plus-eligibility-self-help-tool. To be eligible for this waiver, the person must have a disability and medical nursing needs, as assessed by the Virginia Uniform Instrument (UAI). You can view the UAI in our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#waivers.

TO APPLY FOR THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES WAIVERS, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD

- Alexandria City CSB: 703-746-5999
- Arlington DHS/IDD Services: 703-228-1700
- Fairfax/Falls Church CSB/IDS: 703-324-4400
- Loudoun CSB: 703-777-0597
- Prince William CSB: 703792-7800

If not in Northern Virginia, visit http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/community-services-boards-csbs to find your local CSB

TO APPLY FOR THE CCC PLUS WAIVER CONTACT YOUR COUNTY'S DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

- Alexandria City 571-213-7963 / 703-746-5999 (if over 18)
- Arlington 703-228-1297, / 703-228-1700 (if over 18)
- Fairfax/Falls Church 703-324-7948
- Loudoun: 703-737-8949
- Prince William: 703-792-7500

If not in Northern Virginia, visit http://www.dss.virginia.gov/localagency/index.cgi to find your local DSS

| NOTES | |
|--|--|
| DATE APPLIED FOR DD WAIVER? | DATE SENT IN WAIVER PAPERWORK? |
| DATE VIDES COMPLETED? | DATE APPLIED FOR CCC PLUS WAIVER? |
| WAIVER STATUS ? (waiting list priority or have Waiver) | NAME OF WAIVER SUPPORT COORDINATOR? |
| LAST TIME TALKED TO CSB? | ON IFSP EMAIL LIST IF ON THE WAITING LIST? |
| YEARS APPLIED FOR IFSP AND WHAT REQUESTED? | |

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY PROGRAMS

You may begin the application process for Social Security benefits the month after your child turns 18. The first step is to determine eligibility for any benefit program; the Social Security Administration (SSA) will decide which program is appropriate. For webinar presentations on SSI/SSDI visit The Arc of Northern Virginia's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/@VideosatTheArcofNoVA.

SSI VS. SSDI

For both Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), a person must meet SSA's definition of disability. Disability is defined as the inability to engage in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) by reason of any medical (physical and/or mental or blind) impairment. Your disability must have lasted or be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months or result in death. For 2025, the wage limit for the SGA is \$1,620 gross income/month.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

SSI is a cash assistance program for those with limited income AND who are either 65 years old or older or blind or disabled. Adult SSI beneficiaries must have limited income and resources (\$2,000 in assets); parents' income does not count for adult applicants. You do not have to have any work history. Monthly benefit payments are determined by the current benefit rate (\$967 a month in 2025), minus any "countable income." If eligible for SSI, you will also be eligible for Medicaid. ** Note: It can take close to one year to begin receiving payment, but back payments will go back to the date of the approved application.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE (SSDI)

While SSI is a needs-based program, SSDI is an insurance program with benefits dependent on previous payments into the system. In other words, SSDI beneficiaries must have worked enough (or their parents or spouses must have worked long enough) to have made contributions into FICA. Monthly benefit payments are based on the worker's lifetime average earnings covered by Social Security.

APPLYING FOR BENEFITS

The steps for applying are:

- 1. Start with a disability report. Go to the website at http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm and click on How to Apply (You may also call 1-800-772-1213) to get started. Complete as much information here as you can prior to your appointment at the local office. The application asks for names, addresses and telephone numbers of doctors and therapists who have treated your child and information on any hospitalizations. More descriptive medical records, such as a letter explaining a diagnosis or evaluations by therapists or schools can be brought to the intake meeting (make copies!). If you do not have access to a computer, you can request an application be mailed to you when you call the 800 number. You cannot fully complete the application for benefits online; you must request an appointment online or by calling Social Security.
- 2. Call Social Security. To make an appointment, call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) Monday through Friday between 8am to 7pm, or contact your local Social Security office or schedule online at https://www.ssa.gov/manage-benefits/make-an-appointment. Hold times can be very long. You will be greeted by an automated answering attendant, who will prompt you to state why you are calling; say "Apply for SSI". The auto attendant will ask for you to say or key in your child's Social Security number. You will then be directed to a representative. During the phone interview, the representative will take information and enter it into a computer, which will secure the date of the application.
 - Paperwork will be mailed to you. Complete and return within the allotted timeframe.
 - The document generated during the phone interview will also be mailed, to be signed for accuracy.
 - Before mailing anything back to the agency, be sure to make copies.
- 3. Set up a screening interview. During the previous phone interview, the representative will set up a screening, which continues the application process, at your local Social Security office. If outside of the Northern Virginia area, visit https://www.ssa.gov/locator to find your local office. SSA office hours are Monday-Friday 9:00-4:00.

ALEXANDRIA OFFICE

5510 Cherokee Ave., Suite 200 Alexandria, VA 22312 **800-472-2402**

FAIRFAX OFFICE

10800 Park Ridge Drive, Suite 100 Reston, VA 20190 **800-829-3158**

MANASSAS OFFICE

9500 Center St. Manassas, VA 20110 **800-325-0778**

- **4. Go to the screening interview.** Bring to the intake interview any and all information to prove your child's age, citizenship, disability, and lack of assets/resources:
 - Original birth certificate (or other proof of age and citizenship) and Social Security card
 - Documentation to verify your address
 - Copy of special needs trust, ABLE Account, guardianship and/or conservator order and letter of qualification
 - Individual Education Program (IEP)
 - Income slips if your child has income
 - Information on any assets your child owns like a savings account, investments, title to a car or life
 insurance. These cannot total more than \$2,000 for SSI benefits (unless held in a special needs
 trust or an ABLE Account). Note that for programs with income limits, SSA considers parents'
 income and assets up until your child turns 18; individuals over 18 years of age are considered
 independent households.
 - If you have not completed the application online, bring the required medical records and contact information to the screening.
 - Checkbook or other papers that show a bank account number to have benefits deposited directly to a Representative Payee account or an ABLE Account.
 - A signed rent agreement between parent and child (to receive the full benefit). SSI is intended to cover expenses like rent and utilities. It is recommended that you charge your adult child rent if he or she lives in the family home. Note that as of 2024, SSI recipients may receive family assistance with covering most food costs without penalty. A recipient must be spending at least current Presumed Maximum Value (PMV) on rent and utilities to avoid a penalty or reduction in benefits. For much more detailed information on calculating rent in the family home, keeping receipts, and a sample lease agreement, visit our resource library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#social-security.
- 5. Wait for eligibility determination. The agency will send your Disability Report Form and medical history to the Disability Determination Service (DDS). DDS may or may not request more information, such as work history, when the disability began, and what treatment has been given. DDS may also request, on behalf of SSA, a medical or psychological exam (SSA pays for the exam by a physician chosen by SSA). A decision is made and in 2025, decisions are taking 9-10 months on average. If you are denied, you have 60 days to appeal.
- 6. Set up a Representative Payee account. While applying, you will need to set up a Representative Payee account at a bank; be sure to title the account correctly (SSA has suggested wording). Automatic deposit of benefits is required. Alternatively, you can also set up an ABLE Account for deposits from SSA. For more information on ABLE Accounts, visit https://www.ablenow.com/ and visit our YouTube Channel for a webinar on this topic at https://www.youtube.com/@VideosatTheArcofNoVA.

Note that having power of attorney, being an authorized representative or having a joint bank account with the beneficiary does not give you the legal authority to negotiate and manage the beneficiary's Social Security and/or SSI payments. For more information on being a Representative Payee, visit our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#social-security and https://www.ssa.gov/payee.

THE REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE

A Representative Payee (Rep Payee) is appointed by SSA to receive Social Security and/or SSI benefits for someone who requires support managing his or her money. Rep Payees should be comfortable handling financial records and be trusted to keep in mind the best interests of the disabled beneficiary. To be designated a Rep Payee, contact the local SSA office (see above). You must then submit an application, form SSA-11 and documents to prove your identity. SSA requires you to complete the payee application in a face-to-face interview. A payee must keep records of how the payments are spent or saved, and be able to make all records available for review if requested by SSA.

Tips for Representative Payees

- A payee must report any earnings to Social Security. This includes work income, one-time payments, child support, trust payments, etc. SSI is a needs based month-to-month benefit. Any delay in reporting to SSA could mean an overpayment of benefits. Keep a record that you sent documentation to Social Security.
- When you call SSA (1-800-772-1213), keep a record: date, name of the person you spoke to, what you asked, what they told you.
- Make copies of all documents you give to SSA.
- Promptly open and read ALL mail sent by SSA. When SSA gives a deadline response date, compliance
 within that date is required. Seek help immediately if needed. Keep ALL paperwork, letters, and mailing
 envelopes in your file.
- Report by mail, online, or using the SSA app. Keep wage records in your file.
- If a person receives SSI and/or Medicaid, remember to keep all resources/assets below \$2000 in any month to maintain eligibility.
- Everyone should have their own my Social Security account needed to report earnings, apply for benefits and track application status.
- When a major life change occurs (address, marriage, employment, loss of job) report to SSA immediately, both to the 1-800-772-1213 and to the local SSA field office.
- If you need help managing Social Security and benefits, work with a benefits counselor
 to help you manage this. Benefits counselors are available at the Endependence Center
 https://endependence.org/services/benefits-counseling and the Endependence Center
 of Northern Virginia (ECNV) https://www.ecnv.org.

For additional information on Reporting Tips for Beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Programs, visit the Resource Library on our website at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#social-security.

If you need additional guidance navigating the application process or other Social Security related questions, reach out to us through The Arc of Northern Virginia's I&R Portal at https://thearcofnova.org/program/info-referral/#portal for resources on fee based services that can provide one on one support such as Inclusion Consultants https://inclusionconsultants.com.

| NOTES | |
|---|---|
| CHECKED TO ENSURE YOU HAVE ALL OF THE NEEDED DOCUMENTS? | LEASE PREPARED? COMPARABLE RENTS READY? |
| REP PAYEE ACCOUNT SET UP? BANK NAME AND ACCOUNT INFO? | DATE APPLIED FOR SSI? |
| NOTIFIED ALL LISTED DOCTORS THEY MAY GET CALLED? | DATE OF SCHEDULED CALLS? |
| DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND WHEN? WHERE ARE COPIES OF SUBMITTED INFO KEPT? | REP PAYEE CONFIRMED? |

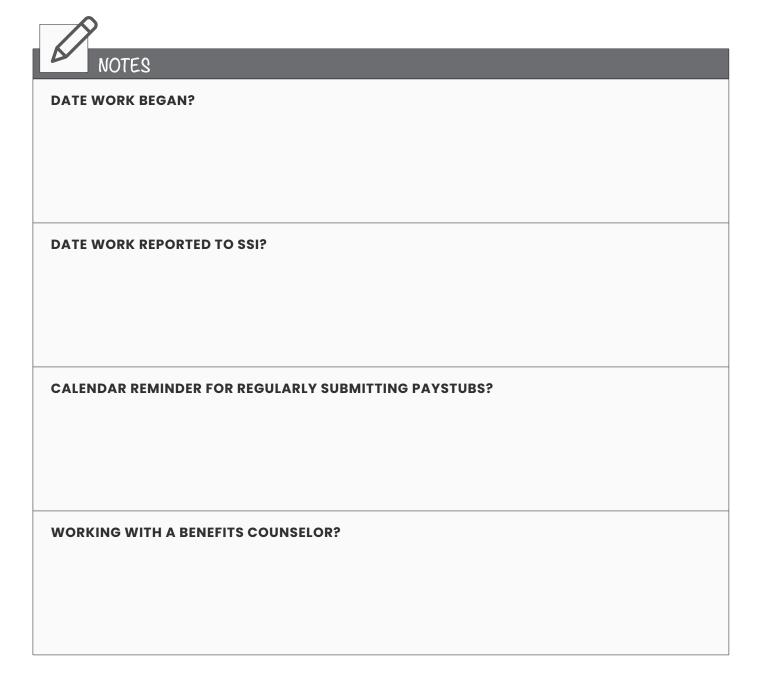
HOUSING AND SSI

In general, at least one-third of your SSI benefit is assumed to be paying for housing expenses (rent or mortgage, utilities, property insurance/renter's insurance, etc.) and the other two-thirds for other eligible expenses like food and clothing. If monies from a special needs trust are used to purchase a home with a mortgage, and the trust makes monthly mortgage payments, then the beneficiary's SSI payments will be reduced by about one-third each month (the portion of SSI associated with housing).

** Note: this is not the case if you use an ABLE Account. ABLE accounts can pay rent without penalty.

Whether the home is purchased outright or with a mortgage, SSI payments will be reduced by slightly more than one-third if the trust pays for household expenses such as taxes, heat, electricity, water, sewer and trash collection.

See https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0500835300 and https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/ Inx/0500835901



ENSURING HEALTH INSURANCE

Having adequate health insurance is an important element in securing your child's financial as well as physical health. Adult children with a lifelong disability may stay on their parents' health insurance indefinitely (non-disabled children are not covered after age 26). Steps you can take now include:

- · Applying for Supplemental Security Income for your child with a disability. Once approved, apply for Medicaid.
- Exploring options and costs of health insurance for your child once you are no longer working.

