

8. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

This section will leave you with the key messages communicated throughout the Guide in each of the previous sections.

You are going to have to work hard to help your child prepare for adult life. The system is not going to do this for you. The best transition plan is not going to guarantee that the supports and services you would like for your child will be available at the conclusion of your transition process. You will need to be creative and consider ways to support your child beyond the traditional service system.

These are some of the key messages that this guide will leave you with as you begin the transition planning process with your child.

- It is never too early to start planning - start thinking about your plan before your child is in high school. There are many things you can do from an early age to prepare for the changes ahead.
- From a very young age, you can begin building self-reliance skills to encourage a move to a more independent life as an adult.
- Your vision should be a long-term objective – one that is achieved in incremental steps by identifying activities to complete on a year-by-year basis. Most importantly, this vision should be done with the active involvement of your child.
- Establish a vision for your family. Your plans for the future need to be considered and factored into the development of the plan for your child.
- Be prepared to have to initiate things for yourself. Do not wait for the education system to create a plan for you. Do not wait for your service providers to create a plan for you. Do not assume that the service system will provide support when your child turns 21. It will be up to you to create your child's future.
- Calls to agencies and professionals that you may not have spoken to before could be intimidating at first but being organized and prepared before you call will make the task seem less daunting. Use the tools and the resources provided in this document to help you get started.

- Find creative people, energetic people, positive people that will surround you with the type of support you need as you enter this major time in your child's life. Speak to your child's teacher to find a parent in your area or speak to an access agency. They will connect you to other parents or parent groups. If you do not find an appropriate group, then consider starting your own.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM EXPERIENCED PARENTS...



"Do your research and know what you are asking for."

"You can't rely on the system - government funding isn't secure and it won't ever replace the importance of valued relationships."

"You have got to start to think differently and figure out something for the future or you and your son or daughter are going to be sitting at home together all day watching TV."

"Get yourself connected to some parent groups through an agency – stay involved – in whatever way you can including volunteering your time – it's a great way to get connected with others. Get newsletters – it's a way of getting information."

"Everyone has the capacity to dream and to see their child as a person with gifts - you have to find the way to change your view point."

