Our Fall Transition Focus is on Getting Started and Creating a Timeline!

Welcome back to school and to the first LTISD Transition Newsletter of the 2021-2022 school year! Throughout the year, Transition News will be one way the Special Education Department and Transition Specialist will work to keep students and families abreast of all things transition. In addition to personalized transition plans developed in conjunction with your child’s Special Education Team, this newsletter will provide you with upcoming school and community events, links to agencies and resources, as well as highlight an important transition topic.

Check out the resources on Transition Timelines & resources shared in this month’s newsletter!
Transition: Did You Know?

Preparing for adulthood can start long before high school - here is no need to wait for your child to approach 18 before researching, planning, and taking action on what the future can include. Students with disabilities, and their families, aren’t on their own in this process. Your child’s case manager, campus counselor, teachers and the transition specialist are here to help. There is no right or wrong time to begin transition planning. We are here to meet you where you are and hope the resources below help open up the conversation at looking into the future.

Texas Project First - Transition to the Future
Adapted from the Texas Project First Website, September 2021   http://texasprojectfirst.org/node/203

What’s Transition?
We often associate transition with high school students, but transition really just means moving from one life stage to another. Transition includes moving from/to:

- Birth to Three
- Early Childhood/Preschool
- Elementary School
- Middle school
- High school
- Adult life in the community, after public school
- Retirement

The Future
Again, the purpose of IDEA is to prepare students for further education, employment, or independent living. Every year your child is receiving special education services, you should be preparing them for graduation. As early as possible (we recommend Middle School at the latest), begin talking to your child about his or her plans for the future.

Do you struggle just to get through the day? Figure you’ll have time to worry about your child’s future later? We’ve all been there. But you should know this: The future is coming and it’s coming faster than you can imagine. And, everything you do now may affect your child’s future. Do you know everything you need to know?

- What do you envision for your child’s future?
- Where will he live?
- Will she work? If so, what career or occupational path do you and she envision?
- Where will he spend his free time?
- What about friendships, a love relationship?
- What will the adult world look like for your child?
  - Does my child want to attend a four-year college or university?
  - Does my child plan to attend a trade school?
  - Does my child plan to enroll in a certificate program at the community college?
  - Does my child plan to work in the community? If so, what kind of job would he or she like to do?
  - Does my child plan to attend a day program that will require specific self-help skills?
  - Does my child plan to live independently or will he or she require supports?

Most importantly, what are your child’s hopes and dreams for the future? Do you know?

LTISD Transition Newsletter - ECSE/Elementary School Edition, Fall 2021
What Do Parents Need to Know?

No sooner do we get our kids settled in – to Kindergarten, middle school, high school - and before we can take a breath, here comes the next transition! What's a parent to do? Regardless of the change you are facing, here are some steps you can take to make the transition as smooth as possible:

*Educate yourself about where you and your child are headed.*

What options are available?

For example: Is Head Start an option in place of PPCD? What about Pre-K? Do Kindergartners attend a full-day or half-day program? What elective class choices are offered for junior high/high school? What post-secondary options are available in your community, the state, or nation?

What does a typical day in that environment look like?

For example: Does the campus use single teacher classrooms or do they team/co-teach? Do the students move to other classrooms during the day or do they stay in one classroom the full day? When/where is lunch? What about opportunities for physical activities?

What skills and abilities are needed to be successful in that environment?

It can be helpful to look at the curriculum (Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills) to determine what typical children will learn in a specific grade placement.

As you consider the skills and abilities typical children demonstrate in that environment, think about your own child. It's easy to think “My child could never do those things!” Instead, look for ways to adapt the environment, the supports and services your child receives, or other ways your child could be successful there in his/her own way. Think creatively!

What skills are required in the adult service system? Opportunities are very limited for individuals who do not have the self-help or communication skills or appropriate behavior to attend some day programs.

What will it take for your child to be successful in that environment?

What modifications will help? Is assistive technology necessary? Are the buildings accessible for your child? What supports and services do you anticipate needing? What can your child work on right now to better prepare him/her?

Who are the “powers that be” – The Decision-Makers?

