

LEARNING MODULE #6

Part 2 of 2

TRANSITION PLANNING

Part 2 will include the remaining topics:

4. Transition To Adulthood
5. Strategies For Successful Transitions
6. Transition To Adulthood - Planning Tools

4. Transition to Adulthood

The Ministry of Education publication “Career and Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs” suggests that an early, multi-year, career and life-centered planning process provides time to address the challenges facing students and helps to translate plans into actions. Transition planning may involve school personnel, school district staff, a facilitator from community services such as Ministry for Children and Families Community Living Services, day program personnel, parents and the student themselves. The main purpose of transition planning for adulthood, is to ensure that the student and his/her family achieve the type of future that they have envisioned. The school needs to know the **dream** for the student as an adult so that the student can begin to participate in activities within the community during the school day/week, which will continue on after the student leaves school. This will help to make the transition to adulthood occur more smoothly. We want the student and family to be able to feel like they are stepping into adulthood and not having to take a leap. The **last year of school should mirror the student's life as an adulthood** as close as is possible. Visits to day programs can begin in some communities as well. It is recommended that the resource teacher contact the local day program to find out which kinds of activities they have to offer. This can be done through an internet search for BCACL (the B.C. Association for Community Living).

Readings

- **Developing an Individual Support Plan for an Adult.** A practical guide for adults and those who support them who develop and submit an individual support plan to CLBC.

http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/policies_and_publications/documents/GuidanceforPersonalSupportPlanDevelopment-ADULTS-FortheWeb.pdf

Guiding principles for this document include...

- Career and life transition planning should enhance the student’s adult life.
- Career and life transitions planning should be integrated into existing individual curriculum planning activities at school, particularly in the last year.

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- Students' skills and interests (motivators) should be the primary determinants in selecting the goals for the future that will translate into the student's adult life during the transition process.
- Family or guardians as well as the student (if appropriate), should be helped to become effective self-advocates and knowledgeable users of services. The resource teacher needs to organize several meetings and begin to ask the family key questions in order to support the family and student through this process.

- Successful transition planning to adulthood, requires communication and co-operation amongst parents, students, educators, adult service providers, social workers and natural supports within the community.



Readings

- [Transition Planning For Youth With Special Needs, A Community Support Guide, Ministry of Children and Family](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/support_guide.pdf)
http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs/pdf/support_guide.pdf

Reference Folder

- Refer to the reference section in this module for the "Transition Checklist" to help guide the case manager through the process of gathering information and assisting the family to prepare for the student's transition to adulthood.

4.1 Recommended Processes For Transition To Adult Life

Refer to the "Student Transition Diary" in the resource materials at the end of this module. This document, from the Ministry of Education publication: [Career /Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs](#), provides a step by step plan from Grade 8 through 12 to guide school teams, families and students through sequential steps in the transition planning process. The diary also creates a public record of the plan itself, assisting students and teams to focus their efforts on achieving meaningful education goals.

Readings

- "Student Transition Diary" from [Career/Life Transitions for Student with Diverse Needs - A Resource Guide for School](#), Ministry of Education, Special

Programs Branch 2001

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_clt_resource_rb0144.pdf

4.2 Financial Services

Community Living Services is an extremely important resource for students and their caregivers in the transition to adulthood. Children's services have currently returned to the Ministry for Children and Family Development under CYSN (Children and Youth with Special Needs). Eligibility there is through Developmental Disability (as per DSM1V), Autism Spectrum Disorder, or those who are eligible for the "At Home Program". "CLBC" (Community Living B.C.) is a crown corporation (under MHSD) responsible for adult services for people who meet the DSM1V determination of "Developmental Disability". The new expanded eligibility called "Personal Supports Initiative" (PSI) is determined by a diagnosis of "FASD" (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder) or ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and "Adaptive Functioning" if 3 deviations below norm.

