



Building Bridges



InclusionNB

A Parent Guide on Transition from School to Work, Adult Life,
and Community Participation for Youth with Disabilities





The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.

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Preface

This guide is written primarily for the benefit of families/caregivers who have a child or children with disabilities. It is written with the hope that family/caregivers and young people with disabilities will have the information and confidence they require to be actively involved in planning for life beyond the classroom. Many of the issues discussed in this guide are common to many young people with disabilities. Indeed, transition from school to life as an adult is something for which all young people need to be prepared.

Since the Inclusion NB represents the interests of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, many of the stories and examples we use feature people who have been identified as having this type of disability. If you are involved with someone who has a different disability, please remember that these stories and examples are used to highlight specific issues or messages.

While this guide is written for families, we believe it will also be useful for teachers, guidance counsellors, and others who will have a role to play in assisting individuals with disabilities and their families make successful transitions. The importance of working together to achieve the goals identified by young people and their families cannot be over-emphasized. Educators and others involved in the transition process need to be clear about their roles and the importance of finding respectful ways to help young people with disabilities and their families plan for the future.

References to "we" in this guide refers only to Inclusion NB. Any opinions and views expressed in this guide do not necessarily reflect the views of those who have provided financial assistance or assisted in other ways.

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this guide is current to March, 2021. Government, school programs, and policies will change from time to time and readers are encouraged to seek up-to-date information.



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InclusionNB

Part I Introduction

Chapter 1 Transition From School to Work and Adult Life

Chapter 2 Helping Your Child Make Transitions: A Message for Families

Chapter 1

Transition from School to Work and Adult Life

Introduction

All parents wonder what their child's life will look like after school is finished. We all ask: What will my child do? Where will they live? What kind of friends will be part of their life? What kind of person will they be?

For at least 13 years, parents are reassured by the regularity and structure of a school that fills a child's day with classes and activities. Making the transition from school to either the workplace or post secondary education is both exciting and challenging. This is particularly true for parents of children with disabilities.

We all share the same goals for our children with or without disabilities. We want them to have a job, a good home, good friends, and opportunities to be involved in their community.

This guide is about helping you understand the role you can play in helping your child achieve these goals by making a successful transition from being a student to being an adult.

In this chapter, we explore:

- what is transition;
- what is available today to help;
- what the future might hold; and,
- hints on how you can use this guide to ensure you become an effective advocate for your child's needs.



Why is Transition Important?

All young people who attend and eventually leave school go through some kind of transition. For many people, the transition from school to adult life is smooth. Young people with disabilities, however, are at a greater risk of being unemployed and uninvolved in the life of their communities. Figuring out how to make the transition smooth and successful is crucial.

Transition is about preparing to leave, then leaving school and doing things that other adults do. It is also about participating in community life and being a citizen – a contributing member of society

What is transition and why is it important? What is Happening with Transition?

Transition is about change. For young people who attend school, it is a change from their status as students to being adults and doing things other adults do in the community. This may include getting a job, going to college or university, getting a place to live, developing personal and social relationships with other adults, and being involved in the community. Obviously, the transition from being a student to being an adult may not involve all of these activities at the same time; for example, many young people will continue to live with their parents after they finish school. But, most young people will do (or want to do) most of the things other adults do during their twenties and early thirties. Some will even start before they leave high school.

This guide is about how youth with disabilities can successfully make the transition from life as a student to adult life. It offers parents guidance and suggestions about how their children can be ready for life as adults by the time they finish high school. It talks about planning for the transition to work and adult life, about what a student should be learning and doing while in school to make transition easier, and about involving other people who can help make transition happen.

All young people who attend and eventually leave school go through some kind of transition. For many people, the transition from school to adult life is smooth. They go to college, get a job and an apartment, and so on. Some people find making transitions more difficult. Young people with disabilities are at greater risk of being unable to attend college or university, and of being unemployed and uninvolved in the life of their communities. Figuring out how to make the transition smooth and successful is crucial. The steps that are taken to prepare for adult life while people are still in school can make a positive and lasting difference.

In the past, transition for too many young people with disabilities has meant leaving school and receiving some kind of services aimed at keeping them occupied (for example, sheltered workshops -which are organizations that provide allowances or training for people with disabilities separately from others). While some young adults with disabilities may require services in the community, adult life involves much more than receiving services.

New Brunswick has developed programs and resources to promote successful transitions for students to help make the transition to adult life. These programs often involve providing young people with opportunities for career exploration and work experience while they are still in school.

To date, a number of steps have been taken by the school system to help plan for the transition of youth with disabilities (and other youth) from school to adult life. This includes:

- The Department of Education has introduced a Personal Development and Career Planning Curriculum, from Kindergarten to grade 12. The curriculum consists of three strands. Personal Development involves outcomes which enables a student to explore their specific personality traits and skills, take personal responsibility for their behaviour, develop positive self-esteem, and learn how to interact effectively with others. Lifelong Learning helps students understand their unique learning style, develop lifelong learning and time management skills, and assume personal responsibility and self-motivation. Career Exploration and Cooperative Education helps students explore personal characteristics, assess various career options, have the opportunity to engage in unique work placements and learn about themselves and the world of work.
- The Department of Education has developed a planning portfolio called myBlueprint. This provides students with a platform to build an individualized portfolio and to plan for transitions. myBlueprint is designed to assist all students in planning for their futures and it is intended to be updated regularly by students with help from parents, teachers and counsellors. This portfolio promotes the need for all students to develop goals, reflect on interests and have a long-range career plan.
- The Inclusion NB Transition to Work program partners with school across the province to support students in grades 10, 11 and 12 with an intellectual disability to become “workforce ready.”
A facilitator from Inclusion NB will work with a



limited number of students, their families, teachers, and others to develop a “person-centered” transition plan. Throughout this program, students participate in a wide variety of work readiness activities, such as Job Readiness classes and workplace experience to help ensure each student will be prepared for life after they leave high school.

