

TRANSITION PLANNING

A GUIDE FOR TRANSITIONING
FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO ADULT
LIFE AND BEYOND



**INCLUSION
SASKATCHEWAN**

supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Transition Means Growth
- 2 Three Questions
- 3 Things To Consider
- 7 Transition Planning
- 10 Grade Checklists
- 17 Resources
- 21 Adult Guardianship
- 23 Acronyms

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TRANSITION MEANS CHANGE & GROWTH

All of the changes that happen when high school is finished can be overwhelming, but also exciting. Leaving high school means getting a job, following a career dream, taking post-secondary training, finding a place to live, being involved in the community, and so much more. While this transition can be difficult for anyone, a student with a disability may need some extra support in deciding and planning their transition to life after high school. As such, we've created this handbook to guide you and any student with an intellectual disability through the transition process.

This handbook will help you and your student create a transition plan that will consider all of the possibilities ahead of them, while also taking into account what challenges they might face along the way. In the pages ahead, we'll explore ideas about when to begin planning for transition, what areas of adult living to plan for, who should be part of the planning team and why.

TRANSITION GUIDE PACKAGE

In addition to this handbook, we have created a **Transition Guide Package** intended to help your student in determining transition goals and objectives. The package includes worksheets that will aid in outlining the transition plan, developing a personal work profile, preparing for a job interview, and more. You can find a print-ready version of this package on the Publications and Resources page of www.inclusionsk.com

THREE QUESTIONS

As you and/or the student begins the transition planning process, there are 3 questions about life after high school that need to be asked and answered.

What am I going to do throughout the day?

Think about paid employment, attending a vocational program, taking post-secondary courses, volunteering in the community, participating in a day program, and/or starting a business.

What am I going to do for fun with friends?

Think about what activities are available in the community/school and what supports the individual in transition needs to access those activities. When individuals leave high school, often their social network becomes smaller. It's important to teach the student social and communication skills to help them build and maintain friendships during and after high school.

Where am I going to live?

Some individuals wish to stay in their own community or they may want move to larger centers where there are often more opportunity. It's important to explore different housing models and plan for what supports are needed in each model.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER: WORK EXPERIENCE

We strongly advise that a work experience strategy be integrated into the student's development plan and reviewed / adjusted throughout the student's high school life. Properly structured work experience in the community is a valuable tool as it helps students to gain skills that will be necessary once they transition into adult life. This kind of experience can be gained through a non-paid work experience high school program, volunteer work, doing chores around the home, or helping a neighbour.

We encourage parents and teachers to explore personal contacts in order to find job possibilities for students. Keep in mind that the most valuable work experience for the student will be one where the student is interviewed, trained, and evaluated the same as paid staff. If you feel that you've found a potential fit, pass along the contact to one of our Employment and Transitions Facilitators and we can work with the employer to ensure that all of the necessary supports will be in place to make the experience positive for everyone involved.

Quite often we find that students with intellectual disabilities struggle to find employment after high school. Ensuring the student engages in non-paid work experience during the high school years can be the means to a making smooth transition into the workforce.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER: WHO TO TALK TO

When concerns arise, it's important to reach out to the school staff. Schools often welcome parent communication, however, if you find that your concerns are not being heard, we advise that you move up the chain of command (as demonstrated in the table below) starting with teachers first.

Position	When to Contact
Teacher	A student is complaining about being treated poorly or not wanting to go to school; you are concerned about a student's progress, classroom placement; and/or you see signs of changed behaviour in a student.
School Principal	If you are concerned about a student's educational program or the services they are being offered. Principals are responsible for establishing an effective learning environment for your student.
School Board	If the principal is unable to resolve a matter, you may request the board of education review the issue.
Ministry of Education	We don't recommend contacting the Ministry of Education regarding issues relating directly to a single student. The Ministry is responsible for establishing goals, objectives, and regulations for the entire Saskatchewan education system.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER: LIFE SKILLS

There are many things a student needs to learn to get ready for adult life. The following is a general list of skills to consider learning at home, in the community, and at school before transitioning into adult life.