Community Living Services has excellent web site that details their services:

<http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/>

Families, School teams and Communities may also want to explore:

- What **supported employment** can look like for people with disabilities (e.g., an adult in a power wheelchair with an attendant in Victoria who is paid to walk dogs for a local veterinarian). What does "inclusion" look like for adults with disabilities? What kinds of support are available for parents with disabilities?
- What are other districts are doing regarding transition into adulthood? (e.g., one School District has employed part time workers to support individuals after they have left school to investigate job opportunities).
- Support from local people, friends and extended family. (The more we ask others to help, the more open we are to new solutions).

Reference Folder

- **Refer to the reference section for this module for "Erica's Calendar" for examples of community activities from Ft. Nelson for their student.**
- Identify and implement a transition process (e.g. PISP's Long Range Planning, MAPS (McGill Action Planning System) or PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows of Hope). Build in follow-up with subsequent team meetings each year. Parents report frustration in transition planning with lack of follow-through on actions from individuals at meetings. People change and situations change. Subsequently, transition plans need to be altered and updated.

- A person should be identified for the student to provide support as an advocate for the student long after s/he leaves school. Some examples could include family members or a friend who establishes a "life long" advocacy. A community advocacy group builds expertise and knowledge and promotes long-term advocacy and responsibility. This is where it may be helpful to organize a "microboard". (This will be explored later in this section.)

We need to begin advocating early. Advocates do have power. Vocal people can often effect trends and funding. Parents can...

- Write proposals
- Visit proposed settings and options to see if these are really appropriate
- Approach volunteer bureaus for help
- Tap into what the regular students are getting (e.g., career preparation, etc.)

Points to Ponder

- Reflect on a student with special needs in high school. What does this person's current curriculum look like?
- What are the barriers to transition planning as outlined in the Student Diary? How would you manage those barriers?
- What support does the student and family need from the school and from the community?
- What success transition to adulthood stories can you share?

4.3 Funds For Equipment As An Adult

Often school teams and family ask, "*What can we do once our student becomes an adult and SET BC equipment is reclaimed?*" The case manager might contact CAYA through SET BC to fill in a request form for any equipment the student may currently be using through SET BC, which they feel may facilitate the student's participation and learning once s/he is an adult. The plan should demonstrate the student's need for the equipment to support work, volunteer, or service related activities in the community.

Readings

- **Communication Assistance for Young Adults (CAYA)** is a project created through Special Education Technology BC (SET-BC) to serve adults over the age of 19 who require alternative or augmentative communication (AAC) assistance. <http://www.cayabc.org/>

This process should be initiated early, as we don't want to have any down time if possible for students being without their access switches and voice output equipment.

5. Strategies For Successful Transitions

In this section we'll consider only a few of many educational and social considerations that can provide significant support for successful transitions.

5.1 Peer Support

A buddy system (e.g., "peer support group") established with age appropriate peers at the student's current school is extremely helpful for transitions (whether from classroom to classroom or school to school). These students will become an important part of the student's support system in the receiving school. A peer support group is a specific group of students who meet regularly to brainstorm ways to support the student in his/her inclusion within the school at large. It is important that peers know how to facilitate each of the skills that the student is working on (e.g., switch use, hand use, choice making, etc.) These peers should know how to actually assist or prompt the student in these activities to make their involvement meaningful for the student.



This peer has been shown how to assist this student with hand over handgrip on a felt pen with a ponytail holder.



This classmate has learned how to prompt this student at the elbow to use her voice output during the buddy reading activity.

The teaching assistant needs to model, explain, then step back and encourage the peer to take over the activity with the student. Peers need to know how to assist the student to participate at his/her own level rather than stepping in and doing the activity for the student. The teaching assistant then moves to the role of **facilitator** between peer and student, and allows the peer to have the "**hands-on**" experience with the student. Peers can be encouraged to link up with the special needs student if they are aware of similar interests. Sometimes it is helpful to **brainstorm mutual interests** and then engage in a phone number exchange to increase friendships. It may also be helpful for the family of the special needs student to complete a recreation or **leisure inventory**. This will also help school teams realize where they need to broaden leisure experiences for the student. It is also important for resource teachers to do an inventory of places of business and recreation for their local community so that activities in some of these locations can begin to be programmed into the student's schedule.

