

**Transition Planning:
Tips for Making the School to Adulthood Transition Meaningful and Productive,
Without Losing Your Mind Along the Way**

Presented by Laurie Jerue
Illinois Parents of Adults with Developmental Disabilities, Unite!
December 7, 2018

TIP #1: THINK ABOUT AUGUST.

***Understand transition and the critical role you and your child play in making it successful. You have rights and responsibilities. If you're not sure what those are, ask! If you get stuck or can't imagine what life will be like when school services end, think about August or summer break, when there are no school services. Multiply August times twelve months, and there's your future. Whose job do you think it is to ensure your son/daughter makes the most seamless transition into adulthood? If you guessed YOU and YOUR CHILD, you're right! 😊**

TIP #2: REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING NOW IN SCHOOL, WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE SCHOOL-BASED AND WHICH COULD POTENTIALLY BE SUSTAINABLE BEYOND 22ND BIRTHDAY?

***If you're not sure how your child currently spends his days in transition, ask. If it's helpful to you, use our Day-At-A-Glance or Week-At-A-Glance Planners to start filling in chunks of time you know of now. Consider whether these activities are school-based (i.e. they will end when your child turns 22) OR if they are potentially sustainable beyond the 22nd birthday. Your goal is that by the last one to three months of transition services, your child's day is mostly spent on those activities that will transition with him/her after school ends.**

TIP #3: PRIORITIZE IEP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, IF POSSIBLE DOWN TO AS FEW AS THREE. WORK ON THOSE THREE GOALS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

***Once you leave school, you will never again have an IEP nor a multi-disciplinary team of college-educated teachers and related service professionals whose job it is to gather, plan, and implement goals specifically for your child. Use whatever time is remaining WISELY.**

***In thinking about how to prioritize what to teach, think in terms of barriers: barriers to your child working, volunteering, being out in the community, becoming someone's roommate. If you're still stuck, try asking yourself and your family this question: What 3 things drive the individual or your family into meltdown mode? Chances are if your child experiences or exhibits behaviors, verbalizations, habits, etc that cause meltdowns for themselves or for the family who loves them, those same triggers may affect them and potential bosses, co-workers, and friends in the community. Really think about this because it's important. It's those things that should be front and center on any transition IEP.**

TIP #4: TRANSITION IS NOT A PLACE NOR A PROGRAM.

***Your goal is to develop a sustainable set of activities – work, volunteerism, life skills, rec/leisure – that occur beyond the walls of any transition program site and move out into your home and community.**

***Don't ask "what's available" but instead ask "what does my son or daughter need?" Then work with your team to figure out how to create those supports or instruction across the day and on weekends too. Your**

home may become one of the places you teach life skills; you or you and your friends may become teachers or facilitators of rec/leisure or volunteering. The school continues to play a role, yes, but parents also begin to take on more responsibility for teaching and accompanying kids on their journey into adulthood. In transition, parents and teachers become more like partners.

*Depending on how well or poorly your child generalizes instruction, it will be fine for some of the instruction to occur in school, but for others it will make sense that time be spent practicing and learning skills in the environment in which they will be using them as adults.

*Think about whether your child's activity will be pursued solo in adulthood or in a small/large group, too. If there are friends or classmates in transition who will be pursuing similar activities (things like Next Chapter Book Clubs, certain volunteer assignments, faith-based activities, etc.) now is the time to start connecting with other families and organizing these activities to begin...before transition ends.

TIP #5: MAKE THE TIME TO GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY AND HAVE YOUR COMMUNITY GET TO KNOW YOU AND YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER.

*Some call this networking. Others, just getting to know your neighbors, faith community members, civic groups or clubs. Take stock of who you already know using our worksheet *Networking 101: Who Do You Know?* You may be pleasantly surprised! If your list isn't long, don't despair! It's never too late to start making connections in your neighborhood.

*You may be asking "Why is this important?" Here's why. Neighbors, co-workers, friends, fellow dog-walkers, people you know through your church, or people you know because you're a regular customer...these people will be your greatest transition resource going forward. Through your relationships with them, and through them knowing and valuing your son or daughter, this is where the magic happens! It's these folks who may know about a part-time or temp job; someone looking for volunteers to help with a community project; potential rides to and from shared interest activities. And your son or daughter may just make a lifelong friend in the bargain.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ATTEND TODAY'S PRESENTATION. IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN LAURIE AND OTHERS ON THE IPADDUNITE FACEBOOK GROUP, HERE'S HOW:

Already have a Facebook account? Just type IPADDUnite into your Facebook search bar & request to join. Visit our website at www.ipaddunite.org. Link to Closed Facebook Group at bottom of homepage. While you're there, look through our Resources Section.

Any questions, call Laurie Jerue at 630-712-3232 or email jeruefamily@comcast.net.