Who will participate in the decision-making for your child? Who will provide direct services to your child there? Identify those people by name and job title. Make an appointment and begin getting to know these people before your child gets there. Help them begin getting to know your child and where he/she is headed; they will be much more invested in helping to make those plans happen once you get there.
Make a plan

Steven Covey says to “begin with the end in mind.” A successful transition depends on careful planning and the help of many. Make sure that everyone involved in your child’s current placement is included in the planning and that you all have the same “end in mind.” Remember the purpose of the IEP.

As your child approaches adulthood, there are many new things to consider, decisions to be made, and tools available to help you make them. We offer an overview of these topics, and point you to where you can learn more:

- **Self-Determination:** Having Choice in one’s life
- **Self-Advocacy:** Speaking up For Oneself
- **Person-Centered Planning:** Taking An Intentional Approach to Planning for the Future
- **Guardianship and Alternatives to Guardianship** – Protecting Your Young Adult’s Rights and Legal Responsibilities
- **A Parent Perspective on Transition**
- **Transition Planning** – Including Post-Secondary goals, Courses of Study and Coordination of services
- **Graduation**

Know that the environments and supports you create for your child in elementary, junior high and high school will determine the kinds of environments and supports that child will need in the adult world.

The sooner you can build self-advocacy, independence, social skills, and relationships with others, the more likely an adult life in the community will become.

It’s never too early; it’s never too late!

Too often we see families trying to make serious life-changing decisions in the midst of a crisis. Whether your child has many years before graduation, or less than 6 months, take a few minutes to educate yourself on what’s ahead and begin thinking about the future today.
Navigating Life - Transition to Adulthood
Adapted from the Navigate Life Website, September 2021

When we live with and support children who have disabilities or special health care needs, we often hear the word "transition." We talk about transitioning between activities. We talk about transitioning between schools. And we talk about the process of transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

Even though the law says that your child becomes an adult on their 18th birthday, adulthood really doesn't happen overnight for any child. From the moment your child takes that first breath, they are on the path toward adulthood and greater independence. We have the chance to help them prepare from day one.

We can help our children learn to take responsibility for themselves in so many ways. We can teach them to greet their doctors, ask questions, and describe their symptoms. We can encourage them to do tasks and chores around the house. We can help them find a neighborhood or volunteer job. We can teach them to talk to teachers about their needs.

But even with preparation, most of us have mixed feelings as we approach our child’s transition to adulthood. We might feel: excitement, concern, relief, fear, and maybe even a little bit of grief as we watch our children grow into young adults. As parents of children with disabilities or special health care needs, our fears and anxieties can be especially intense. We know our children will still need extra care and guidance. Our challenge is to find the balance between keeping them safe and giving them the freedom to be independent.

There Is Help

The good news is that there are lots of other families facing the same questions and challenges. And, there are people who can help you:

- Connect with other parents who are going through the same thing so you have people to answer your questions or lend a caring ear.
- Look for organizations in your community that offer families help with transition.
- Find good tools in the Texas Parent to Parent Pathways to Adulthood program.

Transition Action Groups (TAGs)

Texas Parent to Parent has created Transition Action Groups (TAGs) as part of their Pathways to Adulthood program. These groups of parents and children get together often to help each other make transition easier.

TAGs can help families with many things, including:

- Making transition plans.
- Finding and setting up living arrangements.
- Sharing facts and tips about schools, benefits, and caregivers.
- Having a social outlet – for children and parents.
- Giving emotional support to each other.

If you are interested in finding or starting a TAG near you, Texas Parent to Parent can help. Visit their Pathways to Adulthood page to learn more.

Waivers and Transition

The biggest question of all is this: How can my child and family get ready for all of these changes? Finding the answers might take a lot of time and planning. Many people say it’s never too early to start transition planning. For example, waivers that can help your child gain independence have long interest (waiting) lists, and it can take many years to get into these programs.

If you haven’t already signed up, go to our Waivers page to find out more. It’s never too late to start transition planning. Whether your child is 4, 14, or 24 years old, you can start from where you are to make their adult life better.