Reference Folder

- Refer to the reference section at the end of this module for “Leisure Activities Checklist” as an example of one of many leisure inventories that exist.
- Refer to the reference section for this module for the Ft. Nelson "Community Service Guide" as an example of a community search for possible adult activities.

Points To Ponder

- If asked to pull together a peer support group, who is interested in and knows the student well? Where would I draw this group from?
- Are my student’s peers aware of the skills that the student is working on?
- Do classmates know through scripted routines and graduated prompting how to facilitate an interaction (e.g., through switch work, hand use, choice making, etc.) without “taking over” for the student?
- What do “meaningful interactions” between my student and his/her peers look like?

5.2 "Friends of...Club"

This strategy or social planning tool was developed by Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint from Inclusion Press and involves neighbours, classmates, relatives and friends who are invited to the family's home to brainstorm how they can help expand the student's social network. The following are some strategies for this process:

- List the student's interests and regular activities (including chores such as getting a haircut).
- Ask individuals to commit to one activity per month based on a mutual interest (e.g., swimming; going to the library to pick out some books, etc.).
- The facilitator develops a calendar, which outlines everyone's commitments. This calendar is flexible and goes out with a newsletter once a month to keep everyone motivated and informed about changes and progress.
- It is good to designate a facilitator or advocate for the student other than the family so that they don't feel that they are begging for assistance. The facilitator doesn't need to be a professional.

Outcomes: Some students have indicated that they have more choice over their lives and more independence. Community involvement is seen as being more "adult-like", whereas staying at home is viewed as more "child-like". The student may learn more acceptable behaviours. This process also relieves the parents from total responsibility for social activities. The student will learn to generalize social skills and become more outgoing over time by modeling more appropriate independent behaviours.

A Demonstration video, entitled "Friends of...Clubs", may be ordered through Inclusion Press, 24 Thome Crescent, Toronto, Ont. M6H 2S5, Tel/FAX: 416-658-5363 or do a Google search for "Inclusion Press".

It is important to do a survey of what the student might realistically be doing when s/he leaves school prior to facilitating this activity. If the student will be living with his/her family, or visiting his/her family on weekends, the resource teacher needs to know what kinds of activities the family enjoys doing, so that these can be considered for the adult's schedule.

Ideally, this social calendar is implemented in the last year of school so that this plan is well in place by the time the student is ready to transfer completely into the community and adulthood. The student could very well be living 50% of the school schedule outside of the school by mid-year and 80% outside in the community by the end of the school year.

Reference Folder

- Refer to the reference section for this module for examples of social calendars including "Sample Calendar", "Sample Internet Environmental Scan", "Hobbies" and "Leisure Inventories".

5.3 Scheduling In Community Involvement

Community involvement is a recommended component of many students' educational programs.

Not only does the community provide real life opportunities for functional skill development, it also widens the student's circle of support to include more people. Ultimately the community is the very environment we want our student to transition to. Our students need lots of exposure and practice to acquire the awareness and skills to be successful.



But community does not mean just going to the store once a week to mail a letter. We need to define community in a broader sense. Community can mean the school itself, the neighborhood, as well as community recreation and leisure opportunities and potential job sites. The school should contact the local day program provider and dovetail with activities that are already in place for other similar adults. What are some Community Opportunities our students can participate in?