How to Use This Guide

This guide has four main parts, each with its own chapters. Please read the entire book to review all of the issues. Specific information you may require from time to time may be in one or two chapters. Use the information in these chapters as you need it, while keeping in mind the book itself presents a more complete picture of what transition is all about.

You may also find the information in this guide is too much or too little for what you need. If you require further information, review the list of resources at the end of the book. Remember, this book is not intended to provide you with all the answers, but rather help you and your child work through your own process for making transitions from school to adult life.

Part I of this guide introduces the concept of transition and why it is important. In Chapter Two, we provide an important message to families as the people who will play the most important role in seeing their child through transitions from school.

In Part II, we talk about working and living in the community. This is what transition from school is all about. Chapter Three talks about your child's future role as a citizen and their possible life in the community. It also explains community participation and its significance for people with disabilities.

Chapter Four talks about the importance of work and some current trends in work and employment affecting all people. Issues of support to find and keep work for people with disabilities are also reviewed.

Part III addresses in detail planning for transition. We review what needs to happen while your child is in school to ensure better opportunities for transition. In Chapter Six, we talk in depth about planning for transition: what it is, when it should start, who should be involved, and what roles young people with disabilities and their families should play. Chapter Seven reviews the planning process in terms of what you may need to know to begin planning, the importance of identifying goals and visions for your child, and what should happen during planning meetings while your child is in high school.

Part IV focuses specifically on transitions from school to work. In Chapter Eight, we review the skills necessary for employment and the importance of developing a career portfolio during high school. Chapter Nine talks about career education and work experience during school. Different ways that students can become familiar with work and be exposed to work during their school years are reviewed. Chapter Ten talks about ways in which students with disabilities can receive further education and training after they leave high school.

Although the book is divided into different parts, remember that every part influences the others. As you work through each chapter, you will see how the various bits fit together. For example, work experience during the school years will be directly related to transition planning and to the steps that families take to help assist their child to make the transition to work and adult life.

The book is written for family members – specifically, for parents or caregivers. It is, however, written with the belief and expectation that your child will be actively involved in planning for their future to the extent that they are able. Some of the issues and tasks you will face may be difficult. Remember to take the time you need and ask others to help you.

Chapter 2

Helping Your Child Make Transitions: A Message for Families

The Importance of Positive Attitudes and Expectations

Your attitudes toward and expectations of your child can be the most important factors in supporting your child's future. High expectations do not provide any guarantees of "success," but they will support your child in reaching their potential.

Introduction

Throughout this guide, we explore the important roles played by parents, families, and communities in helping young people make the transition from school to work and community participation. Your and your child's chances for success increase dramatically when both family members and members of the community share the commitment that people with disabilities have the opportunity to be productive citizens.

In this chapter, we look at how you can nurture that kind of attitude and awareness – in yourself, in your child, and in members of your community. This chapter explores the importance of:

- Positive attitudes and expectations;
- Involvement;
- Encouraging independence and the development of new skills and abilities;
- Being informed about your community;
- Taking action when necessary; and
- Strategies for effective advocacy



Positive Attitudes and High Expectations

Your attitudes toward and expectations of your child can be the most important factors in supporting your child's future. For many parents, having positive attitudes and high expectations becomes difficult because parents are often reminded by professionals of all that is wrong with their child. In fact, many parents are told not to expect very much from a child with a disability. Fortunately, some of these attitudes are changing. There is a growing understanding that ALL children are capable of growing and developing. Programs such as Family & Early Childhood Education attempt to assist with the development of young children with disabilities.

You may still have negative attitudes and expectations to overcome. Remember that if families have low expectations of their child, this can and likely will have a direct impact on that child's life. High expectations do not provide any guarantees of "success," but they will give your child a better chance of reaching their potential. The way you view your child is likely to have a great influence on the way that others view them as well. This does not deny that your child will have limitations. Rather, limitations are seen as barriers that may need to be overcome while helping your child develop their potential. Every person has strengths and interests from which realistic expectations and goals can be built. You will be reminded of this throughout this guide.