LTISD Transition Newsletter - ECSE/Elementary School Edition, Fall 2021
Texas ABLE Accounts

https://www.texasable.org/

The Stephen Beck, Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 (the “Act”) was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President to provide certain individuals with disabilities a means to save for disability-related expenses. It allows creation of a qualified ABLE program by a state (or agency or instrumentality thereof) under which an ABLE account may be established for an individual with a disability who is the Designated Beneficiary and owner of that account.

The Texas Legislature enacted the Texas Achieving a Better Life Experience Act that established the Texas ABLE® Program (“Texas ABLE” or the “Program”) (1) to encourage and assist individuals and families in saving funds for the purpose of supporting individuals with disabilities to maintain health, independence, and quality of life; and (2) to provide secure funding for qualified disability expenses on behalf of Designated Beneficiaries with disabilities that will supplement, but not supplant, benefits provided through private insurance, the Medicaid program under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, the Supplemental Security Income program under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, the Social Security Disability Insurance program under Title II of the Social Security Act, the Designated Beneficiary’s employment, and other sources.

The Texas Prepaid Higher Education Tuition Board, with assistance from the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, administers the Program.

Program Disclosure Statement

Before you open a Texas ABLE Program Account (“Account”) and before you make any investments in the Program, you should carefully read the Texas ABLE Program Disclosure Statement and Participation Agreement (“Program Disclosure Statement”) for important information about the Program. You should also consult your tax, investment, or disability benefits advisor(s) for more information on how enrolling in the Program might affect you.

Want more information?

Attend an information session to learn more about Texas ABLE accounts - more information below in the Upcoming Events Section of this Newsletter!
Texas Parent to Parent

For more information, go to txp2p.org
Adapted from the Texas Parent to Parent Website, September 2021

Texas Parent to Parent is a statewide non-profit developed for parents by parents: provides parent to parent matches, support, information, website, resource, newsletter, etc.

Mission: Texas Parent to Parent supports children with disabilities, chronic illness, and other special healthcare needs by empowering their parents to be advocates for them through peer support, resource referral and public awareness.

There are several waiting lists you should get on now for services that will make a big difference later:

➔ CLASS (Community Living & Support Services) (877) 438-5658
➔ MDCP (Medically Dependant Children’s Program) (877) 438-5658
➔ HCS (Home & Community Services) (800) 458-9858
➔ TxHmL (Texas Home Living Program) (800) 458-9858
➔ (YES) Waiver (Youth Empowerment Services) (512) 804-3191

These programs provide funding, based on the income of the individual with disabilities (not the family), for therapies, assisted/supported living, home and vehicle modifications, nursing, adaptive aids and more. Waiting lists are years long; so sign up now!

Texas Parent to Parent Austin and Vicinity Resource Information

Transition Timeline, starting at age 6

Transition Inventory, a tool to assess where families are in planning for their youth’s adulthood

Pathways to Adulthood Training
Part 1: Getting Started On Transition / School And Career Exploration
  • Tuesday, October 19th, 2021, 6:00pm-7:30pm
  • [Click here to register]

Weekly Parent Support Group
Zoom Support Group Calls (in English)
  • Wednesdays at 11:00 am
  • Hosted by Patty Geisinger
  • [Click here to register]

The TxP2P Pathways to Adulthood program assists families to plan a good life for their sons and daughters with disabilities after graduation from public school, and provides support, information and tools for carrying out this plan. For more information and to register, visit the TxP2P website at: txp2p.org
The **Texas Transition and Employment Guide** provides information on statewide services and programs that assist students with disabilities in the transition to life outside of the public school system. The guide is divided into sections on Self Advocacy, Transition Services, Employment and Supported Employment, Social Security Programs, Community and Long Term Services and Supports, Postsecondary Educational Programs and Services, Information Sharing, and Guardianship and Alternatives. Each section has phone numbers, emails, and websites to help you find what you need. At the end of each section and at the end of the guide, you will find a timeline of steps that you and your parents can take as you make the transition from student to adult.