- Meal planning
- Grocery shopping
- Cooking/preparing/storing food
- Cleaning the house
- Time management
- Money management and budgeting
- Paying bills
- Setting up appointments
- Health care
- Learning about sexuality (and how to stay safe)
- Learning and practicing how to get along with others
- Working on communicating needs, interests, and preferences
- Learning more about how to disclose and explain a disability
- Asking for help
- Practicing personal hygiene
- Taking the bus
- Learning how to communicate address and phone number.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING

- Remember that transition planning is as much for the parents as it is the student. Inclusion Saskatchewan can connect parents with other parents who have experienced similar things with their children.
- Start the transition process as early as grade 9 (i.e. do not wait until the last year of high school). It's probably best to start thinking about a transition to adult life as soon as the student starts high school.
- Getting involved in your student's transition planning is one of the ways you can feel good about preparing for her or his future. Other members of the transition team will be there to offer you support and information.
- Being involved also means being informed.
- Make yourself aware of the rights and options relating to supported decision making and co-decision making (see the Adult Guardianship section of this guide on page 21).
- Don't give up! Things may get discouraging, but it is important to remember that you are doing all of this so that your student can have a full life in the community, doing what they want to do and meeting people they want to meet.

TRANSITION PLANNING

Step One: Clarifying Roles

Transition planning is a lengthy process that will develop over the course of the student's high school career. Based on our experiences in the development of successful transitions, we feel that one of the most important things to do before getting started is to clarify roles.

The School's Role: is to help the student begin the transition planning process. Teachers can help the student describe their goals and dreams while supporting the family to get answers to questions about the student's future. Teachers can also help decide who should be invited to the meeting and create the agenda, making sure important items are covered at the meeting.

The Parent's Role: is to take an active part in your student's transition and schooling. Remember that transition planning is a team effort, so be sure to discuss who is doing what before the process gets underway (e.g. who will invite members, who will make the agenda, and who will coordinate meetings.)

Step Two: Putting the Team Together

It's important to create a team around the student who can assist them in their transition to life after high school. Schools and families are encouraged to build a transition team of individuals who bring unique expertise to the process and can aid in helping the student realize their goals.

Typically, a transition team includes:

The Student: The person at the centre of the plan should be attending all of the transition meetings. The plan is about them and it is good

TRANSITION PLANNING

practice to allow them the opportunity to let others on the team know what their interests, goals, and expectations are. Further, having the student at each meeting gives them an avenue to express whether suggestions or plans are okay with them (note: if they are unable to speak, arrangement will need to be made for someone to speak for them that knows them well).

School Staff: This could include teachers, educational assistants, principals, student service coordinators, occupational therapy professionals, and speech & language consultants.

Parents, Siblings and Other Family: This could include grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. Family members who know the student well can offer natural support.

Agencies: This could include Inclusion Saskatchewan, Community Living Service Delivery, and/or other organizations. The Resources section of this guide features descriptions of agencies you can invite.

Step Three: Having Meetings

Transition meetings are a way for everyone on the transition team to share their thoughts, offer ideas, suggest solutions, and discuss all things related to the student and their goals and objectives.

Typically, an agenda for a transition meeting looks like this:

1. Introductions
2. An outline of strengths, interests, and goals by the student/family

TRANSITION PLANNING

3. The school describes the school day and student's classes
4. Parents describe what home life is like for their son/daughter
5. Agencies describe their services and bring suggestions
6. Summarize who is doing what and when and set next meeting date

Step Four: Checking In

The transition team will need to meet regularly to check in on how the plan is working and developing. There is no hard and fast rule about how often the team should meet, but we encourage teams meet regularly – even frequently – depending on the situation. If things are not working well, we encourage teams to call additional meetings outside of the regular meeting schedule. The transition plan is meant to be flexible, and the team members should be prepared for changes.

GRADE CHECKLISTS

We've created the following Grade Checklists as a means of guiding teachers, parents and students through the transition process, starting with grade nine. These checklists will help you keep organized and instruct you on what needs to be completed in each year in order to ensure a successful transition for your student.

Remember some checklist items may not apply to every individual and additional resources may be needed that are not mentioned in this handbook. Individual needs vary and therefore the plan should be adapted to each student.

GRADE CHECKLISTS

Grade 9

- Look into getting a learner's or driver's license.
- Learn how to use public transportation.
- Get a Social Insurance Number.
- Compile key information (e.g. learning style, tools and supports used, what tools have and haven't worked, etc.)
- Start asking family, close friends, service providers, and organizational supports to join transition planning meetings.
- Have a Psychoeducational Assessment completed by one of the school's Educational Psychologists. Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) uses this assessment to determine if individuals are eligible for their support.
- Get a copy of the *Navigating the System* resource book from Inclusion Saskatchewan (inclusionsk.com).
- Learn more about the Disability Tax Credit and the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

GRADE CHECKLISTS

Grade 10

- Complete Grade 9 Checklist.
- Assess and consider what the student's interests are and what types of jobs they would like to try.
- Explore options for work experience in the community.
- Prepare a resume.
- Fill in a **Personal Work Profile** (located in the Transition Guide Package) and share with the team at the next transition meeting.
- If the student is eligible for CLSD support, connect with a case worker about housing options and day programming.
- Brainstorm 5 and 10 year goals.
- Figure out what activities the student can get involved with in the school and community.