Community	Opportunities
School	Classes, Recess / Breaks, Lunch Time, Art, Drama, Foods Class, Technology, Gym., Music, Choir, Assemblies, Dances, Spectator at Sporting Events (basketball ?), Jobs at School
Church	Attending Services, Youth Group Activities, Volunteer Opportunities
Community Recreation /Leisure	Swimming, Fitness Programs, Games, Outdoor Activities - (e.g., walking, hiking, jogging, hiking, biking, paddling, sailing, etc.)
Community Events	Movies, Local Theatre, Concerts, Markets, Festivals, Sporting Events
Retail / Business Community	Shopping - Grocery Stores, Malls, Neighborhood Markets, Garage Sales, Errands - Banking, Post Office / Mailing Letters, Recycling
Restaurants	Going for coffee or tea, Eating out at local restaurants

Some school teams have done a task analysis for all of the local community businesses. This is important for our special needs person. These **community matrixes** need to be streamlined to the individual's **skills and motivators**. (Refer to samples of these in your reference section for this module.) Developing a social calendar is an excellent tool to support this planning as well. When merging into the community, the student's resource teacher may find it helpful to develop a one-page skills sheet which helps to outline for those encountered in community activities, what the student is working on now and as an adult. What should a student's schedule look like in the last year of school?

Reading

- Including Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities in Typical Classrooms, June E. Downing, Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co., 2008, Chapter 7 - The Highschool Student: pp 185 - Preparing for adulthood paragraph; pps. 200 - 209 - Community based instruction sections; & Transition to Postsecondary schools & adult life.

Reference Folder

- Refer to the "Special Needs Work Experience".
- Refer to "Sample Adult Motivators" for an example of applications to the local

community activities (both service related and leisure) for someone who is in their last year of school.

- Refer to the activity matrix called “Community Activity Adult Matrix” in which local businesses are sited in relation to the student’s motivators and possible active participation for leisure, home and work or community service activities.
- Refer to “Adult Skills” for a sample list of skills, which can be shared with those in the community to help them see the student/adult a life long learner.
- Refer to the reference "Last Year's Schedule".

Points to Ponder

- What presence does your student have in your local community?
- Which community activities is your student currently involved in?
- Does your student’s community connection need to be increased? If so, in what way and how can you incorporate this into the school program?

6. Transition To Adulthood - Planning Tools (e.g., P.A.T.H. - Planning Alternative Tomorrows of Hope)

The following are some strategies and tools for your student’s family and school to be aware of as s/he moves into the last year of school. These can be very useful tools and there are resources available to help the family and team explore these further if and when they are interested.

6.1 P.A.T.H. (Planning Alternative Tomorrows of Hope)

This is a planning tool that is used by many school districts and helps to solidify the plan for the future in the last few years of school. This tool should help us script out the student’s activities for the last few years in school so that we can begin putting “the dream” into place now. Even students with severe disabilities can be involved in activities that provide some service to others in their community. Refer to examples in the video: Transition To Adulthood found on this website and created by P.I.S.P. The following are some examples of real students’ contributions in B.C. over the last several years...

- One student on Quadra Island who is deaf and blind, used his switch to help make dog biscuits, which he sells at the local market on Saturdays. (Refer to Cameron on the video: **Transition To Adulthood**. www.pisp.ca)
- Another student from Victoria began selling muffins, which he helped make with his switch and some choice making and tangible objects, at the local café. After he left school, he continued for a while to run this very small business as a way of connecting with others and providing a service. He now works with his

adult workers to create and sell crafts. (Refer to Justin on the video: Transition To Adulthood. www.pisp.ca)

- Another student in the Queen Charlottes offers juice and cookies to some of the seniors who live on one floor at the hospital for afternoon snack as a service activity once a week. (Refer to Kathleen on the video: Transition To Adulthood. www.pisp.ca)

If you have done so already, view the video: **Transition To Adulthood**, found in the video section at www.pisp.ca
Or go directly to this link and click on the video to download:
<http://www.pisp.ca/video/index.html>



- Refer to Inclusion Press website for demonstration videos and more information regarding the PATH planning tool. You can do a Google search or click on this link: <http://www.inclusion.com/path.html>

Readings

- Planning Alternative Tomorrows of Hope, Pearpoint, J., O'Brien, J., & Forest, M., Introduction to PATH
<http://www.inclusion.com/vdpathtraining.html>
- Your Future Now, Transition To Adulthood, Ministry of Education.
http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/spec_needs?adulthood.htm

Reference Folder

- Refer to "PATH Guidelines" for guidelines in facilitating a PATH meeting.
- Refer to the "PATH Sample " for an example of what a PATH might look like for a student with severe multiple disabilities.