Ways to presume competence:

- Treat adults as adults. Use a typical tone of voice, just as if speaking with a friend or co-worker. And when your child is present, never talk about them as if they are not in the room. Make sure others directly address them rather than going through a third party (i.e. you).
- Find a way to help your child communicate. Everyone communicates, whether through speech, augmentative communication devices, pictures, gestures, sign language, and more. Help your child find the communication system that works best for them. Communication is power and the key to self-advocacy!
- Pay close attention to what your child is trying to tell you. Before you discount behaviors as simply a part of their disability, first consider that your child might be trying to tell you something. Behavior is communication, and it may very well be that your child is expressing something important in this way.
- Don't withhold information out of fear your child won't understand. Instead, expose them to all the things you would any other child. People usually understand more than they can express.
- Always ask before giving assistance and let your child tell you what you may do to be helpful.
- Never pretend you understand what is said when you don't. Ask your child to tell you again what was said. Repeat what you understand.
- Try not to finish your child's sentence or cut them off. Listen until they have finished talking, even if you think you know what they might say. (and even if they take longer to express themselves than you are accustomed to).
- Avoid using stereotypes in your thinking. We all have different personalities and our own ways of doing things. To find out what a person prefers, ask them directly. ("If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism.")
- Because some people like to please others, it is important to be mindful of your body language, tone of voice, and other gestures that may influence a person's decision.
- Let your child make their own decisions or with some guidance. Don't take over and make decisions for them. It can be difficult for some of us to make quick decisions. Be patient and allow your child to take their time.
- Focus on what your child can do. All people want a chance to live a typical life, just like everyone else.
- Avoid using the terms "low-functioning" and "high-functioning."
- Remember there is much research about expectations. Children perform to the level of expectations of teachers and parents.

Parents and families normally help their children make the transition to adult life. It is reasonable to expect that you will also help a child who has a disability make the transition, but it may take more careful planning. It is not enough to assume the school system will make sure your child is prepared for adult life and inclusion in the community once they graduate.

Be Involved – Involve Your Child and Others

Be involved in the transition process during your child's years in school. This means helping your child set some personal goals and finding ways to achieve them. You will need to attend meetings (or even make sure they happen) and keep on top of what is happening while your child is in school.

Involve your child in plans and decisions concerning future goals and what needs to happen while your child is still in school. In Chapter Six, we talk about ways of involving your child and the importance of making sure that they are always part of the discussions about their life.

Achieving a successful transition from school will also require a commitment from other people. These people may be teachers, other family members, friends, employers in your community, etc. The transition process may be difficult at times and other people will be able to help.



You may have to ask for this help, unless it is offered freely. Asking for help may be difficult, especially if you have asked in the past and it has been refused. It may also mean having people who are strangers to you involved in the life of your child.

Often, other parents who have been or are going through the same process will be a good source of help. Sometimes, parents get together in small groups to talk about issues they have in common. Getting together with other parents may be necessary if the kinds of things you want to happen are not happening. Inclusion NB or other organizations within your community may be able to help you contact other parents.

Being involved also means being informed. You may have to learn about transition planning, work experience programs offered by schools, supported employment, etc. You may also have to learn how people in your community make a living. While you do not have to be an expert, having some information will allow you and your child to participate fully in discussions and decisions about transition planning and activities. Use this guide as a starting place and seek out other information as you feel it is necessary.

"I become what you think I am."

Encourage Your Child

There are a number of ways you can encourage your child to learn and develop abilities. One of your goals should be to have your child do as much for themselves as possible, both at school and at home. For example, having your child do chores around the home will teach important lessons about doing a job your child is asked to do. In addition, learning to do things, such as tell time and ride a bus, will help make your child more independent. Encouraging the development of your child's abilities will mean they will have to depend less on others in the future. Start as early as possible.

Encourage your child to make decisions. Often, parents of children with disabilities are tempted to make all decisions for their child. Encouraging the ability to make decisions will mean that your child will be able to participate in transition planning and be ready to make decisions as an adult and as a citizen. In considering your child's ability or potential ability to make decisions, remember the following:

- Your child may be able to make more decisions than you presume. Ask yourself how you will help and encourage your child to make their own decisions now and in the future. Most people develop their decision-making abilities by making small decisions (for example, what to wear, what to eat for lunch, etc.).
- People with disabilities sometimes communicate in different ways (for example, sign language, other gestures, picture boards, etc.). Decisions are often expressed in ways people may not readily understand. Listen to your own child's choices and help others understand the way in which they communicate. The way in which you communicate with your child will be an important lesson for others.
- Making decisions sometimes involves a risk. Allow your child the chance to make decisions even if some risk is involved.
- It is typical for all of us to ask others for help and opinions when making decisions. Your child can also benefit from the help and support of other people in the same way.
- Do not expect perfection from your child when they are making decisions or choices. We all make mistakes from time to time. Remember, every decision or choice has consequences, some good and some bad. All children, whether or not they have a disability, have to learn this.

Encouraging the development of your child's abilities will mean that they will have to depend less on others in the future. Start as early as possible.

Knowing your community will allow you to be more active in planning for your child's life in the community after school is finished.

Often, a person with a disability may not be ready to make decisions when others think decisions need to be made. Forcing a child to make a decision in a hurry may result in a bad decision and an angry or frustrated child. When possible, try to arrange for your child to have the time they need to decide what they really want.



Know Your Community

You will be a great asset to your child if you know your community well. Who are the employers and what kinds of jobs are available? What are the opportunities for summer jobs? If you have a local community college, what programs are offered that may interest your child? What community services or government programs exist in your community that may help your child achieve their goals? What opportunities are there for leisure activities and social gatherings?

Knowing your community will mean that you are informed enough to make suggestions about possible jobs, housing, or social opportunities. It will also allow you to be more active in planning for your child's life in the community after school is finished.

Networking

Networking is a conscience effort to meet people and use them as a resource, particularly for mutual benefit. It is also used to expand one's circle of acquaintances, to find out about job opportunities, and to increase awareness of what supports and services are available within the community.