**From the Guide: TRANSITION IN TEXAS TIMELINE**

Transition prepares students to move from high school to adulthood. Transition in Texas begins before a student’s 14th birthday, or earlier if the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee decides it would be right for you. As you get close to beginning high school, you will need to talk about what you want to do after graduation. Your transition services will be based on your needs, preferences, and interests. The ARD committee (which includes you and your parents) writes the transition plan as part of your Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The **Transition in Texas Timeline** is a tool to help you and your parents work with the other members of the ARD committee to write your transition plan. Use this timeline to decide if these issues should be discussed at the ARD committee transition meetings.

**Parents:** If your child is identified with a developmental disability, put his or her name on an interest list until services are available, you can find more information about the interest list here [https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction](https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction). Please know that it may take years.
**Upcoming Events:**

**Should I open an ABLE account?**
DATE/TIME: Wed., Sept. 22, 2021, at 12:00 noon
DESCRIPTION: There are many decisions to be made as you prepare for the future of your special needs family member. Living with a disability is often associated with significant costs. That's why individuals and families should consider contributing to an ABLE account which offers tax-advantaged savings that can fund disability expenses. Join us as Special Needs Advisor Allison Schaberg explains how to successfully plan for your financial future.
PARTNER: Partners Resource Network - Region 13
WEBINAR ID: 881 5669 1518
REGISTER HERE: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NuNOj2ykTFWp4CB-MpU3wQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NuNOj2ykTFWp4CB-MpU3wQ)

**Calm and Confidence in the Chaos: Self-Care Strategies for Parents of Children with ADHD**
DATE/TIME: Tues., Sept. 28, 2021, at 6:30 pm
DESCRIPTION: Are you exhausted from constantly cleaning up after your child, reminding them to do their homework, and redirecting their attention to complete their chores? Do you question your parenting skills or worry that you're going to say the wrong thing to your child? Are you at your wits' end? You're not alone. Join us on September 28th at 6:30 pm where we will learn and practice tools to help you feel calm and confident amid the chaos of parenting a child with ADHD.
PARTNER: This event is in partnership with Fort Bend ADDA Parent Support Group
SPEAKER: Jessica Hernandez LMFT, LPC with Missouri City Family Counseling
WEBINAR ID: 885 1035 5475
REGISTER HERE: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3TWz3rvAQB-12-r-YrSBwg](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3TWz3rvAQB-12-r-YrSBwg)

**Upcoming Event:**
“Understanding Community First Choice” - Partners Resource Network in collaboration with The Arc of Gulf Coast will present a free webinar on Thursday September 23 at 10:00AM
Is your child on the Medicaid Waiver waiting list? Are you waiting 10-15 years for help but need help now? Community First Choice is a program that can assist you and your Medicaid eligible child/young adult with little to no wait time. Come learn more about this program!
Registration link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_o4H4zaKESPaHbkuy60GFdg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_o4H4zaKESPaHbkuy60GFdg)
The Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University would like to offer training at no cost to Texas parents and caregivers of children up to age 22 with core features of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Parents and caregivers will learn how to improve their child’s communication skills. This service is provided by a grant project entitled Coach to Communicate (C2C), sponsored by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The training includes a 1-hour self-paced webinar that teaches behavioral strategies to increase communication use in children with ASD. Once complete, parents can choose to be paired with a coach for a more intensive 12-week training specific to their child’s communication needs (again, at no cost to parents). Coaching is offered in English and Spanish.
Resources for Families of Children with Disabilities & Professionals
Adapted from the Texas Parent to Parent Website, September 2021

A project of the Texas Education Agency committed to providing accurate and consistent information on Special Education to parents and families of students with disabilities, created by parents, for parents. You start with the age of your child and go into a directory especially created for that age group, but you can always look ahead to be prepared for what's coming. [http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/)

This website was created by parents for parents, and Texas Parent to Parent oversees all the resources and edits all the pages that are on this website. You'll find a lot of great information on diagnosis, insurance, Medicaid Waivers, family support, education and transition on this site. Try out the Search box to find whatever you need. There is a search page (Find Services, Groups and Events) for you to find services, groups and events. These resources are reviewed every 6 months and edited as needed. Most of the groups are parent groups of various kinds and the services are mostly nonprofits with no fees or who have a sliding fee scale. There are no therapy groups or doctors on this list. There are also a lot of great articles by parents and videos in both English & Spanish on this site. [https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en](https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en)