Points To Ponder

- What is the dream for my student's family?
- What are we working on that will support this dream being carried out?
- What are some of the stumbling blocks you have experienced in transition planning? What solutions do you propose?

6.2 Transition Checklist

Historically, special education parents have expressed some of the following needs:

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- the need to start early planning for transition to adulthood
- action plans sometimes are not implemented
- the ITP (Individual Transition Plan) needs to be holistic; all issues need to be addressed (e.g., health, relationships, housing, finances, assistance when parents die, etc.)
- a dream or vision for the future needs to be identified
- the need for a facilitator from the community living association to identify grants, agencies, resources, government programs, etc.
- the special education teacher may have limited experience or knowledge about career counseling or job search; likewise, the career counselor may have limited knowledge about severely disabled students and their skills and how best to explore service related activities within the local community.

Teachers and social workers need to begin working with families early on to address what needs to be in place to support students after they leave school. For a quick and easy step-by-step approach to planning for transition to adulthood, check out the reference tool - "Transition Adulthood Step By Step".

Reference Folder

- Refer to "Transition Checklist" for actions to consider, regarding key information and resources the school case manager should be encouraged to use to guide the student's family.
- Refer to "Transition Adulthood Step by Step" for a summary of steps for the case manager to take to prepare for transition to adulthood.
- Refer to "Transition Form Sample" produced by School District 58 as a sample.

6.3 Housing Options & Other Daytime Community Services

The student's family may decide that s/he will continue to live with them indefinitely. However, various housing options might also be considered either for now or when the student leaves school. Some families have their child live with them during the week but their child lives with a foster family on the weekends. Other families have their child live with the foster family during the week and the child comes home for a one-night sleep over during the weekend. Some families alternate week ends with foster families. There are many creative solutions that may assist a student's family when they are in their teens as well as help to prepare for transition as an adult.

The Victoria Association for Community Living has developed a booklet for families called "A Home Of My Own" which outlines various options and considerations for families regarding transition to adulthood. Your local association may have something similar, which you can request.

6.4 Microboards

Some families with special needs children have chosen to use micro-boards to broaden the advocacy group around their child as s/he becomes an adult.

Micro-boards often consist of a few selected friends, family or acquaintances that are invited by the family or special needs person to be part of their board. These persons usually are invited because they are committed to knowing the person over time and having reciprocal relationships with them. Relationships are the most important component of a micro-board. In the past in B.C., a minimum of five people must be on the micro-board to satisfy the legal requirement for the Provincial Society Act. It is a good idea not to have too many people on the micro-board as this can become unmanageable as well. Many parents who use micro-boards have indicated that they feel comforted knowing that there are caring other people who are there to support their child, should something happen to them. Also, there are others to assist with sorting out care issues and exploring resources for their child who is now a young adult. The responsibilities are spread throughout the group instead of falling on one person's shoulders. If you are interested in learning more about micro-boards check out the web site for VELA. If your student's family would like some assistance in setting up their own micro-board for their child, the VELA group is funded by the ministry to assist families in doing this. They will facilitate this free of charge for families.

Reading

- VELA Microboard - free planning resource for families, includes PATH facilitation <http://www.microboard.org>

6.5 Tools For Transition To Adulthood


Teachers should think about preparing materials that can help to transfer knowledge from school based assistants to new adult workers, whom sometimes change. Developing tools that can help to encourage consistency in expectations for the student's participation as an adult, is crucial. The following are some suggestions...