PRIVATE EMPLOYER HEALTH PLANS

Dependents with a lifelong disability may remain under your employer-sponsored policy beyond age 26. Contact your health insurance provider to check about this option.

MEDICAID

Medicaid is a federal health insurance program available to low-income persons, the elderly and people with a disability. One way to obtain Medicaid is to qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If you meet the requirements for SSI, you will meet those for Medicaid.

You can have private health insurance and still be covered by Medicaid or FAMIS Plus (excluding Plan First). If you have other insurance, the other insurance plan pays for medical services first. Having other health insurance does not change the Medicaid co-payment amount, if one is required, that you will pay to providers as a Medicaid enrollee.

Note: If you or your loved one has a developmental disability, is not receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and has a Medicaid Waiver prior to age 18, then there will be a need to have a "disability determination" done before the 18th birthday to ensure there is no lapse in Medicaid Waiver services as the move from childhood to adult Medicaid occurs. For more detailed information on this topic, visit our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#medicaid.

HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM PAYMENT PROGRAM

HIPP is a Medicaid program that helps families pay for employer sponsored health insurance premiums. It is for families with at least one person who received Medicaid. If your child has Medicaid, the Health Insurance Premium Payment (HIPP) can help pay all or part of your health insurance premiums.

Your health insurance plan may cover services that are not covered by Medicaid. HIPP allows you to have health insurance you might not otherwise be able to afford. HIPP evaluates the services covered under your health insurance plan and compares the average Medicaid cost for your Medicaid eligible family member to the cost of your health insurance premium.

Information is available on the DMAS website at

https://coverva.dmas.virginia.gov/learn/premium-assistance/health-insurance-premiumpayment-hipp-programs or call the HIPP Program at 800-432-5924.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

Download a copy of the booklet "Medicaid and FAMIS -PLUS Handbook" at https://dmas.virginia.gov/ media/5019/medical-assistance-handbook-final.pdf



CREATING AN ESTATE PLAN

All parents should have a will, and those who have children with a disability also need to create a **family-funded** special needs trust to protect any public benefits that child may receive.

CREATING A WILL

A will is critical to ensuring that your wishes are carried out regarding how and to whom your assets are divided after your death. If you have a child with a disability, this is doubly important. Find an attorney who specializes in special needs planning; he or she will be able to address the unique needs of each of your children and not jeopardize the benefits or services of your child with a disability and /or the relationship between the siblings and family members. A list of attorneys can be found in our Provider Directory on our website at https://thearcofnova.org/resources/business-directory. While many wills create family trusts, to avoid jeopardizing the benefits or services of your child with a disability you need to create a separate special needs trust.

REVIEWING BENEFICIARIES

In addition to naming a (third-party/family-funded) special needs trust as the beneficiary for monies inherited through a will, you should also review the beneficiary designations for resources considered outside your will, including:

Employer provided life insurance (if both parents work and have insurance through their jobs, be sure to check beneficiaries for both); Private life insurance policies (again, check beneficiaries for all policies), Individual retirement accounts, including Roth IRAs* 401K and 403(b) accounts*, SEP Plans*, Thrift Savings Plans*; individual checking and savings accounts; Brokerage accounts; Savings Bonds. You will need to use specific language to designate these monies to the SNT. Please check with the trustee to determine proper wording.

Special cautions apply when designating a special needs trust as a beneficiary of one or more of your retirement accounts (those marked with an *). The document creating the special needs trust (whether it is a will or a stand-alone trust) needs to state that the trust is "an accumulation trust" for the purpose of receiving distributions from retirement accounts. This comes into play once your child with a disability turns 18 and may be eligible for SSI as an adult. After age 18, an adult receiving SSI can only have \$2,000 in assets. Typically, when someone inherits a retirement account, they have to start receiving periodic payments from the account which would most likely disqualify them for federal benefits such as SSI and Medicaid.

If siblings, other family members, or friends wish to leave your loved one money, be sure to inform them that they must designate the special needs trust as the beneficiary. Give them the exact name of the trust and the date it was created.

SPECIAL NEEDS TRUSTS

SPECIAL NEEDS TRUSTS (SNT)

Special needs trusts allow families to provide for the future financial stability of their loved one with a disability. Since some federal benefits programs impose limits on beneficiary's assets and resources, your son or daughter could be disqualified from benefits if he or she received, for example, an unexpected inheritance or proceeds from a lawsuit. However, the law allows families to set up a special needs trust (SNT) that can act as a repository for an inheritance, stocks, property, insurance settlements or other assets without a loss of public benefits.

If your family member with a disability receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid (or you are contemplating having them apply for these benefits), creating a special needs trust is a necessity as these programs limit your loved one to just \$2,000 in assets to remain eligible.

In the event that one receives an unexpected inheritance, or other forms of unexpected income, these would be directed to what we refer to as a self-funded trust (aka a first party special needs trust). While this is a feasible option for someone who is over-resourced or needed assistance managing their finances, this is often a last resort type of trust given the requirement of a Medicaid payback; in contrast, a family-funded trust is not subject to a Medicaid payback and therefore it's beneficial to elect this route if an option to plan for the future is available.

TWO KINDS OF TRUSTS

Family-Funded Trusts (third-party trusts) are established by parents or with an authorized non-profit, such as The Arc of Northern Virginia, for their child with disabilities. The person establishing the trust, usually called the grantor, chooses to make some of his or her own assets available for the benefit of the beneficiary (person with disabilities).

These trusts may be funded during the parents' lifetime or after the parents' lifetime for anyone electing to provide monies to the person with a disability without directly paying funds to their pocket and therefore jeopardizing means-tested benefits. You can contribute to them while you are still alive or you can fund them upon the death of the parent(s), friend, etc. with an inheritance, life insurance policy or transfer from another trust.

In a family-funded trust, the Grantors decide who will inherit any funds remaining after the Beneficiary passes away. Frequently grantors leave the funds to other family members, including siblings, as well as, to charitable organizations.

Self-funded Trusts (first-party trusts) are established by the beneficiary, parent, grandparent, guardian, or court order and are funded with resources that belong to the person with disabilities. Common sources of funding for first-party trusts are structured settlements, lump-sum paybacks from Social Security, irrevocably assigned child support for an adult child with disabilities and Survivor Benefits, and inheritances that mistakenly were given directly to the individual with the disability. The first-party SNT involves a mandatory Medicaid-payback clause which means any funds remaining in the trust after the Beneficiary's death must first reimburse Medicaid for any Medicaid-funded care the individual received during his or her lifetime. In The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust program, there is one exception to the Medicaid payback requirement: Instead of electing to satisfy the Medicaid payback, grantors can elect to leave the remaining funds to The Foundation of The Arc of Northern Virginia's Personal Support Self-Funded Trust.

While many legal matters can be undertaken with a lawyer with a general background, SNTs require the services of an elder law or special needs attorney with expertise in disabilities and this particular kind of trust.

SETTING UP A TRUST

Special needs trusts can, and should be, set up as early as possible as part of the parents' overall estate planning.

For either option, you will have to pay fees to set up the trust and, possibly, to manage the funds. The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust program allows for a trust to be established while remaining unfunded, or funding can be elected with a minimum of \$500 seed money.

USES OF TRUST FUNDS

Funds from a special needs trust are usually not distributed directly to the beneficiary, as that may jeopardize some government benefits. Instead, they are usually disbursed to third parties who provide goods and services for the use and enjoyment of the beneficiary. Funds from the trust can be used for a variety of life-enhancing expenditures without compromising your loved one's eligibility for government benefits:

Here are some examples:

- Education and tutoring
- Out-of-pocket medical & dental costs not covered by insurance
- Transportation (including purchase of a vehicle)
- Maintenance of vehicles, car insurance
- Materials for a hobby or recreational activity
- Trips, vacations, hotels, airline tickets
- Entertainment such as movies or ballgames

- Computers, videos, furniture, or electronics
- Athletic training or competitions
- Special dietary needs
- Clothing
- Housing costs (although this may reduce SSI benefits)
- The list is extensive!

Acting as Trustee

A trustee is the person who oversees trust assets and administers the trust provisions, including investing, account reporting and tax reporting, check writing, and disbursements. The Arc of Northern Virginia's trustee is Key Bank while The Arc manages the trusts and provides day to day client relations. Professional legal and investment advice are crucial for trustees administering a special needs trust themselves.

For more information about being a trustee, download a free handbook at: http://www.specialneedsalliance.org/free-trustee-handbook

The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust

For trusts established with The Arc of Northern Virginia, the family and beneficiary do not have this burden of trust administration. Trust staff perform all administrative tasks and client relations and Key Bank handles all fiduciary and investment duties. To learn more about The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust visit https://thearcofnovatrust.org.

Our program offers a handful of ways on how to pull funds from a trust, pending review and approval of submissions. These methods include:

- <u>One Time Disbursement:</u> good for one-time expenses where we're reviewing and issuing payment to a vendor (ex: one-time payment for reimbursement to a person who paid for an item on the beneficiary's behalf). Supporting documentation includes disbursement form, receipt/invoice, and statement showing charge (if someone is requesting reimbursement).
- <u>Recurring Disbursement:</u> good for recurring bills (ex: a monthly car insurance payment). Supporting documentation includes completion of a recurring disbursement form for us to retain on file, and submission of the bill each month it's received to enable us to initiate payment.

To allow more autonomy for the beneficiary to use their funds, we offer two types of cards that are directly connected to a trust account; these include a True Link card (reloadable debit card) or a Key2Business card (credit card). A True Link card is a card in which we can load a recurring amount of funds in real time from a trust account onto it based on the person's budget and requested funds; this would be loaded at the frequency in which the primary representative/grantor has determined. In contrast, a Key2Business card is a credit card where The Arc of NOVA's SNT can set a credit limit on the card based on the budget provided that is tied to the beneficiary's financial needs; the Key2Business credit would later be paid off by the beneficiary's trust balance. Both cards require submission of receipts after transactions are made. If interested, speak with The Arc of Northern Virginia's Client Coordinator to inquire about these options.

ABLE ACCOUNTS

ABLE Accounts are an additional financial tool that may be used by some people with disabilities and their families to save for the future while protecting eligibility for public benefits.

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014 allows states to establish tax-advantaged savings accounts for certain individuals with disabilities for their disability related expenses. Contributions of up to \$19,000 (in 2025 – this amount is tied to the annual exclusion for gifts) a year can be made to an ABLE Account and up to a total of \$100,000 without endangering eligibility for certain means tested benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid. An eligible individual is someone who developed the onset of their disability before age 26 (in 2026, the age will increase to 46), and; is entitled to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits based on blindness or disability; and self-certifies that they have a qualifying disability diagnosis from a physician.

An eligible individual over the age of 18 may open and manage an ABLE account independently or an Authorized Representative may open and manage an ABLE account on behalf of the eligible individual. Authorized Representatives include an eligible family member (spouse, parent, grandparent, or sibling), legal guardian, someone with Power of Attorney, or a care representative. An eligible individual may only have one ABLE account. Any person may contribute to an ABLE account for an eligible beneficiary.

ABLE Accounts do not replace the need for a Family Funded Special Needs Trust, but may be used in conjunction. Funds in an ABLE account may be used for Qualified Disability Related Expenses. Qualified Disability Expenses are expenses that maintain the health, independence, and quality of life of the individual with a disability. Key aspects of ABLE Accounts are similar to First Party or Self-Funded Trusts in that they require a Medicaid payback upon the death of the beneficiary.

The ABLE program in Virginia, ABLEnow is administered by Commonwealth Savers (formerly known as Virginia 529). To learn more about ABLEnow go to www.ablenow.com. The National ABLE Resource Center www.ablenlc.org offers lots of good information and allows you to compare programs in different states. No matter where you reside, you can open an ABLE account in any state that accepts outside residents into their program.

For a better understanding of the differences between Special Needs Trusts and ABLE Accounts visit the Resource Library on our website at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#s-n-t.

| NOTES | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| WILL CREATED? | LOCATION? | |
| | UPDATE PLANS? | |
| BENEFICIARIES UPDATED ON ALL STOCKS, BANK ACCOUNTS, ETC.? | | |
| SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST WEBINAR ATTENDANCE PLAN? | | |
| SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST ESTABLISHMENT DATE? | | |
| ABLE ACCOUNT INFORMATION? | | |

56 TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE | PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SERVICES BEYOND SCHOOL





THE LEAP INTO LEGAL ADULTHOOD

SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING

We at The Arc of Northern Virginia are often asked about the need and value of guardianship and other forms of legal authority, especially as they relate to "protecting the person". The answer to what is appropriate depends upon the person. It is critical to remember that guardianship and similar measures are simply legal authority on a piece of paper. They cannot manage behavior, prevent someone from doing something, or undo many decisions they have been made.