This website is a guide for Texas parents and caregivers of children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities from birth through 5 years of age. Again, it was created by parents for parents of young children and Texas Parent to Parent was one of the partners on the project. Check out this diagram of “Finding Help in Texas – a guide to the agencies, programs and services included in the Parent Companion Website.” [http://www.parentcompanion.org/](http://www.parentcompanion.org/)

The Special Education Information Center (SPEDTex) works collaboratively with stakeholders to provide resources and facilitate collaboration that supports the development and delivery of services to children with disabilities in our State. If you have questions on special education, you should be able to find the answers on this website. [https://www.spedtex.org/](https://www.spedtex.org/)

2-1-1 Texas, a program of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, is committed to helping Texas citizens connect with the services they need. Whether by phone or internet, our goal is to present accurate, well-organized and easy-to-find information from state and local health and human services programs. 2-1-1 Texas is a free, anonymous social service hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. No matter where you live in Texas, you can dial 2-1-1, or (877) 541-7905, and find information about resources in your local community. Whether you need help finding food or housing, child care, crisis counseling or substance abuse treatment, one number is all you need to know. [https://www.211texas.org/](https://www.211texas.org/)
Eligible people with disabilities may qualify for federal and state programs that pay benefits, pay health care costs or provide food. If you are not already signed up for one of these programs, visit the sites below to find out if you might be eligible or to apply for benefits.

What is CLASS?
CLASS provides home- and community-based services to people with related conditions as a cost-effective alternative to placement in an intermediate care facility for individuals with an intellectual disability or a related condition. A related condition is a disability, other than an intellectual disability, that originated before age 22 and that affects a person's ability to function in daily life.

Interested in receiving CLASS services?
Those interested in receiving CLASS are placed on an interest list by calling 877-438-5658 and asking for the CLASS Waiver Program. The person will be contacted when funding becomes available. An offer of the CLASS Program depends on individual need and one's date of placement on the interest list. Current contact information is required for each person on the CLASS interest list, and HHSC must be notified of any changes to address or telephone number.

For more information please contact CLASSPolicy@HHSC.state.tx.us

Helpful Resource Website:
https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/community-living-assistance-support-services-class

Integral Care supports adults and children living with mental illness, substance use disorder and intellectual and developmental disabilities in Travis County. As the Local Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority, Integral Care strengthens our community by supporting our most important asset, our people, to achieve well-being. Integral Care provides individuals with high quality mental health care, collaborates with community partners to strengthen programs and systems, and works to raise awareness of mental health issues in our community.

Integral Care works with children and adults living with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to make sure they have the tools they need to thrive. We create opportunities for people to form healthy relationships, live in the community and lead meaningful lives. Services are available regardless of ability to pay and can be provided in many languages.

CALL US TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOU
To learn more about our programs and services for adults and children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, call us at 512-472-HELP (4357). Press 1 for English, then 3. We're here Monday through Friday, from 8am to 5pm. Integral Care can also connect you to trusted community resources.

Because people with disabilities are at a greater risk for abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violation of legal and human rights, protection and advocacy organizations like Disability Rights Texas are needed. Our mission is to help people with disabilities understand and exercise their rights under the law, ensuring their full and equal participation in society.

The Arc of the Capital Area is one of the oldest continuously–operating non-profits in Austin. Since 1949 we have empowered adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We serve over 1,000 individuals each year across 17 counties. Intellectual and developmental disabilities or I/DD is an umbrella term that includes more than 100 different diagnoses, including Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and Autism.

ARCIL (A Resource for Independent Living) is a consumer-driven, community-based, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the empowerment of persons with disabilities to achieve maximum independence and equal community access. Services are developed, directed and delivered primarily by persons with disabilities. ARCIL contributes to the development and improvement of attitudes, resources, methodologies, and opportunities for community integration.

The Autism Society, the nation’s leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. We do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy.

Our Mission is to provide education, support, and resources to individuals with Down syndrome, their families, professionals, and the community while building public awareness and acceptance of the abilities of individuals with Down syndrome.