Networking is one of the most effective strategies that you can use to help your child explore and expand career opportunities. Utilizing as many personal contacts as possible will provide the most opportunities in producing potential employment and/or becoming involved in the community.

You should see potential in every acquaintance and contact you meet. Anyone you meet could be an employer, know an employer, or know who is quitting, hiring, or expanding. You could also use your network to "plug-into" other people's networks, thereby expanding the pool of potential contacts in an effort to discover further opportunities for your child.

There are two basic types of networks, informal and formal. Informal networks consist of those individuals that are closest to you. Some examples of informal network contacts include the following:

- Family
- Close Friends
- Colleagues
- Clergy
- Neighbors
- Dentist
- Doctor

A person's formal network usually includes acquaintances and professional contacts. Depending on how familiar you are with these contacts will determine where you place them in your social network. Formal network contacts may include:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary or Lyons Club
- Past & Present Employer Contacts
- Supported Employment Professionals
- Community Representatives
- Local Town Officials
- Rehabilitation Counselor
- Case Manager
- School Faculty

Take Action

Be prepared to take action when it is necessary to do so. Too often, we tend to rely on other people when someone with a disability needs some assistance. This is particularly the case when there are local services or service agencies that are supposed to help people find jobs or get involved in their communities. Services are helpful, but they have limitations. They should not replace the efforts of you and your child to make things happen. Remember, the more a family does, the more credible family action will likely appear.

There are many kinds of actions you may need to take as part of the transition process. You may need to call a group of people together to help you and your child plan for what happens after high school. You may need to talk with employers in your community about possible jobs for your child. You may need to talk to people in your child's school or school district about opportunities to learn subjects and skills that will benefit your child. You may need to encourage and motivate your child to do more and to achieve their potential as a student and as an adult.

Strategies for effective advocacy

You know your child in a more profound way than anybody else. You have had years living with, observing, reacting to, understanding, and responding to your child. You have learned under what conditions your child cooperates or resists, initiates or follows, interacts or withdraws, and when they are most eager to communicate.

As a parent, you will be your child's most important advocate until they are old enough and informed enough to speak up for themselves. You know your child's strengths and challenges, and you can help identify and push for the resources your child needs to succeed. Because every child and situation is different, advocacy can take many different forms and approaches. Here are some tips to help you effectively advocate for your child.

Advocating for and with a loved one with a disability may:

- Help your child stand up for their individual rights;
- Help your child have and maintain opportunities for meaningful involvement in the community; and
- Help your child gain access to the supports and disability-related services that they may require to have a good life.

Tips for Being an Effective Advocate

Keep the lines of communication open with your child.

Regardless of your child's age, it's never too early to open those lines of communication. Your child has every right to know what's being done to help them and they have every right to voice their opinion throughout the process. A young child may not understand what being an effective advocate means or everything that happens during the process, but they will know that they play a role, and that is important.

Build relationships. Get to know your child's support team (including medical professionals, teachers, counsellors, social workers, etc.). Building relationships with these people will help keep the lines of communication more open. There's less of a chance of misunderstanding if everyone knows each other.

Preparation. Remember that information is power. Have specific goals or things you would like to achieve for and with your child. Identify the key issues or problems that you and your child are encountering along with possible solutions that you see as workable. If possible, identify what you are willing to accept if you cannot get exactly what you want. Finally, identify the people who may be able to help you and the people who you will need to speak with to achieve results for your child.

Communication. Be clear, concrete, and assertive. Listen carefully to what other people are saying and ask questions. Where appropriate, use stories or visual ways to communicate information. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification, as well. It's a good idea to submit in writing any requests or questions you may have. Keep copies of these requests that include the date you sent them. It might also be helpful to keep a log of whom you spoke to and when.



Documentation and Note Keeping. Keep a notebook, log, or diary to record your discussions. Keep a file of written responses and other documents. Use emails as a follow up to meetings.

Follow up. Try not to be too frustrated or intimidated if you are not getting the response or results that you are seeking. Sometimes, following up your issues may require that you talk with a more senior level position within an organization. At some point, you may feel that you have done all you can on your own. When working with government systems or agencies, you may need to contact elected officials. Lastly, there may be times that are not successful no matter how hard you try.

Remember that you're in control. Parents should never feel pressured to make a decision. Ultimately, you're in the driver's seat. While it's important to be receptive to others thoughts, don't agree to something you think goes against what's best for your child.

Stay calm. Remember that your child's support team is there to help, even if you disagree with them. The process will go more smoothly if you listen and keep an open mind. Make a list of the topics you want to cover in important meetings. Take deep breaths. Consider bringing a friend or relative who can take notes for you and help keep you steady.- Understand your child's rights: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities protects anyone with a disability from unlawful discrimination. The Convention is an international treaty that spells out the rights of people with disabilities and the obligations of countries that ratify the convention to promote and protect those rights. The Convention came into force in 2008 and Canada has signed the Convention, but has not yet ratified it. The U.N. Convention is one of the most progressive human rights documents affecting the lives of people with disabilities to date. It contains 50 sections (or articles) and touches on the rights of people with disabilities in the areas of inclusive education, employment, community inclusion, and the justice system.

The best kind of professional-parent relationships are those in which mutual trust, respect, and open communication are present. Parents should be recognized for the central role they play in the life of their child's growth, development, and well-being, while professionals should be recognized for the special knowledge or expertise they contribute.