DIGNITY OF RISK AND SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING

In recent decades, a movement has grown talk about the "dignity of risk" we all have to make decisions. The concept is simply that all people need help making some decisions and we all learn by making bad decisions. For example, many people without developmental disabilities rely on tax accountants or doctors to explain life decisions in simple terms they can understand. And, many of us have learned the most from our biggest mistakes. People with disabilities should have the same opportunities to make decisions and learn through natural consequences and a support team about how to proceed next time. We all express preferences in some ways. Using those preferences, along with support from a person-centered team, to make educated decisions is called "supported decision-making". A team of people (one person or more) who care about the person with a disability are asked by the person to work together to help them understand and make decisions. It does not involve taking away legal rights; instead, it builds a foundation for growing decision-making ability and independence over time, centered around working with the person on expressing their preferences. It has no cost and is probably what you are already doing. You can learn more about Supported Decision Making and view webinars on this topic on our website at https://thearcofnova.org/SDM. SDM can be used on its own and in conjunction with all forms of legal authority.

ROADMAP TO SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING

Who can help with each area of your life?

How can they communicate with you? Ask them to be sure they can help.

STEP 4 Get it on paper

STEP 3 Build your team

Write up a Supported Decision Making Agreement, Special needs Trust, or whatever tools you need.

STEP 1 Assess your needs

Can you make choices with support? How much support? Who do you want to help?

STEP 5 Work your plan

As you make big and small choices, look to your Agreement and ask your team for support.

STEP 2 Explore options

Read about decision making options, watch videos, talk to others. What kind of ideas work for you?

STEP 6 Keep it up

A couple of times a year, review your agreement. See what is working. Change your plan as your needs change.

| SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING RESOURCES | WHERE TO FIND IT |
|---|---|
| The Arc of Northern Virginia's SDM Toolkit with SDM in action videos, ideas on how to use and get started with SDM, 3 minute and extended recorded presentation on SDM, and SDM handouts and quick guides. | https://thearcofnova.org/sdm |
| Webinars on SDM implementation and team building | https://youtube.com/user/VideosatTheArcofNoVA |
| Asking any SDM questions | https://thearcofnova.org/answers |
| "Supported Decision Making" book by Jonathan Martinis and Peter Blanck with ideas on wording for Powers of Attorney, background on SDM in the courst, and data on self-determination and SDM increasing safety | https://tinyurl.com/SDM-book |
| "Setting the Wheels in Motion" article by Suzanne Francisco for a description of how a mom of three kids with DD implemented SDM for all of them, including her worksheets on getting started | https://tinyurl.com/SDM-Wheels |
| Jenny Hatch Justic Project info on start of SDM in VA and SDM data | http://www.jennyhatchjusticeproject.org |
| National Resource Center for SDM's stories, videos, agreemtns, and research | http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org |
| "When Do I Want Support" SDM tool for a tool you can use to start creating your own SDM plan | https://tinyurl.com/SDM-ACLU |
| Center for Public Representation's SDM forms, stories, news, and laws | https://supporteddecisions.org |
| The Arc's national SDM toolkit with a SDM agreement building tool and more SDM in action stories | https://tinyurl.com/ArcSDMtools |
| disAbility Law Center for free Power of Attorney builder, help with advanced directives, and information on rights and choices | https://ww.dlcv.org/supported-decisionmaking |

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THE SPECTRUM OF LEGAL SUPPORTS

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

This document allows an appointed decision maker to participate in/consent to IEPs and other school documents. It is only valid in public primary and secondary schools, not universities/colleges. You can find a template at https://www.dlcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Educational-Power-of-Attorney.pdf. Fairfax County Public Schools also has a fillable PDF that can be found at https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/se340.pdf. This document can be shared with the IEP Team.

MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

An agreement that grants an individual the authority to act on someone else's behalf for health-related matters. This allows the individuals to make decisions about things like medical treatment, prescriptions, and nursing home arrangements.

DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

A durable power of attorney will remain in effect for the person designated as an individual with the authority to act on someone's behalf even if the individual later becomes mentally incapacitated. Powers of Attorney can be drafted by attorneys or you can use an online template. They can be notarized, which can be done by your local bank or any other notary. The cost is minimal or free. You can buy and customize low cost POAs at sites like www.legalzoom.com. Powers of Attorney can be created and signed on the day your child turns 18.

MEDICAL DIRECTIVE

An Advance Directive helps you and your child prepare for a time when he or she may not be able to make informed decisions or communicate his or her wishes. An "agent" (parent, relative, or other trusted adult) can make healthcare decisions when necessary, while still protecting the individual's right to make decisions he or she is able to make. There are several ways to make an Advance Directive: Sample forms can be found at http://www.virginiaadvancedirectives.org/picking-an-ad-form.html; You and your child can talk to your doctor about making an Advance Directive; you can hire an attorney to complete an Advance Directive. Once your child's Advance Directive is written, it needs to be signed in the presence of two witnesses. Virginia does not require it to be notarized, but it is a good idea to do so if possible. Once you have the necessary signatures, you should give copies to the Agent, doctors, and other trusted family members. You can also register the Advance Directive online at Connect Virginia https://www.vhi.org/ConnectVirginia/adr.asp.

GUARDIANSHIP AND CONSERVATORSHIP

Legal, court-ordered relationships in which one individual is appointed by the court to become the substitute decision maker for another. This is the most restrictive form of limiting civil rights. Guardians handle contract and medical decisions. Conservators manage financial affairs. You can have both or either restrictions in place, and the same person can serve in both roles. If you do explore guardianship or other legal authority, remember that no matter what you legally sign and agree to do, the person with a disability ultimately consents by participating or not.

Generally, the person seeking guardianship hires an attorney who meets with the individual who may be in need of decision making support. The attorney will ask for evaluations showing a diminished ability to make decisions and relevant diagnoses. Then, the attorney will work with the courts to have a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) appointed. The GAL is an independent attorney who should meet with the individual and proposed guardian to ensure the proposed guardian is appropriate and that the individual understands what is going on to the best of their ability. If all goes well, the parties appear briefly before a judge in civil court for a legal appointment to take place. It is very important to work with an attorney experienced in this field. The process usually takes 2–3 months and costs about \$3000-\$4000 in the Northern Virginia area. You can request payment plans or reduced fees, but there is no guarantee of either. You can begin the guardianship process as early as 17.5 years of age, and can be done at any time over the age of 18.

Parents can be appointed as co-guardians, which allows either to act independently. You may ask the court to appoint "standby" guardians, who would serve when the appointed guardians are no longer able to serve. Standby guardians can act as guardians for up to 30 days, but must got to Court to become the permanent legal guardian. Once the individual with a disability has a guardian appointed, someone must always be a guardian, unless the rights of the individual are restored by the Court, following a request or petition to do so. Guardians are required to submit a report every year to the local Department of Social Services; the court will provide a form. Guardians must all take a one-time training from the state to explain the roles and responsibilities of a guardian, and certify that they have done this training on their annual reports.

LIMITED GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON

The courts can limit or specify the authority and responsibilities of the guardian to specific areas of the individual's life; such as medical and health care decisions. The Courts can retain specific rights for an individual through a written order, like the rights involving voting, marriage, and driving.

TEMPORARY GUARDIANSHIP

For specific reasons, a person can be appointed as temporary guardian on a time limited basis. For example: to assist in moving an individual to a residential placement; to make medical decisions, etc.

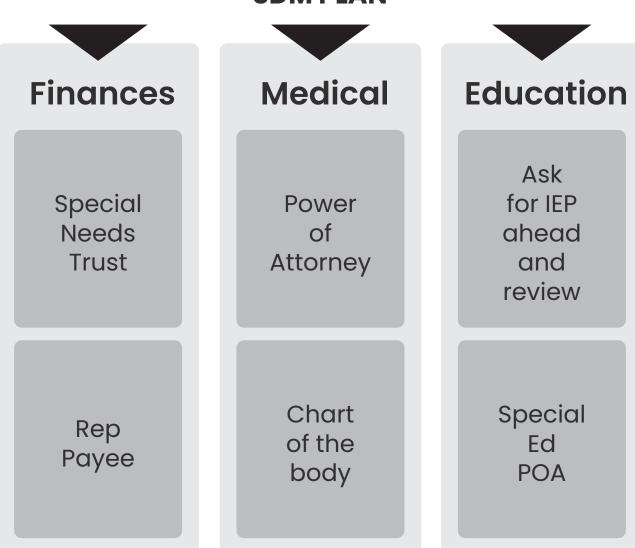
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Supported Decision Making can be used with all forms of legal authority and various support options

SDM doesn't involve any cost or court relationship. It is a matter of working as a team to present information to the person with a disability in a way they understand it and using guiding principles important to the person to help them. You can use tools like Powers of Attorney, Special Needs Trust, or any other options that will be helpful in ensuring the person with a disability gets the right support. You can see a sample SDM agreement, along with tips on filling it out and educating selected supporters, at https://dbhds.virginia.gov/supported-decision-making-supported-decision-making-agreements.

HOW MIGHT THIS WORK...

SDM PLAN



For more examples of how SDM can be used in all aspects of life, see 100 Ways to Use Supported Decision Making on our website at https://thearcofnova.org/sdm.







MAXIMIZING INDEPENDENCE

SELF-ADVOCACY

SELF-ADVOCACY

Increase student involvement with the transition process. A great way to build self-determination for a young adult with a disability is through the IEP process. Begin student IEP involvement early. Assist your child in communicating his or her needs, wants and dreams, but let his or her voice be heard!

- Have the student attend all meetings.
- Assist in understanding your child's abilities, interests, needs, and preferences.
- Let the student express dreams and aspirations.
- Have the student be a part of the decision-making process.
- Practice participating and leading IEP meetings at home.
- Allow your child some freedom under safe circumstances. Yes, students might not succeed, but they need to find out how to handle adversity while you can still provide assistance.
- Allow your child to experiment and try different interventions and strategies. If one intervention, strategy, or approach doesn't work, don't give up, try another!
- Encourage your son or daughter to communicate with community agencies via email, by phone, or in-person with your support.

RESOURCES FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

The I'm Determined project is a state directed project funded by the Virginia Department of Education, focused on providing direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with I'm Determined behavior. The I'm Determined website offers tools for youth to learn and for parents to help teach these skills. www.imdetermined.org

IT'S MY CHOICE

By William T. Allen, PhD from the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities is a self-advocacy workbook designed to help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) actively participate in making choices about their lives.

www.Mn.gov/mnddc//extra/publications/choice/lts_My_Choice.pdf

"DUDE, WHERE'S MY TRANSITION PLAN?"

A guide to promote student involvement in planning for life after high school. https://www.parentcenterhub.org/dude-wheres-my-transition-plan/

THE ARC OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

PEOPLE FIRST FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The Arc of Northern Virginia offers People First for Young Adults, a social and self-advocacy group for youth with disabilities ages 15-26. The group meets in-person and virtually on the second Tuesday of every month.

PEOPLE FIRST (ALLY) TOASTMASTERS

An adapted Toastmasters public speaking club that meets in combination with People First. The group meets virtually on the third Thursday of the month.

To learn more about these groups and to sign up, go to our website at https://thearcofnova.org/self-advocacy.

Advocacy Group is a community of self-advocates who are interested in using their advocacy skills to benefit the greater community. The group meets the third Tuesday of the month on Zoom. This group is facilitated by Christina Eagle, an educator, doctoral student, and Arc of Northern Virginia volunteer. For more information, email Christina at ceagle2@gmu.edu.

VOTING

Everyone has the right to register to vote when they turn 18, unless that right is taken away by the Court (ex. guardianship). Helping your young adult with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) participate in voting is an important step in fostering their independence and civic engagement. Voting is a fundamental right, and with the right support, your young person can have a voice in decisions that affect their community and future. As a parent, you can help by providing information about voter registration, explaining the voting process, and exploring accommodations that ensure accessibility. Whether it's learning about candidates, using accessible voting machines, or practicing how to fill out a ballot, your guidance can empower them to make informed choices.

You can register online, in person, or by mailing in a registration, and details are at https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/how-to-register.

Voting accessibility is a protected right under the Americans with Disabilities Act and individuals with disabilities can get the help needed to successfully cast a ballot. Examples of accommodations may be:

- Absentee voting, in person or by mail
- · Accessible parking at the polling place
- Curbside voting
- Accessible voting booths and chairs
- · Help to understand and complete the ballot from an election officer or someone you bring with you

If your adult child encounters any issues trying to vote because of his or her disability, it is a great idea to take a picture or video and share with the Virginia Department of Elections. You can also contact The Arc of Northern Virginia at www.thearcofnova.org/answers.