GRADE CHECKLISTS

Grade 11

- Review Grade 9 and 10 Checklists for relevant action items.
- Start making decisions about what the student will do after high school.
- If post-secondary education is a possibility, research what the requirements are to attend and what supports are available.
- If employment is a possibility, update resume, practice interview skills, and research supports.
- Explore school-offered work experience options. Remember that work experience has the potential to turn into employment.
- Explore after school, weekend or summer employment options.
- Look at housing options.

GRADE CHECKLISTS

Grade 12

- Review Grade 9, 10, and 11 Checklists for relevant action items.
- Ensure plans are being secured and decisions are being made on housing, leisure, and vocational or employment options.
- Evaluate what financial supports are needed and where to access them.
- Apply for Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) on or after the student's 18th birthday.
- Once connected with SAID, look into the student's coverage via Supplementary Health.
- If the student plans to stay in school past 18, explore which skills they would like to work on (e.g. cooking, work experience, money management, etc.)
- Practice skills such as getting to work on time, asking for help, keeping appointments and developing positive working relationships with coworkers.

GRADE CHECKLISTS

Staying in School until 22

- Review all Checklists for relevant action items.
- Evaluate what financial supports are needed and where to access them.
- Apply for Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) on or after the student's 18th birthday.
- Once connected with SAID, look into the student's coverage via Supplementary Health.
- Work on living skills (e.g. cooking, work experience, money management, etc.)
- Practice skills such as getting to work on time, asking for help, keeping appointments and developing positive working relationships with coworkers.

NOTES

RESOURCES: INCLUSION SASKATCHEWAN

Inclusion Saskatchewan is a provincial non-profit organization that works collaboratively with other agencies to provide support to individuals experiencing intellectual disabilities and their families.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals experiencing an intellectual disability. Inclusion Saskatchewan does not have an age or IQ requirement.

Services Provided:

- Advocacy
- Guidance in navigating government systems
- Connections between families and siblings
- Employment supports
- Assistance with transitional planning
- Community resources and publications
- Learning and networking events throughout the year

Other Publications:

Navigating the System: This book is for parents of children with intellectual disabilities. It features information on respite, early childhood intervention, education, medical care and many other systems.

Road Map to the Future: This book puts complex situations and terms into easy-to-grasp language, providing background information for those who must plan for individuals with a disability. This guide includes what to consider when preparing a will, how to choose executors and trustees, how to make the most of RDSPs and the SAID income program, and information about guardianship and co-decision making.

RESOURCES: GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disabilities (SAID)

SAID is a provincial income assistance program that provides income to individuals whose daily lives are impacted by disability. Individuals who are eligible to receive benefits will also receive coverage through Supplementary Health.

Eligibility Criteria:

- 18 years of age or older
- Lack financial resources to provide for your basic needs
- A significant and enduring disability that is of a permanent nature, substantially impacts daily living activities, and which result in a person requiring assistance in the form of an assistive device, assistance of another person, a service animal, or other accommodation.

Services Provided:

- Living Income – a fixed amount of monthly income that allows beneficiaries the opportunity to make decisions and have more control over how to spend their income. Participants make decisions on how much to spend on shelter, food, basic transportation and other items.
- Disability Income – designed to help with costs related to the impact of disability
- Exceptional Need Income – helps individuals with a number of special circumstances. For example, additional income is available for clothing recommended by a health professional, special food items, food and grooming costs associated with service animals, and homecare.

RESOURCES: GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Community Living Service Disability (CLSD)

CLSD is a branch of Social Services that helps people experiencing intellectual disabilities access a variety of community-based residential services and day programs. CLSD staff work to ensure that the physical, emotional and social needs of people experiencing intellectual disabilities are met and that they are able to live as independently as possible within their own communities.

Eligibility Criteria: programs and supports are offered to children and adults with a diagnosis of an intellectual disability, based on:

- Significantly sub-average intellectual functioning (as defined through standardized measures of intelligence, such as IQ tests).
- Impairments in adaptive behaviour (defined as significant limitations in an individual's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence, or social responsibility that are expected for his or her age level and cultural group).
- Manifested during the developmental period (defined as the period of time between conception and the 18th birthday). In order to help determine eligibility, an educational psychological assessment must be completed by a psychologist and sent to CLSD. Further, individuals over the age of 18 must be able to prove that they were experiencing their intellectual disability prior to the age of 18.