Part II Living and Working in the Community

Chapter 3 Living and Participating in the Community

Chapter 4 Working in the Community

Chapter 3

Living and Participating in the Community

The Importance of Community Participation

The significance of community participation should not be underestimated. People who do things that are valued by others are usually accepted and respected. When we are valued, opportunities are open to us to be involved in community activities and with other people. We are also more likely to have friends and other people in our lives who want to spend time with us.

Introduction

All In this chapter, we look at the importance of living in and participating in the community. Whether you have a disability or not, high school graduation is a major milestone and it means a whole new life begins outside school walls. It is important for families to encourage their children with disabilities to develop the attitudes, skills, and abilities that will help them enjoy greater involvement in the community of their choosing. Here we identify significant ways to help support individuals' participation in their communities.



We will look at:

- why community participation is so important;
- different aspects of participation;
- positive steps that can be taken to encourage your child, which include:
 - developing personal skills
 - developing positive social images
 - encouraging relationships with others
 - encouraging participation in classroom and school activities; and
 - ways to prepare for community participation.

Why Is Community Participation So Important?

We do many things in our lives as adults that are valued by our society. We are workers, taxpayers, voters, volunteers, shoppers, customers, church members, members of a club or an organization, parents or grandparents, athletes, and so on. By being these things, we are seen to be doing something valuable in our communities and society. We contribute, participate, and are generally appreciated.

Many people, for several reasons, are not accepted or valued within our communities. Many people with disabilities are at risk of being left out of our communities if steps are not taken to ensure they are able to participate. Being left out may mean that people with disabilities will not have opportunities to have friends, work, or be involved in the ordinary activities of life.

Aspects of Community Participation

Completing high school exposes your child to many opportunities and possibilities for consideration. Some may be new, while others may evolve from current activities.

There are many aspects of being a member of a society that brings value to our lives and our communities. These could include:

- having the opportunity to participate in the electoral process and having an option to vote (after age 18);
- being a volunteer and offering your time and talents to help your community and your fellow citizens;
- getting involved in community issues (such as the environment, poverty, etc.) and helping your community deal with these issues; and
- joining a service club.

Employment

Having a job or doing some kind of work is a key part of community participation. Most people are known for what kind of work they do. We review work separately in the next chapter.



Family and Friends

Family and friends are often an important part of our daily lives. Quite often, they can influence what our interests are. Being a family member or a close friend is something that both we and others value.

RM moved to Bathurst less than a year ago, without a plan or natural supports in place. He has since made connections in his community and has become known for his commitment to giving back and helping others. He is very knowledgeable about first aid and safety practices and has been recognized by business owners for his desire to keep the community safe. He often helps his friends with various tasks, like moving furniture or books, or helping out in his friend's store. He also enjoys sharing his love of music with others.

RM is eager to try new things with the right support. He recently joined the New Brunswick Coalition for People with Disabilities. He would like to help others and improve the system by sharing his experiences. He plans to continue developing meaningful connections in his new community while maintaining contact with old friends.

Personal Involvement

Personal involvement and community participation may look different for everyone; however, feeling as though you are a valued member of the community as an adult is important, regardless of the way in which a person participates. Personal involvement may mean having opportunities to participate in ordinary community activities, such as shopping, banking, or just getting around in villages, towns, and cities. It is through these activities that we become known and accepted by others.

Personal involvement also includes activities that are more involved or meaningful. For example, a person may be a member of a volunteer group, a book club, or a swim team. People may also become members of an organization that promotes a cause they find important (for example, Cancer Society, UNICEF, etc.). Opportunities to get to know people become greatly enhanced as people become more involved in their communities.

Recreation, Leisure, and Entertainment

Our participation may be based on personal enjoyment or having fun. Recreation, leisure, and entertainment are often ways that we get involved with clubs or associations. Some clubs and associations are involved with sporting activities (for example, a curling club, swimming club, etc.) and others involve hobbies, such as bird watching, photography, etc. Being involved with recreation and leisure may also mean that we enjoy being a spectator or a fan of sporting events, such as hockey, baseball, and soccer. Or, it may simply mean going to see a movie or having dinner with friends or people with whom you work.

[See the Resource List for useful books on this subject.](#)

Housing

It is not the purpose of this guide to review housing options for people with disabilities. It is likely that your child will continue to live with you after they graduate from high school. At some point, however, you and your child may want to think seriously about your child living in a home of their own with whatever support is necessary. Planning for the move outside the family home can be challenging and may take some time. As you think about this, remember the importance of having opportunities to participate in the life of the community and having valued roles. Remember also the security that comes from having a home of one's own. For further information about planning for future housing, see *Taking the Journey*, Chapter 8 (Moving Out: Housing and Support Options). (See Resource List for further information.)



Ways to Encourage Community Living and Participation for People with Disabilities

A number of positive steps can be taken to assist people to be active participants and have valued roles in their communities. Start using these suggestions as early as possible, so by the time your child graduates from school, much of the groundwork will have been laid.

Develop Personal Skills

Developing skills is important for a number of reasons:

- Acquiring skills means your child will be better able to do things that will make it easier to participate. For example, learning a hobby or how to play a sport will make it easier for your child to be involved in clubs or groups that promote these activities. Likewise, learning how to manage finances, ride a bus, or vote in an election will mean these activities will be available.
- Being able to do things for oneself is seen as important in our society; therefore, understanding what your child can do for themselves will make it easier to establish outside supports to assist them to participate and engage in the community.