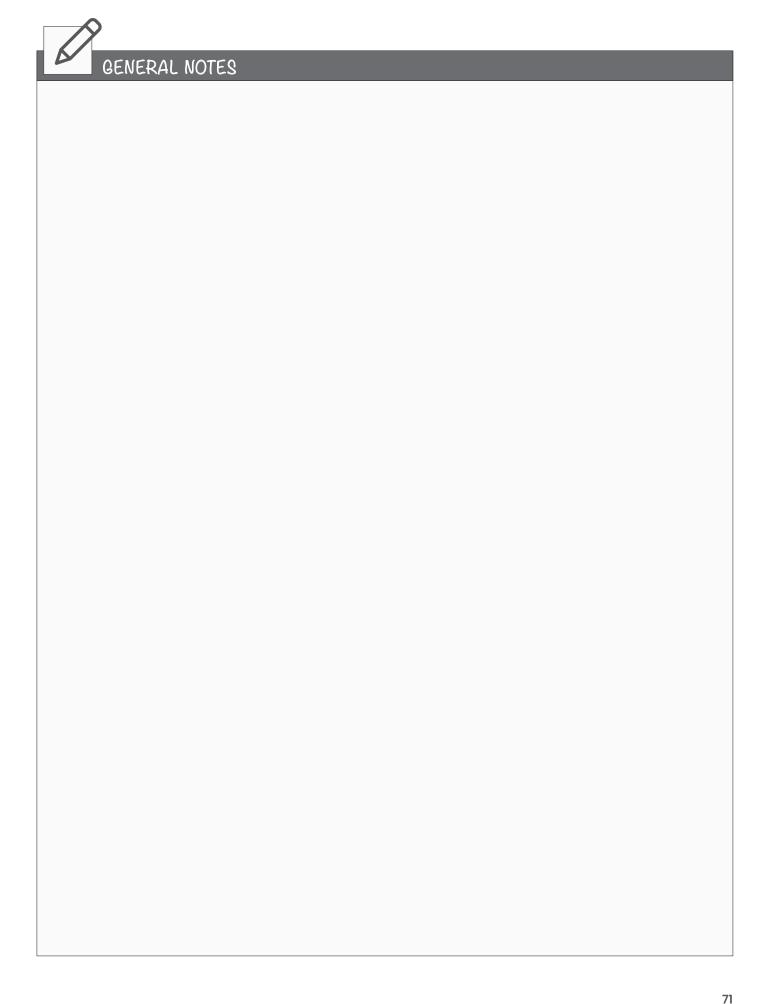
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THE ARC OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S TECH FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (TFIL) TECHNOLOGY TO EMPOWER YOUNG ADULTS FOR TRANSITION

At the heart of the program is Arc2Independence, our app designed to support individuals with managing daily routines and overcoming challenges. The app offers a comprehensive library of lessons in key areas, including Transportation, Daily Living Skills, Employment, and Safety, accessible on phones, tablets, or computers. We also offer free, customized virtual lessons, the program provides essential tools to build independence and confidence in navigating everyday life. With a variety of options and personalized lessons, young adults can learn new skills, practice routines, and achieve goals. Arc2Independence is a reliable tool that provides virtual support, like a travel trainer or job coach, tailored to your personal goals. To learn more, visit our website at https://thearcofnova.org/program/till, contact techforindependence@thearcofnova.org, or sign up for our virtual information session, Building Independence with the TFIL Team at https://thearcofnova.org/tfil-events.

If you live outside of the Northern Virginia and are interested in accessing the Arc2Indepedence app, contact arc2independence@thearcofnova.org.

| NOTES | |
|--|---|
| DATE APPLIED TO VOTE? | SELF-ADVOCACY OPTIONS EXPLORED? |
| OTHER WAYS OR PLANS TO DEVELOP ADULT SKILLS? | PRECINCT INFORMATION? |
| FIRST TIME VOTING? | ATTENDED TECH FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM EVENT? |
| APPLIED FOR TECH FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING? | TECH FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING CONTACT? |



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THE WORKING WORLD & DAY SUPPORTS

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

JOHN HUDSON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/disabilities/john-hudson-internship-program

This is a summer internship program in Fairfax County Government for college students and recent graduates with disabilities

EDUCATING YOUTH THROUGH EMPLOYMENT (EYE)

https://vcwnorthern.com/eye-programs

This program is a summer initiative coordinated by SkillSource in collaboration with Fairfax County's Department of Family Services. The program recruits, screens and matches youth ages 18–24 with professional opportunities in the private sector and other area businesses.

BROAD FUTURES

https://broadfutures.org

Broad Futures is a paid internship program that supports neurodivergent young adults through mentoring, professional skills training, and inclusive workplace experiences.

KENNEDY CENTER EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

https://www.kennedy-center.org/careers/eei-internship

The Experiential Education Imitative Internship is a semester long, paid internship for individuals with intellectual disabilities, 19-30 years of age. The program also provides access to cultural arts experiences at the Kennedy Center, opportunities for social and personal growth, and develops work-readiness skills for success in transition to the workplace.



GENERAL NOTES

PREPARING FOR EMPLOYMENT

Figuring out what to do for a job or career is a challenge for every young adult. While your child may already know what jobs he or she would be good at (or what they really don't want to do), most young adults are not very familiar with what it takes to prepare for and get a job.

And it takes time to figure it all out. Parents and students should take these five steps and get started in middle and high school thinking about work and work-related skills. For more information on employment for individuals with disabilities, see Entering the World of Work: A Guide to Employment Programs for Adults with Disabilities online at https://thearcofnova.org/entering-the-world-of-work.

STEP 1: GET WORK-TYPE EXPERIENCE

Be creative in thinking about what your child already does and how that might teach job skills or be expanded into a career interest. Most people begin learning about the world of work through activities such as: chores at home; volunteering; activities pursued in Boy or Girl Scouts; internships, and through courses that teach job-related skills like computer repair or animal care.

For volunteer experiences, explore the following:

VOLUNTEER MATCH

www.volunteermatch.org

VOLUNTEER ALEXANDRIA

703-836-2176

http://www.volunteeralexandria.org

VOLUNTEER ARLINGTON

703-228-1760

https://volunteer.leadercenter.org

VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX/FALLS CHURCH

703-246-3460

http://www.volunteerfairfax.org

Volunteer Fairfax provides Disability Inclusive Volunteering Resources. These resources include a toolkit for volunteers, an inclusive volunteering search, and an inclusive volunteer training video.

LOUDOUN CARES

703-669-2351

https://www.loudouncares.org/volunteer-center

VOLUNTEER PRINCE WILLIAM

https://volunteerprincewilliam.org

703-369-5292

STEP 2. ASSESS WORK INTERESTS AND SKILLS

Use the Positive Personal Profile to get an overall picture of what your son or daughter would like to do for a job or career and what talents, traits and skills they bring to the workplace. As much as possible, have your transitioning student participate in this conversation; this is the place for him or her to be honest about likes and dislikes and about any support they feel might be needed.

The profile will also help you figure out what things other than skills and talents would make your child happy and successful on a job, such as:

- The type of job he or she would prefer, such as service jobs that entail a lot of customer/client contact vs. production or materials handling jobs that may involve less contact with the public or co-workers.
- The on-the-job environment, which includes the size of the physical space you'd work in, noise level, and indoors vs. outdoors.
- Your child's supervisor and co-workers (preferences for working as part of a team vs. more independently)
- · Your child's work schedule: full time, part time, weekdays vs. weekends, day vs. night shifts, remote, hybrid, etc.
- · Your child's commute. Factoring in how long the commute takes and how much it costs is important in considering a job's suitability.

The profile should be a work-in-progress; consider reviewing it every year as your child gets more academic, volunteer or paid work experience.



STEP 3. MEET WITH THE TRANSITION COORDINATOR

The transition coordinator at your child's high school is the best first stop for information on postsecondary options, including employment and meaningful day support services, transition programs, and DARS services. Localities vary in the services they offer to transitioning students.

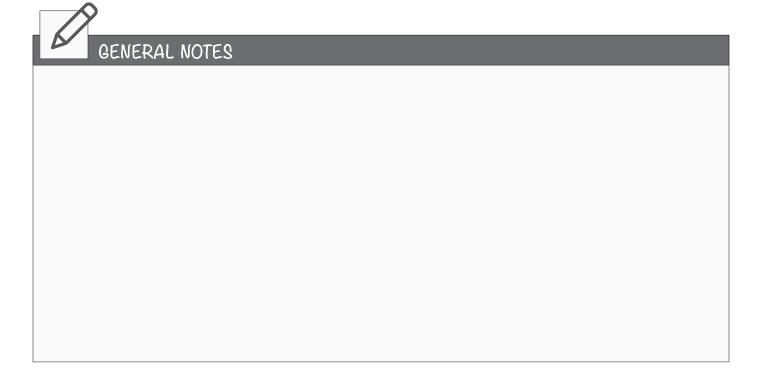
HOW PARENTS MAY HELP

- Give your child chores to do at home and have them do as many tasks at home independently.
- Help your child draft a resume. ChatGPT is a great resource to help write resumes, cover letters, and prepare for job interviews by receiving step-by-step guidance and personalized support in clear, easy-to-understand language. Share the resume with your Transition Coordinator and DARS Counselor.
- Help your child develop a Positive Personal Profile
- Attend IEP meetings, share the Positive Personal Profile, and contribute your ideas for IPEs and other plans or goals related to your student's employment.
- Discuss with the transition team any accommodations and supports that you and your student have agreed might be needed. Help your child understand the supports they need to be successful and have them practice knowing when to ask for those supports.
- Help your child create an email account and have them practice reading and responding to messages in a timely manner.
- Advocate when needed, but let your child speak for him or herself as much as possible.

BUILDING A POSITIVE PERSONAL PROFILE

The Positive Personal Profile is a simple document outlining an individual's interests and strengths, used to identify what is important and what the individual aspires to achieve. The focus is on skills and preferences, rather than labels and deficits. This positive approach helps to determine what the individual can do and loves to do. It also identifies the person's passions and values, which helps to determine what is meaningful for the individual. For a guide on how to use this form along with other great tools to prepare for employment, visit Transcen, Inc.

https://www.transcen.org/training-ta/resources



POSITIVE PERSONAL PROFILE

| Name: | Date: |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| DREAMS AND GOALS: | |
| | |
| INTERESTS: | |
| TALENTS, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE: | |
| LEARNING STYLES: | |
| VALUES: | |
| POSITIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS: | |
| ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES: | |

| DISLIKES: | |
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| WORK EXPERIENCES: | |
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| SUPPORT SYSTEM: | |
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| SPECIFIC CHALLENGES: | |
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| SOLUTIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS: | |
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| CAREER IDEAS, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES TO EXPLORE: | |
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PURSUE SERVICES WITH DARS

DARS (Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services) provides short-term support services to help individuals with disabilities prepare for the workplace, find a job, and get needed support once on the job. DARS focuses on competitive integrated employment (CIE) which is work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is compensated at or above minimum wage and is working in the community with and without people with disabilities.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATIVE (VR) SERVICES

The VR program is an eligibility program and helps people with disabilities get ready for, find, and keep a job. DARS recommends that students explore Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services three years before they plan to graduate high school. This early involvement helps students get to know their VR Counselor and helps the counselor work with the student to outline activities that lead to achievement of the employment goal.

DARS Services include: Assistive Technology, Career Exploration, Career Guidance and Counseling, Job Development, Job Shadowing, On-the-Job Training, Postsecondary Training and Education, Supported Employment, and Vocational Evaluation and Assessment. For more information on DARS services and to download their guide, visit https://www.dars.virginia.gov/drs/vr.

THE ROLE OF THE VR COUNSELOR

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor is an expert in disability and career counseling. There are counselors assigned to high schools in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Loudoun, and Prince William. He or she will determine your eligibility for DARS services, help identify any barriers to competitive employment, and work on your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with you.

Your adult child (or you as the guardian) may have to sign a release so that the counselor may speak with, or get documents from doctors, therapists, former employers (if any), and school staff.

BECOMING A DARS CLIENT

To participate, your child will go through the following steps: referral, intake, eligibility determination, needs assessment, and plan development and implementation.

VR (VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION) INTAKE

The purpose of this meeting is to apply for VR services and talk with the DARS counselor about job plans, disability, education, and any work history, as well as how DRS may be able to assist.

At this meeting, the counselor may ask for additional information or testing (at no cost to you), such as a psychological evaluation or a rehabilitation technology assessment. Your child (or you if you are the guardian) will be asked to sign a release so DARS can request records.

ELIGIBILITY

Your child may be eligible for DARS if he or she has a goal of competitive employment in an integrated job setting and meet the criteria for eligibility. Eligible individuals must have a documented physical, mental, emotional, sensory, or learning disability that causes a substantial barrier to getting or keeping a job. In addition, individuals must be legally eligible to work in the US and be willing and able to work.

If your child is still a student, discuss services with the transition representative at your high school. If your child is not in school, contact your local DARS office directly. Complete an intake with a DARS Rehabilitation Counselor. You will need a Social Security Card, Photo ID, all applicable disability documentation that includes a diagnosis, health insurance information and a parent or legal guardian (if applicable).

Financial eligibility is based on family income. DARS uses a sliding scale which is subject to the number of dependents claimed on the latest income tax return. However, when students receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for their disability, they are presumed eligible for DARS services, if they intend to become employed.