6.5.1 Adult Day Planners

How will new people get to know this individual and interact with them?

Some strategies can include the following...

- modeling interactions with new people on a one-to-one basis
- providing a video of how the individual communicates
- create a Day Planner with communication tools and some of the above information readily available
- create a one-page list of how the individual can communicate and provide this to people the person interacts with routinely


	<p>I am happy when ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>I can be independent and choose my activities.</u> • <u>I hang out with my friends.</u> • <u>I can wheel away when I'm finished on activity - before I get frustrated.</u> • <u>I've had enough sleep.</u> • <u>I go swimming on Wednesdays and to music on Thursdays.</u>
<p>A personal dictionary should be included for individuals who are non-verbal and use gestures, facial expressions or vocalizations to communicate.</p>	<p>Other pages can be included to provide information about motivators, how the individual participates, prompts, and any tips, which may assist with fostering positive behaviours.</p>

Reference Folder

- Refer to the sample called "Adult Day Planner", with more detailed information in your Reference Folder.

6.5.2 How I Make Choices

It is also important that resource teachers create tools that can help new adult workers visualize exactly how the student communicates. If the student is moving to a group home, a poster could be made with pictures of the many ways the student communicates, and mounted on the wall in his/her room.

	<p>You can offer me a choice between 2 objects, which are held up in front of me. I will look at the one I want.</p>
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Reference Folder

- Refer to the reference folder for this module for "How I Make Choices" sample.

6.5.3 Adult Handbook

It is also suggested that the resource teacher create a handbook to help guide new adult workers and possible group home workers, as well as adult day program people to know how best to support the individual to be a life long participant. Key areas to include are:

- Personal Dictionary
- Skills

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- Motivators
- Ideas for participation using switches & augmentative communication (if appropriate)
- How I Make Choices sample
- Special considerations that are specific to the individual

Reference Folder

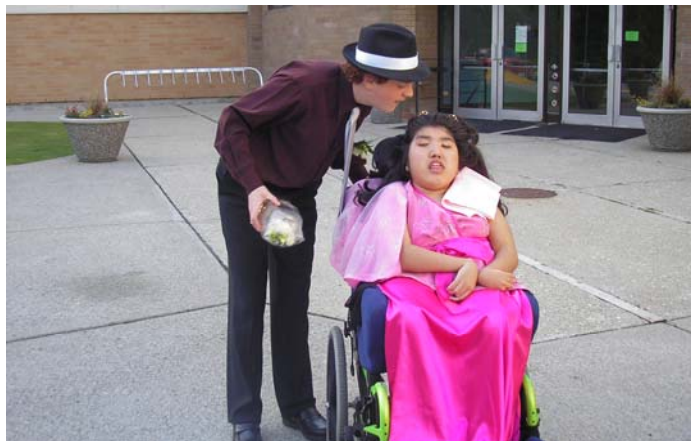
- Refer to the link for the Handbook shell here:
<http://www.pisp.ca/strategies/strategies153.pdf>

Points To Ponder

- What kinds of activities or services could your student provide for some of the businesses in your area? (e.g., conference centres, restaurants, department stores, courier service, laundry mat, hair salon, recreation centre, café, etc.)
- How might the student's activities actually enhance sales for a local business?

Conclusion

Effective transitions involve the collaborative effort of many people. We have explored how and why this process needs to be initiated early on so that it may be evidenced in the student's curriculum planning. This is particularly important in the years before the transition to adulthood. Informed peers are critical aspects of effective transition planning, whether from classroom to classroom or school to school. We have also discussed how systemic thinking and planning within communities and ministries is essential in order for us to improve our existing methods of transition to adulthood. Hopefully the peers who are currently part of the support groups for these students will be part of the systemic problem solving in the years to come. Meanwhile, we need to ensure that we are diligent in following up with regular meetings to revisit our proposed actions. We need to keep everyone accountable and involved in the transition process.



Graduating from high school ... celebrating transition to adulthood!