Develop Positive Social Images

People are more likely to be accepted if other people see them in a positive way. This can be done, at least in part, by making sure:

- your child is dressed in age-appropriate clothing;
- your child is neat in appearance and clean;
- your child takes part in activities that other children their age do (this does not mean your child cannot choose to do other activities they enjoy); and
- that you and other people refer to your child respectfully and in ways that are positive and not demeaning.

Encourage Relationships with Other People

From an early age, your child should be encouraged to spend time with other children. For many of us, the friends that we made as children and teenagers are the people that we now have contact with as adults.



Learning to get along and be involved with other people is one of the more important aspects of community participation.

There are a number of practical ways to encourage your child to have relationships with other children:

- Create opportunities for your child to spend time with other children in your neighbourhood. Make sure your child has access to playgrounds, ballfields, and other places that other children spend time.
- Invite neighbourhood children or classmates to your house for parties, sleep-overs, or other opportunities to do things together. Make your home a welcoming place for neighbourhood children.
- Enroll your child in Scouts, Guides, church groups, sports, or hobby groups that will require your child to interact with other children. Attempt to identify one or two other children who would be willing to help your child participate.

The need for positive relationships and for friends is universal. Currently, schools are increasing their focus on students' relationships as a crucial aspect of learning. The need for friendships and belonging is being addressed by school leaders to better meet all students' needs.

Connecting Students: A Guide to Thoughtful Friendship Facilitation for Educators and Families, C. Beth Schaffner and Barbara Buswell

Encourage Participation in Classroom and School Activities

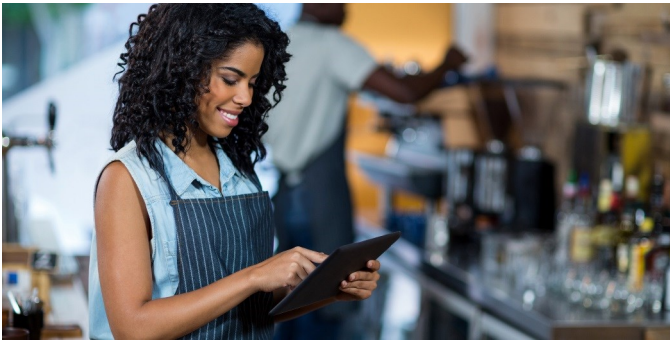
For 12 or 13 years, your child will be spending a lot of their time in school. It will, therefore, be very important for your child to participate in regular classroom and school activities. This should include spending time with other children during recess or lunchtime. Your child should also be encouraged to be part of school clubs and events. Make sure that, each year, you have discussions about your child's participation with their teacher and others from the school. It may be wise to state some goals for classroom and school participation within your child's "Personalized Learning Plan" (PLP).

Preparing for Community Participation

The school years will be an important time for your child to prepare for community participation as an adult. It is important that you and your child begin to think of these things now so you are able to have the benefit of the school system to help you prepare.

As a general guide, we suggest you prepare by doing the following:

- Over the years, support your child's interests, preferences, and strengths. Use this knowledge to help you your child throughout their education.
- Think about what community participation will mean for your child after graduation. What vision do you and your child have about their role in the community? What specific goals for participation would you like your child to achieve? Use this vision and these goals by building them into the transition planning that occurs while your child is attending school.
- As much as possible, incorporate your vision and goals for community participation within your child's school curriculum. For example, learning what it means to be a member of community and how to participate in the community may be appropriate goals for your child as part of a social studies class.
- Make sure that community participation is happening now for your child. As noted earlier, encouraging participation in things like Scouts, Guides, church groups, etc., while your child is young will be the best way for them to learn about being involved in their community.



Chapter 4

Working in the Community

Introduction

There is an important role to play in preparing children of all ages to become successful, employed adults in a society that places a high value on work.

In this chapter we look at:

- The value of work;
- Trends in the workplace;
- Work options;
- Work supports;
- Family, community agency, and business roles; and
- Government and community services and programs.

We have an overriding belief that individuals with disabilities should be given the same opportunities for working in the community as those without disabilities. This chapter will help you and your child prepare for and approach the world of work.

The Value of Work

“For individuals, work is an important feature in structuring: personal and social identity; family and social bonds; ways of making money, and thereby accessing a number of essential and non-essential goods, services, and activities; daily routines; level of activity; physical and mental well-being; self-confidence and self-esteem; and a sense of self-worth provided by the feeling of contributing to society or the common good.”

<http://www.inworkproject.eu/toolbox/>

Why is Work Important?

- Work supplies us with money so we can buy the things we need to live and enjoy life and be as independent as possible.
- Work adds to a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Work allows us to feel we are productive and contributing something to society.
- Through our work, we also obtain part of our identity – who we are: teacher, police officer, store clerk, office worker, etc. When we meet someone new, one of the first questions usually asked is: “What do you do?”
- Working and training for work brings us into contact with others. We meet and get to know people. Our co-workers may become our friends outside of work. For many people, working with others simply makes their day more enjoyable. Work is, therefore, central to our inclusion within our communities.