Information from you, your records, and any new reports will be used to learn about your disability, how it affects your work capabilities and limits, and whether DARS services can help you become employed. Eligibility review is completed within 60 days of the initial meeting. You can help by getting your records for your counselor or authorizing your counselor to request them and keeping appointments.

EVALUATING NEEDS

If your child meets the eligibility criteria, your child and the counselor will discuss the vocational goal and work together to choose the **type of job** that's the right fit.

If more information is needed, your counselor may suggest a vocational evaluation (at no cost to you). A vocational evaluation can include counseling, testing, work samples, and on-the-job evaluations. The results help you learn about the types of jobs your child can do and are most interested in doing.

Next, your child and the counselor will jointly decide **what services** are needed to get ready for and find that type of job. Services provided without cost include:

- Diagnostic, evaluation, assessment
- · Vocational and career path counseling
- Disability Awareness Counseling
- Job seeking and job retention counseling
- Access to employment resource centers
- Job Placement assistance
- Follow along assistance

Services that may have a cost share include:

- Supported Employment
- Apprenticeship Programs
- Work Adjustment
- Post-Secondary Education Programs (vocational, technical, college, or certificate programs)
- External Training Option (through Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center)
- Life Skills Training (through community based providers or the WWRC)
- Durable medical equipment or other goods
- Assistive technology
- Related Services (Transportation, Rehabilitation Technology, Supportive Services, Therapies (Speech, OT, PT)

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)

After DARS eligibility is established, you will work with the VR counselor and/or a potential service provider to write an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE:

- Focuses on the goal of employment
- · Outlines steps needed to achieve the employment goal
- Plans for necessary services and funding

In thinking about necessary services, you, your child, and the VR counselor take into consideration anything that may affect your child's ability to prepare, qualify, or apply for a job or stay on a job. These issues include: mobility, self-direction, self-care, interpersonal skills, communication skills, work skills, organizational skills, self-advocacy skills, stamina, money management, and medication management.

By signing the IPE, your child is promising to take the steps in his or her plan to become employed. It also demonstrates that the IPE planning decisions are made jointly with the counselor, parents or guardians. Ask questions to be sure you understand your role, rights, and responsibilities under the IPE. IPEs are reviewed at least once a year.

Your child must tell the counselor about any changes that affect his or her vocational rehabilitation (address or telephone number, financial situation or family size, medical insurance, disability or general health, or government benefits).

DARS RESOURCES

Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) offers a residential, campus experience in Fishersville, VA for eligible individuals with disabilities. WWRC provides individuals with disabilities comprehensive and individualized services that lead to employment and improved independence. WWRC provides vocational evaluation and training, life skills evaluation and training, medical rehabilitation, and other services. The goal of all programs is competitive, integrated employment. To learn more about WWRC, visit http://wwrc.virginia.gov

Program lengths and admission dates may vary depending upon the program. Admissions are completed on a rolling basis. Many programs do have a waiting list, so apply early.

WWRC Adult Programs include vocational evaluation, work readiness programs, training programs, and driver's education. Workforce training is delivered through instruction teams targeting Business and Information Technology; Manufacturing and Production; and Services and Trades.

DARS LIMITATIONS

DARS does not guarantee a job at any time. You must continue to conduct your own job search. It also cannot promise to send you to school or other type of training.

If and when DARS funding is limited, the law requires DARS to prioritize its services (called Order of Selection) to those with the most severe disabilities and functional limitations (defined by DARS as a vocational barrier or impediment due to a disability that affects mobility, self-direction, self-care, interpersonal skills, work skills, communication or work tolerance).

REGIONAL DARS OFFICE LOCATIONS

ALEXANDRIA DRS OFFICES

Serves Arlington and Alexandria Public Schools 5904 Old Richmond Highway Suite 410 Alexandria, VA 22303 **703-960-3411**

FAIRFAX/FALLS CHURCH DRS OFFICE

11150 Fairfax Blvd. Suite 300 Fairfax, VA 22030 **703-359-1124**

MANASSAS DRS OFFICE

9300 W Courthouse Rd, Suite 302 Manassas, VA 20110 **703-335-5550**

LOUDOUN DRS OFFICE

722 E. Market Street, Suite 202 Leesburg, VA 20176 **703-771-4775**

| NOTES | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| VOLUNTEER INTERESTS? | |
| | |
| VOLUNTEER WORK? | RESUME CREATED? |
| WORK INTERESTS? | |
| WORK ASSESSMENTS? | STRONGEST SKILLS? |
| ACCOMMODATIONS NEEDED AT WORK? | PERSONAL PROFILE CREATED? |
| DATE APPLIED TO DARS? | FIRST PRE-ETS MEETING DATE? |
| PRE-ETS STAFF? | DARS INTAKE? |
| DARS GOALS? | DARS COUNSELOR? |
| | |

WORKING WITH AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ORGANIZATION

DARS contracts with outside vendors or community partners called Employment Service Organizations (ESO) to provide many of the short-term employment services to eligible clients. For example, you may meet with a VR Counselor to determine that you are eligible for situational assessments, but then the VR Counselor from DARS will contract with an employment specialist from an ESO to actually take you to participate in a situational assessment. These vendors may be private nonprofit or for-profit organizations. To see a list of service providers, visit our Resource Library https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#transition.

THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST

Once a DARS client, you will work closely with either a vocational counselor from DARS or an employment specialist from the employment service organization that has contracted with DARS. As a prospective employee, the employment specialist helps you: prepare for, get and stay on a job; communicates with your family about your progress; completes necessary applications & resumes; assists you with initial training as needed; identifies transportation resources as well as travel training.

Employment specialists also work with individual employers to ensure there's a match between the job requirements and your skills. This includes working with the employer to find out about available jobs; working closely with the hiring manager to determine the scope of work; analyzing the work environment to identify the essential tasks and cultural aspects of the department; assisting the human resources department with scheduling and planning the interview; Identifying accommodations and/ or adaptations you may need; communicating with the employer to evaluate your progress; providing disability awareness training for co-workers as needed.

The specialist also coordinates with your DARS counselor on job strategies, concerns of the employer and co-workers, and development of natural supports in the workplace.

JOB DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

There are four phases to the job development process:

SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Situational assessments (going to a job site and "practicing" the tasks) allow the job coach to see how an individual might perform in a particular type of job. Information gathered during the assessment helps determine interest, skill level, preferred environment, and other issues before the job search begins. Not everyone wants or needs a situational assessment. If you have participated in situational assessments with a job coach at your school, share these with your Vocational Counselor.

JOB DEVELOPMENT

This phase comprises the actual job search and preparation for job interviews: networking, looking for job openings, writing or updating the resume, developing a cover letter, practice completing applications and interviewing.

PLACEMENT AND TRAINING

When an appropriate job is found, the vendor can go on the interview, and help determine any needed accommodation. Once on the job, your specialist becomes a job coach to help train you for the job and communicate with you, the employer and your family on how strategies to ensure you are successful.

Job coaching with competitive employment has a limited time frame; you go through an initial phase of working together very closely until you feel comfortable being independent. The amount of intervention on the job depends on the need of the individual. The job coach begins to fade as the individual is able to perform without assistance and things are going well on the job.

Once the individual is stable on the job with less intervention from the job coach, the team will discuss next steps. Travel training may be part of the contract with the vendor. Coaching may also include referrals to outside community resources needed for success in the placement.

HOW PARENTS MAY HELP

- ✓ Reinforce workplace expectations with your son or daughter, such as grooming, appropriate dress, and punctuality
- ✓ Provide feedback to counselors about the work experience from what you are seeing and hearing at home from your child
- ✓ Ask for feedback about how your child is doing on the job from the employment specialist's and the employer's point of view
- ✓ Offer to help solve challenges on issues such as transportation and special accommodations
- ✓ Support your child to practice self-advocacy skills
- ✓ Support your child with increasing their responsibilities, such as having them be accountable for chores around the house. No task/responsibility is too small to start with and they can be built upon.

CLOSING YOUR CASE

In general, after you have been working and stable on the job for 90 days, you and your counselor will close your DARS case. Before closing your case, your counselor will stay in touch to make sure the job is right for you and that you and your employer are satisfied.

DARS may also close your case if you are no longer eligible, if services will not result in your employment, or you have not met your responsibilities.

If you think you need additional DARS services after your case is closed, you may discuss options for re-opening your case or reapplying for services as appropriate to your specific needs. You may also contact the ESO that provided and worked with DARS to provide your services.

CHOOSING AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES ORGANIZATION

Once DARS funding ends, money for continuing, long-term support may be funded by a Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver, the local Community Services Board (CSB) (* if in Fairfax, Arlington, or Alexandria), or privately paid by the family.

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REMINDERS

- Prior to the meeting with the ESO, it is suggested that you have a firm understanding of what funding sources you are affiliated with (Community Service Boards, Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Medicaid Waiver, Self-Directed Services). Learn about what support options are available to you.
- As you begin to interview ESOs, the process will raise additional questions that you may have never thought of. This is okay! If you feel the need to do second interviews to complete a more specific comparison of services, take the extra-time to re-interview.
- Share your capabilities, skills, needs and goals.
- Consider the following when making your decision: How did the provider answer your questions? Did they treat you with respect? Do you like the staff members? Did they present themselves in a professional manner?

The following questions are a general guideline to assist you as you meet with employment service organizations. As you prepare, you will begin to think of questions that are more specifically related to the particular needs of your son or daughter. Don't hesitate to ask any question!

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS (ESOS)

GENERAL PROGRAM FIT

- What types of disabilities does your organization typically support?
- How do you assess if an employer is a good match for an individual with IDD?
- Can you walk me through your intake and evaluation process?

INDIVIDUALIZATION & PLANNING

- How do you tailor employment plans to match an individual's interests, strengths, and support needs?
- How do you develop job leads?
- How is my child involved in setting their own goals?
- Can you provide examples of individualized success stories?
- How does the employment specialist get to know my child?

STAFF EXPERTISE & TRAINING

- What training do your staff have in working with individuals with IDD?
- Do staff receive continuing education or training in inclusive employment or behavior support?
- How are job coaches matched with clients?

JOB DEVELOPMENT & PLACEMENT

- How do you identify potential employers and job opportunities?
- How do you handle workplace accommodations or modifications?

SUPPORT DURING EMPLOYMENT

- What type of on-the-job support is provided?
- · How often do staff check in with the client and employer?
- How do you handle situations where a job isn't working out?

LONG-TERM SUPPORT & GROWTH

- Do you provide long-term support or just short-term job placement?
- How do you help individuals move toward more independence or career advancement?
- What happens if my child wants to try a different job later?

FUNDING & LOGISTICS

- What funding sources do you accept? (Medicaid Waiver, CSB, Self-Directed Services, DARS)
- Do you assist with benefits planning?
- Are there waiting lists?
- Do you provide travel training?

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

- · How are families included in the planning and support process?
- · How often do you provide updates or involve families in progress reviews?

SAFETY, RIGHTS & ADVOCACY

- How do you ensure the safety and dignity of individuals with IDD in the workplace?
- Do you advocate for inclusive practices with employers?
- Do you offer additional support in soft skill development and self-advocacy skill building?

EXTRAS YOU MIGHT ASK FOR

- Can I speak with a family you've worked with?
- Can I visit a workplace where your clients are employed?
- Do you track long-term outcomes like job retention, wages, or satisfaction?
- What companies have you placed people at and in what types of jobs?

Employment First is a national movement rooted in the premise that all people, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of competitive, community-based employment. Employment First is a framework for systems change efforts. The initiative calls for raising expectations, implementing better practices, and aligning policies and reimbursement structures to promote competitive, integrated employment opportunities for all. In February 2012, Virginia Senate Joint Resolution No. 127 was passed, establishing a formal Employment

First policy in the Commonwealth. Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred option for Virginians with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly financed systems.

MODELS OF EMPLOYMENT & FUNDING SOURCES

At present, employment and day support services for individuals with disabilities fall into the varying models described below. However, under the Employment First legislation, the first option should always be placement of individuals with disabilities in community competitive employment, making minimum wage or higher, in an integrated setting. For a list of employment and day support providers in Northern Virginia, visit our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#transition.

DARS is the first payer for short term services needed to place individuals in integrated, Individual Supported Employment. Once an individual is able to obtain and maintain a job for 90 days, DARS funding phases out and if available, Medicaid DD Waiver or CSB (Community Services Board) funding phases in. If DARS cannot serve an individual (he/she may not be found eligible by DARS or there is a waiting list, the Medicaid DD Waiver can provide all the funding from the beginning.

The CSB is the initial point of entry for public funding in your locality for support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Services include support coordination, individual and group supported employment, and day support services. Services are contingent on funding availability and eligibility criteria.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FALLS INTO TWO MODELS:

Individual Supported Employment is defined as intermittent support, usually provided one-on-one by a job coach to an individual in a supported position who, during most of the time on the job site, performs, independently.