Services Provided:

- Individual client support
- Planning with individuals, families, and community to meet needs
- Acting as a liaison between individuals and service providers
- Respite funding (access available prior to the age of 18)
- Vocational programs
- Residential living support

RESOURCES: GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS)

CDS is a funding program under the Ministry of Social Services intended to improve the availability of assessment and diagnosis services; provide services to address the unmet needs of people with cognitive disabilities and their families; provide training opportunities to enhance the knowledge and skill of people who provide services to individuals with cognitive disabilities; and enhance Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) prevention and intervention initiatives throughout the province

Eligibility Criteria: the CDS application uses five criteria to assess both the impact of disability and the type of support or services that are lacking. Individuals must have a cognitive disability and an unmet need that is:

- Related to the cognitive disability
- Can be addressed by an evidence-based intervention
- Cannot be supported by another system

Services Provided:

- Access to a Cognitive Disability Consultant, who can assist with planning, identifying goals and connecting to resources.
- Access to a flexible pool of funds which may be available to address identified unmet needs.

FOR PARENTS: ADULT GUARDIANSHIP

Once a person turns 18 years of age, they are legally considered an adult regardless of the level of support they need. For adults who are unable or need support making decisions on their own, Saskatchewan's *Adult Guardianship and the Co-Decision Act* provides a way to protect those who, as a result of having an intellectual disability, may be vulnerable to personal or financial harm. The Act is considered to be the most progressive among all Canadian jurisdictions, in that it provides options and various levels of involvement of others in the life of a person with a disability.

While most agencies, service providers, health professionals and others who are involved in the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities respect the parents' de facto authority as parents, activities such as accessing medical information or applying for adult benefits may not be possible for parents without their son or daughter's consent.

For parents of adults with intellectual disabilities, we recommend exploring the following models of support depending on what the individual needs.

Adult Guardianship

Adult Guardianship is a legal relationship which gives one adult legal authority over another adult. It gives one person the right to make decisions on behalf of another person, either in personal or financial matters, or both. Applying for a guardianship order may go against what parents feel they have been striving for all their child's life – building, fostering and encouraging their independence. While it is true that from a legal perspective, the individual with a disability loses their right to self-determination, the guardians do not have to exercise their rights all the time – it may depend on the degree of the individual's capacity and ability to function independently.

FOR PARENTS: ADULT GUARDIANSHIP

If a parent decides to apply for guardianship, we recommend that they acquaint themselves with *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision Act* and read the *Application Manual of Adult Guardianship in Saskatchewan*, published by the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee. The information in the application manual will help in deciding whether an application should be made, how to make the application and what to do after a parent has been appointed guardian. The manual also contains a simplified version of the Act and the Regulations, as well as the forms and instructions on how to complete them.

Co-Decision Making

When an adult only needs assistance with making decisions, the assistance must be given in the least intrusive way possible, and the adult must be involved in the decision-making process as much as possible. A co-decision-maker can be appointed to assist the adult, and decisions are made jointly. Effective co-decision making preserves the individual's right to self-determination.

Supportive Decision Making

Supported decision-making is a process of acting with an individual to discover their values, interests, talents and gifts in order to support them to choose the way they want to live their life. Supported decision-making is a very good tool for involving people with disabilities in making decisions about their life. Even if a parent feels that obtaining a guardianship order is the way to go, they can still use supported decision-making to involve their son or daughter as much as possible in making decisions.

RESOURCES: ACRONYM LIST

ABA	Applied Behavioral Analysis
ABI	Acquired Brain Injury
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AEEI	Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration
APSH	Approved Private Service Home
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCTB	Canada Child Tax Benefit
CDS	Cognitive Disability Strategy
CIW	Community Intervention Worker
CLSD	Community Living Service Delivery
CMHA	Canadian Mental Health Association
CSW	Community Services Worker
DLSA	Daily Living Support Assessment
DRHS	Daily Rental Housing Supplement
DTC	Disability Tax Credit
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
IPP	Individual Program Plan
ISC	Individual Support Contract
MDO	Multi-Disciplinary Outreach
MAPS	McGill Action Planning System
MSS	Ministry of Social Service
OT	Occupational Therapy
PATH	Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope
PCP	Person Centred Plan
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PIE	Partners in Employment
PPP	Personal Program Plan
PT	Physical Therapy
PTA	Provincial Training Allowance
RDSP	Registered Disability Savings Plan
RT	Recreational Therapy
SA	Saskatchewan Abilities
SAID	Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability
SAIL	Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living Program
SARC	Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centers
SAP	Saskatchewan Assistance Program
SDF	Self Directed Funding
SILP	Supported Independent Living Program

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