Despite the value we place on work, people with disabilities have been largely excluded from the workforce. Current employment rates for this population are significantly lower than the general population without a disability (nationally 59% versus 80%). In New Brunswick, the employment rate for people with a disability aged 15-64 is 53.9%. While there are several reasons for this, one of the main reasons is people’s attitudes and beliefs about the abilities of people who have disabilities. These beliefs and attitudes have been shared by families and many professionals who have viewed people with disabilities mainly as people with limitations; however, many of these beliefs are not true. People with disabilities can learn and be productive workers in regular workplaces.

Additional reasons why people with disabilities have been excluded from workplaces include:

- Lack of opportunities to enhance independence and build skills
- Lack of support in getting and keeping a job;
- Lack of opportunities to obtain the education required; and
- Lack of preparation by the school system.



How Employment Trends Affect Employment

Planning for the transition from school to work will require a good understanding of what is happening in your community. Rapid advances in technology, new inventions, and new ways of communicating have changed the way society operates, affecting the nature of and way we work.

As students make their way through school, an awareness of the changes in the workplace and ways in which people work and earn a living may influence employment goals. For example, are traditional types of employment still available? Are new opportunities becoming available as a result of new types of businesses or industries? Are there needs in your community for services or goods that are currently not being met?

The type of jobs or careers available have changed over time and continue to evolve. It is important to be aware of changing employment trends:

- Many jobs that previously relied on physical or manual labour no longer exist. Manufacturing jobs, for example, may continue to decline because people have been replaced by technology in some areas. A career in manufacturing and production is possible, but may never return to pre-information age levels.
- Many of the jobs that are available today are in the service business and industries: rather than people producing goods for others to use, more people are now employed in services to the public. These service jobs often require different kinds of skills; for example, the ability to communicate with people (communication skills).
- More people are now working in part-time jobs. Full-time jobs, especially for young people, are becoming harder to find. Today, many people are forced to work in part-time jobs that do not offer the security and benefits (such as pensions and health benefits) that full-time jobs offer. Part-time work may also require flexibility in work schedules and hours of work.
- More people are working for themselves. The greatest growth in employment has been and is expected to be in the development of small businesses and self-employment. As large companies and governments continue to “down-size,” people are forced to rely on their own resources and creativity to create work for themselves. Many people now run their businesses out of their homes.
- Fewer jobs in the public sector. As governments continue to cut spending, fewer people are being employed in government jobs.
- Employment equity occurs when active steps are taken to ensure that some individuals from specific groups (people with disabilities, women, visible minorities, and aboriginal peoples) are hired. Employment equity is usually promoted by governments. For the most part, equity programs are voluntary rather than mandatory.
- Communities may also be affected by seasonal types of employment. Many people, particularly in certain geographic areas of New Brunswick, continue to rely on seasonal jobs to earn a living from year to year.

Finding a job today may look a lot different now than when you were leaving high school!

Work Options

It is more difficult for a young person with a disability to find and keep a job once they leave school. This means it may be even more important for young people with disabilities and their families to begin planning early for the transition from school to work.

There are two work categories to consider:

1. Employed - Working for someone else (a business/ employer) who hires you.
2. Self-Employed - Working for yourself (either individually or collectively with a group of other people).

Some General Considerations

When considering work options, there are some general considerations to keep in mind:

- Respect choices and preferences. A successful entry into the workforce after high school will be easier if your child is involved in deciding what they want to do. Making decisions about work requires having the opportunity to experience different kinds of jobs in one way or another. The transition planning done while still in school will be crucial for allowing these experiences to happen. Summer and part-time jobs (evenings and weekends) are important for learning employment skills and exploring career opportunities.
- Match strengths and skills with potential jobs. Focusing on and developing strengths and skills will be a key part of transition planning. By the time your child finishes school, they should have some strengths and skills in areas that will help determine the kind of work they are able to do in the community.

- Know your local job market. Having a good understanding of what is happening in your community is also important. Look at existing businesses and industries, as well as new ones, from the point of view of their potential to offer employment opportunities. Know where opportunities exist. If self-employment is a possibility, know where opportunities may exist to create a job or starting a business.
- Are there any transportation considerations? Some people with disabilities will not be able to obtain a driver's licence or purchase a car. They will need to rely on other means of transportation to get to or from work. Being able to live as close as possible to your place of work, use public buses, or rely on help from a co-worker to get to or from work may make a big difference. When thinking about the transition from school to work, being able to get to a job may be as important as getting a job.

Supported Employment

Many individuals with disabilities may need help finding and doing a job. Sometimes people only need help in finding a job, filling out a job application, or with the job interview process. Other individuals may require different forms of "support." Support means providing help or assistance to a person within a workplace. This could involve changing or adapting the workplace, job tasks, or job schedules. Some people with intellectual disabilities may require ongoing support (such as someone to give prompts or reminders) while on the job to be able to do a job effectively.

Employment agencies throughout New Brunswick assist individuals with disabilities by providing on-the-job training and on-the-job support as required. This is known as supported employment. Supported employment is an evidence-based and personalized approach to support people with disabilities into real jobs, where they can fulfill their employment aspirations and achieve social and economic inclusion. It involves individual career planning, employer labour and job analysis and the creative matching of a person to a work setting, culture and task. This approach assumes that each person, no matter what disability he or she has, is employable – that each person can bring a return on an investment to an employer when given the proper support for as long as necessary.





One common type of support provided to a job seeker with a disability is a "job coach" who is hired by the employment agency. This job coach goes into the workplace and works with a person with a disability by training them for a job, until they can master the required tasks. The goal is usually to have the job coach "fade out" of the worksite within a certain period of time. Sometimes, the job coach is available to provide follow-up support to the person with a disability on an ongoing basis.