Within individual supported employment, there is the potential for Customized Employment services. Customized Employment is a form of competitive integrated employment tailored to align with the unique strengths, needs, and interests of the individual while simultaneously meeting the specific needs of the employer. Although not widely used, this may be explored as an option. It involves a thorough review of the individual's skills, preferences, and interests along with job development and negotiation with the employer to develop customized job descriptions that fill unmet needs incorporating the discovery information.

Group Supported Employment is defined as continuous support provided by staff to eight or fewer individuals with disabilities in a contract position with a local company or for a mobile work crew that does jobs in a variety of places around the community.

** Several employment service organizations in the Northern Virginia area have AbilityOne contracts with the Federal Government. For more information, visit www.abilityone.gov. The AbilityOne Program creates employment and training opportunities for people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities, empowering them to lead more productive and independent lives. Its primary means of doing so is by requiring Government agencies to purchase selected products and services from nonprofit organizations employing such individuals.

| NOTES | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--|
| ESOS OF INTEREST? | ESOS TOURED? | |
| ESO SELECTED? | ESO GOALS? | |
| ESO POINT OF CONTACT? | FUNDING SOURCE? | |

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JOB SEARCH & TRAINING RESOURCES

A Federal job training program sponsored by the Department of Labor, through a network of One Stop Centers, offer employers and job seekers, universal access to free employment and training services. WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) assists workers with tools to manage their career and helps employers find skilled workers. The primary goal is to increase employment, job retention, earnings, and occupational skills among all employer and job seeker populations including individuals with disabilities. https://vcwnorthern.com/wioa.

Job seekers and employers in Northern Virginia have access to a comprehensive system of employment and training services and resources delivered and coordinated through one-stop employment resource centers. Services are offered at no cost and include: resume writing and interview preparation workshops, career coaching, basic employment assessments, access to computers, phones, copiers, and the internet for employment search, job lead assistance, and ongoing customer support.

FAIRFAX COUNTY ONE STOP

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/employment-and-training/services

ARLINGTON ONE STOP

https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/AEC

ALEXANDRIA ONE STOP

https://www.alexandriava.gov/workforce-development/job-seeker-process-and-essentials

LOUDOUN ONE STOP

https://www.loudoun.gov/1592/Workforce-Resource-Center

PRINCE WILLIAM CENTER VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS

http://vcwnorthern.com

HIRE AUTISM

www.hireautism.org

Created by the Organization for Autism Research (OAR). This website is for individuals on the autism spectrum offering a job board, direct access to local employment opportunities, a profile builder, and helpful resources for the workplace.

DAY SUPPORT OPTIONS

These services should provide meaningful day activities and do not involve paid employment. Activities are provided in small group or one to one settings. The focus is on supporting people with disabilities to access community activities where most people involved do not have disabilities. Activities include general community integration activities such as recreation and leisure, improving social skills, activities of daily living practiced in the community and volunteer experience. This option typically serves individuals who have a high level of daily living support needs throughout the day and who require more support to develop vocational skills.

If the person does not want to work, Day Support Services can be pursued through the waiver or the CSB without going through DARS first. DARS will not fund day support services since they are not related to employment.

For a full list of day and employment service providers, visit our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#transition.

Examples of Questions to ask day support providers:

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY & INDIVIDUAL FIT

- What is your program's mission or philosophy when it comes to supporting individuals with IDD?
- How do you get to know each individual and their unique interests, preferences, and needs?
- How do you determine if someone is a good fit for your program?

DAILY STRUCTURE & ACTIVITIES

- What does a typical day look like?
- What types of activities do you offer (recreational, educational, community-based, life skills, etc.)?
- How are activities adapted for different ability levels and communication styles?
- · How much input do individuals have in choosing their activities?

STAFF TRAINING & SUPPORT

- · What are the qualifications and training requirements for staff?
- What ongoing professional development do staff receive (ex. behavior support, communication strategies, safety)?
- What is the staff-to-participant ratio?
- How do you handle staff turnover and consistency in support?

BEHAVIORAL & COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

- How do you support individuals with behavioral or emotional regulation needs?
- Do you use positive behavior support strategies or individualized behavior plans?
- · How do you support individuals with limited or alternative communication methods?
- Are there speech therapists, behavior specialists, or other professionals available on site or through partnerships?

SAFETY, MEDICAL & PERSONAL CARE

- How do you manage medication administration?
- · What's your protocol for medical emergencies or behavioral crises?
- How do you ensure safety during outings or transportation?
- Do staff assist with personal care (toileting, feeding, hygiene)? How is this handled with dignity and respect?

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

- How do you keep families informed about daily activities or concerns?
- How are families involved in decisions or planning?
- Are there opportunities for family engagement, events, or training?

TRANSPORTATION & ACCESSIBILITY

- Do you provide transportation to and from the program?
- Is your space fully accessible (ramps, sensory-friendly areas, adaptive equipment)?
- Are outings in the community accessible and inclusive?

PROGRAM OUTCOMES & LONGEVITY

- What long-term goals do you support (ex. independence, socialization, skills building)?
- Can individuals transition into employment, volunteer work, or more independent settings from your program?
- What happens if a participant's needs change over time?

EXTRAS

- Can I speak to other families currently in the program?
- Can I observe part of a day or see a sample schedule?
- Are there waiting lists, and how long is the enrollment process?

ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT & DAY SERVICES

SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY AND ARLINGTON COUNTY

Self-Directed (SD) Services is an alternative to the traditional model of support for people with intellectual disabilities. The individual/family is ultimately responsible to determine service needs (with input from the individual's Community Services Board support coordinator and Interdisciplinary Team), identify a service schedule, recruit, hire, train, supervise, compensate, and evaluate direct service providers.

SD SERVICES:

- Increase and expand individualized service options and plans
- Bring greater control and supervision of services to the individual/family
- Allow greater flexibility in scheduling and receiving services
- · Can be provided in the community closer to the individual's home

SD Services are available to individuals with intellectual disabilities 22 and over who meet CSB service eligibility requirements and currently receive or will be authorized to receive day support or employment services funding. For more information:

ARLINGTON COUNTY

https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/DHS/Aging-Disability/Programs/Developmental-Services

FAIRFAX COUNTY

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/services/self-directed-services

** as of August 2025, SDS in Fairfax County is on hold and may be canceled. Contact the Fairfax County CSB to confirm the availability of these services.

SPARC (SPECIALLY ADAPTED RESOURCE CLUBS)

https://sparcsolutions.org

Offers community based meaningful day opportunities. It is a clubhouse model day program that supports adults with disabilities over the age of 22 with life skills development, entrepreneurial projects, recreation, and enrichment activities such as music and art therapies. Clubs are located in Alexandria, Arlington, Herndon, McLean, Reston, and Sterling. Visit their website to learn more and see pricing.

ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES DAY PROGRAM (ADDP)

https://mcleanbible.org/tysons/special-needs

is facilitated by McLean Bible Church for high school graduates and focuses on spiritual formation, literacy, vocational training, personal care and independence, recreation and leisure, social skills, travel training and community navigation, and self-advocacy. There is a monthly fee based on the number of days enrolled per week. The program operates five days a week, Mon-Fri 10am-3pm.

AUTISM COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

https://aca-va.org

offersweekdayprograms (5hoursperday 9:30am-2:30pm). It is a structured, community based program designed to promote engagement and independence with 1:1 support. Families can utilize their own personal attendant during programming hours.

A PURPOSEFUL DAY

https://www.apurposefulday.org

Offers programs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM to cultivate a community where adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities participate in activities encompassing physical fitness, artistic expression, life skills development, and social engagement.

For additional non-traditional day programs, visit our Resource Library at https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#transition.

OPTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL HELP WITH EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITION

NEXT LEVEL TRANSITION CONSULTING

www.nextleveltransition.com

Provides support for transition services, career exploration, career planning and job coaching, and drop-in independent living support. Accepts private pay and DARS funding.

STARFISH SAVERS

www.starfishsavers.com

Provides consultation and advocacy, coaching and life skills, and community based transition coaching. Accepts private pay and DARS funding.

INCLUSION CONSULTANTS

www.inclusionconsultants.com

Offers counseling, coaching, and consulting services for individuals and families who think they may not qualify for traditional services or believe their current services are not meeting their needs.

SOCIAL GRACE

www.SocialGrace.com

Prepares neurodivergent individuals for real-life success by strengthening their social and executive function competencies. Through therapy, coaching, and real-world experiences, Social Grace helps individuals navigate relationships, school, work, and daily life with confidence. This practice also supports individuals obtaining and maintaining employment by developing essential workplace skills, including on-the-job occupational therapy, to foster success in professional settings.

Social Grace partners with Our Stomping Ground to provide FREE weekly and monthly social programming and a free parent support group, ensuring families have the guidance and community they need.

STEMSKILLS

https://stemskills.org

Is an inclusive educational and training program designed to introduce individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to engage opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The organization offers hands-on activities that build practical skills, boost confidence, and promote lifelong learning.

STEMSkills allows participants to explore topics like coding, robotics, digital media, environmental science, and more—all adapted to meet diverse learning styles and support needs. In addition to skill-building, STEMSkills emphasizes social development, teamwork, and real-world applications that may support future employment or independent living.







HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

As your child begins the transition from school to adulthood, it's important to start thinking about where and how they will live in the future. Housing is a key part of building an independent and fulfilling life, and exploring options early can help create a stable and supportive living arrangement that meets your child's unique needs. Whether your child may live independently, with support, in a group setting, or at home, planning ahead allows you to consider financial resources, support services, and your child's goals and preferences.

HOUSING AND SERVICES

When you begin to think about long term housing plans, one of the first things to consider is whether or not support services (e.g., personal care assistance, skill development, nursing, etc.) will be needed as well. If so, you'll need to plan for how the services needed will work with the housing option you select. To learn more about publicly funded services through the Medicaid Waiver, visit https://thearcofnova.orgresource-library/#waivers. To see options for hiring drop in care staff, visit https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#l-i-c for information on live-in caregivers.

WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

As you explore these choices, think about what you value. Ensure you are looking at options that respect your wishes for independence and flexibility, as well as offer options to bring in any and all services you need. You may try more than one option over time, which is perfectly normal. Options may be more or less appealing at certain points in the lifespan or as services available to you change.

WAITING TIMES

Waiting times for affordable housing options can vary widely. If you've prepared a budget, know where you'd like to live, have materials needed for your home, and have services and/or subsidies available to support you, you could be ready to move in just a few months. If you have restrictions on where exactly you can live, the type of housing you want, you are still waiting for a Medicaid Waiver, or want an option that has a waiting list, the wait can be many years in some cases.

TYPES OF HOUSING

It is never too early to start weighing housing options since some require more time, planning, and resources than others. Here are some brief descriptions of common housing options for adults with developmental disabilities. In all of these models, you could use Medicaid Waiver support options and/or private pay to bring in services.

Housing Resources

- 1. For more in-depth information on this topic visit https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/find-ing-home-adults-disabilities to download our guide on Finding a Home for Adults with Disabilities.
- 2. To watch recorded webinars that walk you through housing tours, options, and resources, visit https://www.youtube.com/user/VideosatTheArcofNoVA
- 3. To sign up for The Arc of Northern Virginia's e-newsletter that shares housing news and learning opportunities- https://thearcofnova.org/about-us/newsroom/newsletters

| HOUSING TYPE | FUNDING FOR HOUSING | GETTING STARTED |
|---|--|---|
| Owned or rented apartment or other home where services and supports can be brought in up to 24/7, or can allow for live-in staff. | Use income or a rental subsidy to fund the rental costs and/or look for a "tax credit unit" that may have lower rents. | Talk to your Waiver Support Coordinator (even if on the waiting list) about preparing for this option. You could move within months if you're prepared. |
| Shared Living Waiver service where person with a Waiver has live-in staff, plus other staff as needed. | Use income or a rental subsidy to fund the rental costs. | Talk to your Waiver Support Coordinator about preparing for this option. You could move within months if you're prepared and have a Waiver. |
| Supported Living Waiver service that involves moving into a unit owned by a service provider or leased by person with disability, and provider then brings in staff. | Use income or rental subsidy to fund the rental costs. | Talk to your Waiver Support Coordinator about preparing for this option. You could move within months if you're prepared and have a Waiver. |
| Group Homes are usually 4-7 unrelated people living in a home staffed and owned by a service provider. | Use income to pay for rent, food, and program fees. | Talk to your Waiver Support Coordinator about preparing for this option. You could move within months if you're prepared and have a Waiver. |
| Sponsored Residential is a Waiver service where a person with a disability lives with a caregiver who provides needed services, usually in the home of the caregiver. | Use income or rental subsidy to fund the rental costs. | Talk to your Waiver Support Coordinator about preparing for this option. You could move within months if you're prepared and have a Waiver. |
| Shared a home or rent a room in someone else's home to keep rent costs low. | Use income or rental subsidy to fund the rental costs. | Work with your support team to figure out a budget, identify, and select a good fit. |
| Buy a home with a low interest microboard or other loan. See more about microboards below * | Use income or rental subsidy to fund the rental costs. | Research low interest loans and figure out what you can where, for how much, and what type of home you'd need. |
| Public housing is a housing unit owned and maintained by a local government. | Use income to pay for reduced rental costs. | See if your locality has public housing and get on waiting lists when they open. |

*ABOUT MICROBOARDS

A microboard is essentially a circle of support, a group of family and friends who care about a person with a disability and volunteer their time to help support that person. When a circle of support incorporates itself as a corporate entity, it can engage in business transactions on behalf of the individual with a disability and become a microboard. The microboard is an effective tool to make sure that this question of what happens to my loved one when we are no longer here can be answered.

What is a microboard?

- Circle of support providing ongoing advocacy to an individual with a disability.
- Registered, legal entity established through articles of incorporation and administered by a board of directors who follow an agreed upon set of bylaws.
- The board of directors are like-minded people who care about the individual and commit to understanding and advocating for them.

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WHO IS ON THE BOARD?

Just like a board of directors serving on behalf of a non-profit organization, the microboard similarly works together to support an individual with a disability. It includes: volunteers who care about the person and are willing to work together for their benefit; friends, neighbors, family members, former teachers and therapists, or anyone who may have a connection to the individual with a disability; people who can't or wouldn't be able to help on their own because of time, distance, or knowledge constraints, but could help as part of a larger team.

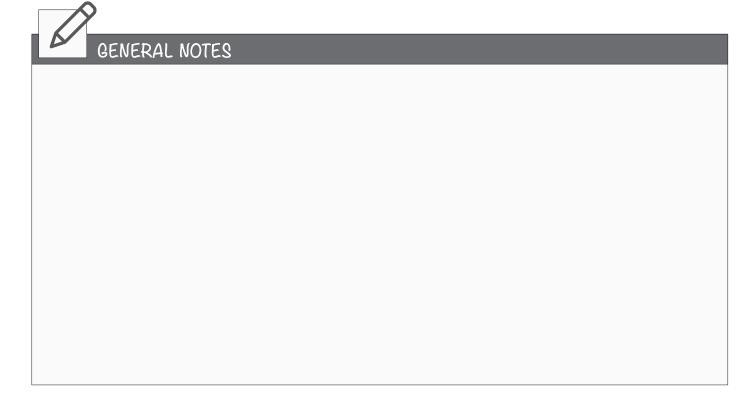
DETAILS OF THE BOARD

Often a microboard has a certain size, such as up to 9 members, with some serving in leadership positions. Meeting minutes are taken and recorded and all officers and members will need training to develop in-depth knowledge of the individual with a disability, their strengths, needs, preferences, routines, and services.

HOW IS THE BOARD CREATED?

In Virginia, microboards are registered as non-stock corporations through the State Corporation Commission (SCC). There is an initial registration fee and an annual fee to keep the board registered. You'll need to name a Director of your microboard, which is often the founding member, and establish an official address where you can receive mailings and notifications as needed. You will need to establish article of incorporation, as well as, bylaws. Bylaws describe how the microboard is run. Bylaws can also highlight key support areas for the individual such as having a running agenda that helps the board to discuss and address important topics such as housing, funding, and medical supports. Similar to a letter of intent, it can also contain the parents' wishes for their child and help guide the board as to how they make decisions about their advocacy efforts.

To learn more about establishing a Microboard, contact All Needs Planning https://allneedsplanning.com **804-223-1511**.



| NOTES | |
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| FIRST THOUGHTS ON VIABLE HOUSING MODELS? | HOUSING TOURS AND LOCATIONS? |
| FUNDING AVAILABLE? (e.g., Waiver, voucher, Ioan, SNT) | HOUSING MODELS TO EXPLORE FURTHER? |
| BUDGET COMPLETED? | CSB TOLD OF HOUSING PREFERENCE? |
| HOUSING SERVICE PROVIDER AND CONTACT? | HOUSING PLAN? |
| MOVE IN DATE? | HOUSING CHECKLIST COMPLETED? (from TP Housing Guide) |

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KEY PARTS OF A FULL LIFE

BUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Recreation and social activities are vital parts of a full and meaningful life, especially for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Beyond just having fun, these experiences offer opportunities to build friendships, develop independence, and strengthen communication and social skills. Whether it's joining a local art class, participating in inclusive sports, attending social clubs, or exploring hobbies, recreational programs can help young adults discover their passions and feel connected to their community. Included here are only a handful of recreation opportunities that are available. To see a full list of social and recreation opportunities that are both in-person and virtual, visit our Resource Library https://thearcofnova.org/resource-library/#recreation.

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION AGENCIES

All Northern Virginia localities have Therapeutic Recreation Offices providing recreation and leisure opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Offerings for young adults include adapted classes, social clubs, and summer camps. If you are new to the area, you may request that an assessment be completed to help the staff understand the needs of your child.

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Therapeutic Recreation
https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=45758 **703-746-4311**

ARLINGTON COUNTY

Department of Parks and Recreation
Therapeutic Recreation Office
https://parks.arlingtonva.us/therapeutic-recreation
703-228-4740

FAIRFAX COUNTY

Fairfax Therapeutic Recreation Services

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/therapeutic-recreation 703-324-5532

LOUDOUN COUNTY

https://www.loudoun.gov/1185/Adaptive-Recreation 703-777-0343

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

https://www.pwcva.gov/department/parks-recreation/inclusion-based-programs 703-792-8066

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Some online programs are also available.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church

https://www.novasova.org

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Manassas, Manassas Park, Prince William
https://www.specialolympicsva.org/rappahannock-region/area-23

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Loudoun County https://sovaloudoun.org

OUR STOMPING GROUND

https://ourstompingground.org

Our Stomping Ground builds inclusive residential communities that also offer a variety of programs including book clubs, games nights, art and fitness classes and more. Some events are only open to residents of a specific community, but others are open to anyone in the Northern VA area. Explore their event calendar to see what opportunities are available.

| NOTES | |
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| HOBBIES AND INTERESTS? | |
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| CLUBS? | |
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| CLASSES? | |
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| SOCIAL GROUPS? | |
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| SPORTS/REC GROUPS? | |
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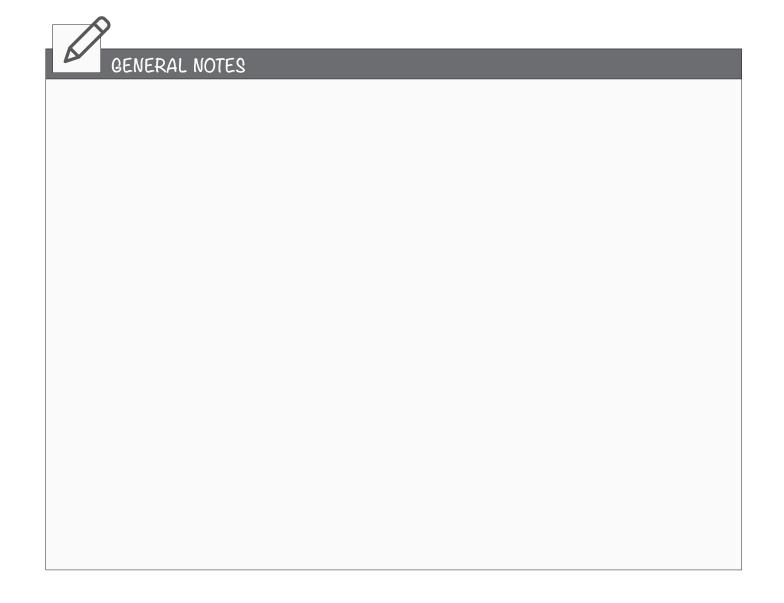
NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS

Navigating relationships and sexual health is an important aspect of adulthood, and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) deserve access to information and support that empowers them to build healthy, safe, and fulfilling relationships. As parents, guiding your child through this transition can feel overwhelming, but there are some resources available to help.

EASE (Empowerment Advocacy and Sexuality Education) https://www.easeeducates.org offers online and in-person classes for teens and adults with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities. EASE also offers Parent Workshops on how to talk with your child of any age about relationships and sex ed.

Elevatus Training https://www.elevatustraining.com offers self-study and online classes for parents.

Hello, It's Me https://hello-itsme.com is an inclusive fee based online platform designed to support individuals with IDD in building meaningful connections and enhancing social skills. The app offers interactive features such as story-based learning modules that teach real-life scenarios, relationship coaching, and opportunities for friendship and dating. Users can also participate in live virtual events like dance parties and karaoke sessions to foster community engagement.



GETTING AROUND IN THE COMMUNITY

People with disabilities may benefit from travel training and from reduced fares for Washington-area bus and subway. Taxi companies also provide reduced rates and special services for persons with disabilities.

NON-DRIVER IDENTIFICATION CARD

Since many reduced fare programs—whether for students, persons with a disability or senior citizens require proof of age and/or photo identification; a worthwhile first step is to obtain a non-driver identification card from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). These cards have no age restriction and are available for an adult or child who does not hold a learner's permit or driver's license.

You can request a medical indicator on their driver's license or identification card to signify conditions such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or intellectual disability (IntD). To obtain this indicator, applicants must provide a signed statement from a licensed physician confirming the diagnosis. This request is made during the application process at a Virginia DMV customer service center. Once approved, a "9" will appear in the restriction field on the front of the ID, with "ASD" or "IntD" decoded on the back, aiding law enforcement in recognizing communication needs during interactions.

All of the information a customer needs to prepare for a DMV visit is available on the DMV web site at https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/licenses-ids/id-cards

FREE STUDENT BUS PASSES

FAIRFAX COUNTY

Free bus passes are available to Fairfax County and City of Fairfax County/FCPS middle school and high school students (registered 7-12 grade ONLY). Students can sign up for the Free Student School Bus Program at all Fairfax County public high schools and middle schools, and ride the Fairfax Connector and City of Fairfax Cue bus for free. Find more information at your school's administration office. You need to have a parent's or quardians' approval to sign up.

FREE STUDENT BUS PASS + METROBUS

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/student-pass

Students attending Annandale, Davis Center, Falls Church, Justice, and Marshall can sign up for the Free Student Bus Pass + Metrobus Program. Students who attend these schools can ride Metrobus for FREE in Northern Virginia, along with Fairfax Connector and City of Fairfax CUE. When you sign up for the pass, you'll receive a specially designed and programmed SmarTrip card. This expanded program includes Fairfax Connector, Cue, and Metrobus access between 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. Visit the Fairfax Connector website.

ARLINGTON COUNTY

https://www.apsva.us/transportation-services/public-transportation

Students in Arlington can ride the Arlington Transit (ART) for free and can also register for a Student iRide SmarTrip card to ride approved WMATA Metrobus routes for free, and if the trip begins or ends in Arlington.

If a student does not have a Student iRide SmarTrip card, contact the Transportation Coordinator (TC) located onsite at your school or visit a Commuter Store.

ALEXANDRIA CITY AND LOUDOUN COUNTY

https://www.dashbus.com

https://www.loudoun.gov/bus

DASH buses in the City of Alexandria and buses in the Loudoun County Transit System are free for residents of those localities.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

https://omniride.com

OmniRide offers local buses in eastern and western Prince William County, Manassas and Manassas Park that operate along fixed routes that are free for residents. OmniRide also offers paratransit door to door service. For more information, visit https://omniride.com/omniride-access-paratransit-service.

TRAVEL TRAINING

A key element of independence is being able to get around on public transportation for one's work and social life.

- ECNV (The ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia) offers free travel training on Washington-area bus and subway routes for people with disabilities. www.ecnv.org
- WMATA https://www.wmata.com/service/accessibility/MetroReady-Travel-Training-and-System-Orientation.cfm offers MetroReady Travel Training at no cost to seniors and people with disabilities. MetroReady is short-term, comprehensive, intensive instruction designed to teach customers how to travel safely and independently on the accessible Metrobus and Metrorail public transportation systems.
- The Arc of Northern Virginia's Tech for Independent Living (TFIL) Program offers travel training experiences to gain independence and confidence. With hands-on guidance, participants will receive an orientation to the various transit systems throughout the DMV. These trips aim to boost safety awareness, introduce problem-solving skills, and promote independence. To learn more or register for an event, visit our website at https://thearcofnova.org/tfil-events/ or contact techforindependence@gmail.com.

METRO DISABILITY ID CARD

All jurisdictions in the Washington area offer reduced transportation fares, but you will first need to obtain a free Metro Disability ID card. You will need to complete an application and have a health care professional certify the individual's disability. Call 202-962-2700 or download an application from

http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/doc/Reduced_Fare_Application.pdf

The Metro Disability ID card is good on Metro buses in the District as well as ART in Arlington, CUE, Fairfax Connector, RideOn, TheBus, VRE and MARC also accept it.

REDUCED FARECARDS/BUS PASSES AND/OR SMARTRIP CARD

One option for reduced fares is a reduced fare bus pass or fare card (metro). Use your Metro Disability ID to purchase a SmarTrip card that is encoded for discount fares. This provides 50% off Metrorail and Metrobus fares for all reduced fare programs. Customers also receive a discounted fare on regional bus service providers that accept the SmarTrip card such as Alexandria Transit Company (DASH), Arlington Transition (ART), CUE Bus System (Fairfax), Fairfax Connector, and OmniRide/PRTC (Prince William County).

It is highly recommended that you register your SmarTrip card. If you lose it, you will get a replacement card for \$5 that includes the fare value of the lost card at the time you reported the loss. Add value to your SmarTrip card in any Metro station at the fare card machines or on Metrobus.

USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

A good place to start to learn about available routes is www.CommuterPage.com with links to Virginia and Maryland bus and rail services.

- · Alexandria www.dashbus.com
- Arlington www.arlingtontransit.com
- Fairfax <u>www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector</u>
- Fairfax City www.cuebus.org

DISABLED PLACARD/PLATES

In Virginia you need to get a MED-10 form for a disabled parking placard or license plate. You can pick one up at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), or you can get one from their website at http://dmv.state.va.us.. A physician must fill out the form. Bring the completed form to the DMV. You can get a placard or a plate, or both. Placards offer flexibility since you can move it into any car in which you are the driver or a passenger. You will need to pay a fee and you will receive your placard or plate on the spot. You can do it by mail, but the process does take longer.

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PARATRANSIT OPTIONS

MetroAccess is the area's ADA paratransit service that provides shared-ride, door-to-door service that operates during the same hours of operation as corresponding Metrorail and bus service. Unlike non-emergency medical transportation, MetroAccess is a shared ride public transportation service for people who are unable to use the accessible fixed-route Metrobus and Metrorail public transit due to disability. MetroAccess can be used for any trip purpose within 3/4 of a mile of areas serviced by Metrobus and Metrorail, during the same hours of operation as regular Metrobus and Metrorail service. "Shared ride" means that multiple passengers may ride together in the same vehicle.

To be eligible for MetroAccess service, a person must meet one of the following conditions:

- (1) Have a disability as defined by the ADA AND be unable as a result of disability to utilize fixed-route transportation (Metrobus and Metrorail);
- OR (2) Need to use a ramp or wheelchair lift to use a public transit vehicle, but an accessible public transit vehicle is not being used at the time, date, and on the route you would travel. (Please note: All Metrobuses are wheelchair accessible);
- OR (3) Be unable to travel to or from a bus stop or rail station due to a disability.

An application must be completed and certified by a health care professional detailing your disability and the need for paratransit services. To apply, you can download an application at https://www.wmata.com/service/accessibility/metro-access/eligibility.cfm. You will then need to set up an in-person appointment with the Transit Accessibility Center of by calling (202) 962-2700. You may register to travel with a personal care assistant at the time of application. The personal care assistant rides free of charge when travelling with you on MetroAccess.

Once you have been approved, you can schedule your ride 1-7 days in advance by calling **301-562-5360**, TTY **301-588-7535** or book online. Fare is calculated by doubling the fastest comparable route fare on bus and/or Metrorail up to \$4.50 each way.

TOPS (TRANSPORTATION, OPTIONS, PROGRAMS & SERVICES)

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/transportation/tops

TOPS provides subsidized transportation funds on an easy-to-use debit card for eligible older adults, persons with disabilities, and those with limited income who are residents of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church. TOPS connects riders with a variety of transportation modes and options including taxicabs, rideshare services (Uber and Lyft), public transportation, and Capital BikeShare rentals, enabling them to travel affordably, safely, and independently.

STAR (ARLINGTON COUNTY)

STAR https://www.arlingtontransit.com/star is the paratransit component of Arlington Transit – ART. ART provides public fixed route bus services in Arlington County. STAR serves Arlington residents who have difficulty using public fixed route transit due to the effects of age or disability. STAR is a shared ride paratransit service intended to provide a comparable level of transportation as provided by ART, Metrobus and Metrorail. STAR riders share trips if they are generally traveling in the same direction at the same time. Trips are scheduled, with a few exceptions, without regard to the purpose of the trip. All rides are arranged in advance through the STAR Call Center, or online through their website. STAR riders must preplan activities and schedule STAR trips in advance as same day service is generally not available.

Arlington County residents currently certified eligible for MetroAccess are automatically certified for STAR. Rides are provided on a curb-to-curb basis. Drivers park in front of the address and assist riders into and out of the vehicle.

FASTRAN (FAIRFAX COUNTY)

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/fastran

Fastran offers specialized transportation services for residents of Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church participating in human services agency programs. To apply, request an application by calling **703-222-9764**.

MODIVCARE

https://www.modivcare.com

Transportation for Medicaid recipients to a non-emergency Medicaid-covered service.

DOT

https://www.alexandriava.gov/Paratransit

DOT is the City of Alexandria's specialized transportation service for residents of Alexandria and visitors who cannot use regular transit buses or rail due to their disability. Trips are provided by taxicabs and wheelchair accessible vans.

EXPLORE THE POTENTIAL FOR DRIVING

The **Woodrow Wilson Workforce Center (WWRC)** offers comprehensive driving services. Driving services are managed and provided through the Occupational Therapy (OT) Department. This state-certified program is comprised of Certified Driving Instructors (CDI's) and Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (CDRS's).

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Occupational Therapy Driving Evaluation (1/2 day): this is a prerequisite for any other driving service at WWRC. Occupational Therapists assess vision, perception, cognition and motor skills in order to determine an individual's feasibility for obtaining a driver's license. For more information, visit http://www.wwrc.virginia.gov/DrivingServices.htm
- Learner's Permit Class (4 weeks)
- Driver's Training (4-6 weeks): Behind-the-Wheel training provided by an Occupational Therapist or a Certified Driving Instructor. A valid learner's permit is required.
- Other Driving Services: Evaluation and training in use of adapted driving controls; evaluation and training in management of mobility devices for vehicles, evaluation of van needs for drivers.

SERVICESOURCE

https://www.servicesource.org/drivers-permit-prep offers Driver's Permit Prep, a study group to help students prepare for the written portion of the permit test. The study group is conducted virtually and consists of 8 sessions, each lasting 1.5 hours. These classes are eligible to students with disabilities ages 16-22 and who are receiving Pre-ETS services through DARS. Attendees will learn:

- The testing process and requirements (including practice questions for Part I and Part II of the permit test)
- Traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings
- Safe driving techniques and other important information
- Accommodation Request Process

To learn more contact your DARS counselor or reach out to ServiceSource at 703-223-9331.

DRIVER REHABILITATION CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE (DRCE)

https://www.driverrehabcenter.com

The DRCE provides comprehensive, individualized driver evaluation and training services. The center offers adaptive driving instruction tailored to meet an individual's unique physical, cognitive, or sensory needs. Services include clinical assessments, behind-the-wheel training with specialized vehicles, and the use of adaptive equipment.

BLUE ENVELOPE PROGRAM

The Blue Envelope Program is a tool that helps drivers with autism during traffic stops or accidents. It informs officers that the driver may communicate differently and gives instructions to make the interaction easier. You can request a Blue Envelope at any Virginia DMV customer service center. There is no cost, and no documentation is required. Caregivers or guardians may also request one on behalf of someone with autism. For more information, visit https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/BlueEnvelope.



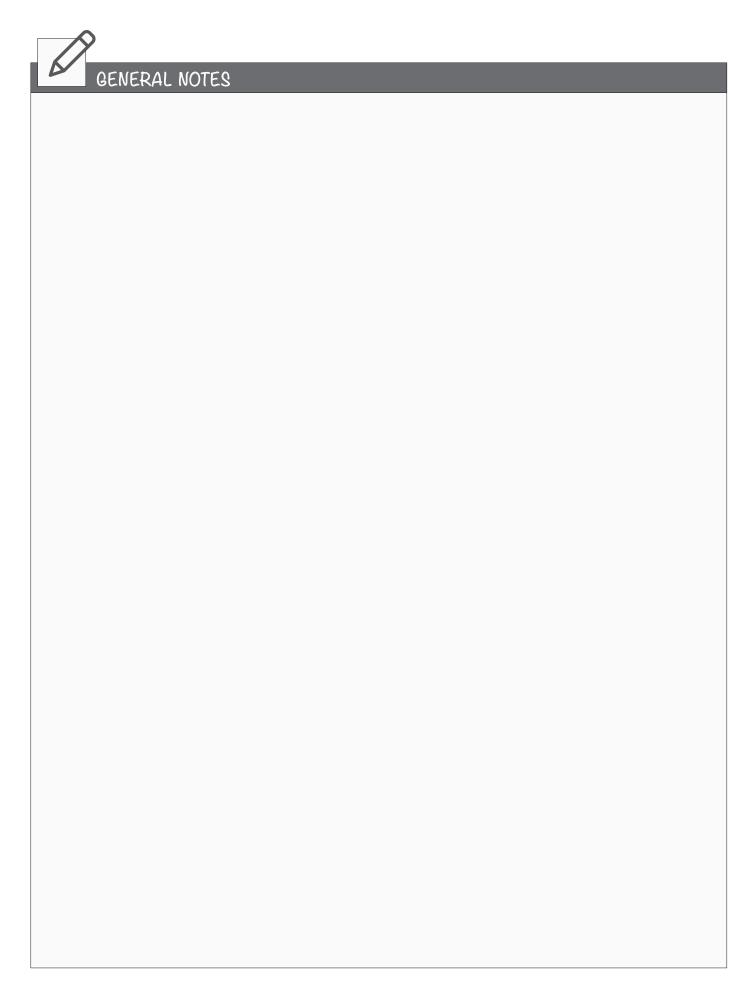
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112 TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE | KEY PARTS OF A FULL LIFE





ADDITIONAL STATE AND NATIONAL RESOURCES



PARENT EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY TRAINING CENTER (PEATC)

https://peatc.org

PEATC offers one-on-one consultations, trainings, workshops, webinars, and fact sheets on navigating special education and transition planning.

PACERS (NATIONAL PARENT CENTER ON TRANSITION AND EMPLOYMENT)

http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/independent-community-living/self-determination.asp

Offers resources for families, educators, and professionals to support effective transition planning. The center emphasizes self-advocacy, family engagement, and inclusive practices to improve outcomes for young people with disabilities.

PARENT CENTER HUB

https://www.parentcenterhub.org

Is a central resource for the network of Parent Centers across the U.S. It provides information, tools, and training materials to support families of children with disabilities. The Hub offers resources on special education, transition to adulthood, and family engagement, helping parents navigate services and advocate effectively for their children's needs.

GLOSSARY OF COMMON ACRONYMS

A

ABA: Applied Behavior Analysis

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ADLs: Activities of Daily Living

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

AT: Assistive Technology

Ability One:

ABLE Accounts: Achieving a Better Life Experience

B

BI Waiver: Building Independence Waiver

C

CCC+: Commonwealth Coordinated Care

CMS: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

CIL: Center for Independent Living

CDS: Consumer Directed Services

CL Waiver: Community Living Waiver

CSB: Community Services Board

CTS: Career and Transition Services

D

DD: Developmental Disability

DABS: Diagnostic Adaptive Behavior Scale

DAC – Disabled Adult Child

DBHDS: Department of Behavioral Health

and Developmental Services

DDS: Disability Determination Service

DMAS: Department of Medical Assistance Services

DARS: Department of Aging and

Rehabilitative Services

DSP – Direct Support Professional

DSS: Department of Social Services

Е

ESY: Extended School Year

EPSDT: Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic,

and Treatment

F

FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education

FIS Waiver: Family and Individual Supports Waiver

G

GAL: Guardian Ad Litem

GSE: Group Supported Employment

Н

HCBS: Home and Community-Based Services

HCV: Housing Choice Voucher

HIPP: Health Insurance Premium Payment program

HIPAA: Health Insurance Portability and

Accountability Act

IDD: Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

IEP: Individualized Education Program

IFSP: Individualized Family Support Program

IPE: Individual Plan for Employment

ISE: Individual Supported Employment

IRWE: Impairment Related Work Expenses

ISP: Individual Service Plan

L

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment

LTSS: Long-Term Services and Supports

P

PCA: Personal Care Attendant

PERS: Personal Emergency Response System

PERT: Post-Secondary Education Rehabilitation

and Transition Program

POA: Power of Attorney

Pre-ETS: Pre-Employment and Transition Services

S

SSI: Supplemental Security Income

SIS: Support Intensity Scale

SDS: Self-Directed Services

SGA: Substantial Gainful Activity

SSA: Social Security Administration

SRAP: State Rental Assistance Program

SNT: Special Needs Trust

SSDI: Social Security Disability Insurance

SPED: Special Education

T

TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

U

UAI: Uniform Assessment Instrument

V

VR: Vocational Rehabilitation

VIDES: Virginia Individual Developmental

Eligibility Survey

W

WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

WIC: Work Incentives Coordinator

WIPA: Work Incentives Planning and Assistance **WWRC**: Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center

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OTHER GUIDES IN THIS SERIES:

Starting Life with Your Child with a Disability
Getting the Most from Special Education
Entering the World of Work
Finding a Home for Adults with Disabilities
Aging with a Disability



Providing Opportunities, Information, Networking and Transition Support