Supported employment may also include the use of assisted technology as a means of helping individuals work around challenges in the workplace. These supports may range from simple reminder alarms to voice-to-text software.

Supported employment has some limitations. These include:

- It is dependent on government-funded employment agencies willing to provide job coaches to assist individuals. There has been increasing pressure from government to provide support only to people with disabilities who will be able to work "independently" at a job within a relatively short period (i.e. three to six months). Individuals who are considered most "capable" are targeted for supported employment.
- A job coach who has to spend a lot of time training a worker at a job site may only be able to work with one or two individuals at one time. This limits the number of individuals who may be able to receive this form of assistance.
- The presence of a job coach in a workplace may set the person with a disability apart from his or her co-workers. This may make it more difficult to "fit in" and be included as a regular worker.

- There is no guarantee that employment agencies will continue to operate from year to year. In New Brunswick, some employment agencies are funded for only a short period. It is difficult to develop a consistent and well-established service that can assist individuals with disabilities to gain access to jobs in the community.

Recently, people have been thinking of ways to overcome some of the limitations of supported employment. There is increasing interest in the concept of "natural supports" (or co-worker support) to better ensure that people with disabilities receive the long-term support they need and ensure that people are accepted and integrated into regular workplaces by their co-workers.

The natural support approach simply means that we rely more upon people who are already in the workplace (i.e. co-workers and supervisors) to train and help a worker with a disability. Instead of providing support directly to the individual with a disability, an employment agency helps the business figure out how it is going to support someone who may have ongoing needs. The agency, therefore, may help an employer identify potential co-workers who would be able to train and support a person with a disability. These co-workers are trained in ways to work with someone who has a disability so that they can do the job.

"The type of accommodation [support] a person needs will vary depending on the individual, the type of work, and the nature of the disability. Due to the nature of the disability, some employees will require certain modifications, equipment, technology, or approaches that will be different from other co-workers. The work environment can be modified to accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities in many different ways."

Ability for Hire: An Employer's Guide, New Brunswick People First, 1997

"Perhaps the most critical ingredient to the successful employment of a person who has an intellectual disability is a supportive employer...A supportive employer is one who has a positive view of people with intellectual disabilities, seeing them as people who have the same motivations to work as any other person. An employer that is able to focus on the person's strengths, abilities and potential rather than on his or her disability is more likely to succeed."

Hiring Someone With an Intellectual Disability: A Tool Kit For Employers, Canadian Association for Community Living, 1996

Self-Employment

There are many examples of individuals with disabilities who are successfully working for themselves or, alternatively, who have started a small business. Self-employment and entrepreneurship may become important options to consider if your son or daughter lives in an area where many people are unemployed or if other options are unavailable.

There are several things to consider before you or your child can start a small business, including:

- **The development of a business plan.** This does not need to be a complex plan, but you will need to consider what kind of goods or services the business will offer. The business plan should identify how the business will be feasible. Is there a local market for what you want to sell? What kind of competition will the business face? Some initial research to find out answers to these questions is necessary. There may be an organization that will assist in the development of a viable business plan or a template online to assist in the initial determination of feasibility.
- **Funding for start-up.** A business requires some resources or investment to get going. This may be for some equipment, an inventory of products you wish to sell, or for some other needs. The start-up costs will vary with the nature of the business. Often, people with disabilities are rejected for business loans because they do not have their own assets or any kind of credit history. It may be possible to secure a small entrepreneurial loan or grant from the provincial or federal government. Families may decide to put up some money themselves to get the business off the ground.
- **Decisions regarding ownership and management of the business.** It will be crucial to decide who is going to own and operate the business. Will the business be owned by an individual or will a company be established? There may be questions about whether a person with a disability will be able to enter into contracts. If so, a small company with a Board of Directors made up of some family and friends can be formed to enter into agreements.
- **Help in operating a business.** A person with a disability may need some ongoing help to do the job and run the business. If a business becomes



successful, some of the revenue from the business can be used to hire someone who can provide the help. Until that time, help may need to be provided by family or a community agency.

- **Business Partners.** It may make a lot of sense to have business partners. The business can be co-owned by partners who share the responsibilities for setting up and running the business. Partners may be family members, other people with disabilities, or people without disabilities.
- **Marketing.** Any successful business will have a decent marketing plan in place. For example, people need to know that a business has something to sell and be persuaded to buy it. A marketing plan could involve advertising, direct contacts with possible buyers, using your contacts to spread the word of your business, telephone solicitations, etc. A person with a disability may require ongoing support in order to do this successfully.

Being self-employed or a small business operator may be an option for some people, including some people who have disabilities. It will require work on the part of the individual, possibly his or her family, and others to start and operate. While at times it may be difficult, it can also be successful. There are successful examples of people with disabilities becoming local entrepreneurs and satisfied business owners.

The Canadian Association for Community Living has published a book entitled *Everybody's Business: Self-Employment Issues and Opportunities for People with a Disability* (see the Resource List for further details). In addition, a Network for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities has been formed in Atlantic Canada. Part of the network mandate is to provide information as well as networking and mentoring opportunities to people with disabilities.



Building a Skill Set

Volunteer Work

Volunteer work provides opportunities to learn new skills or to have different kinds of work experiences. Volunteer work also provides opportunities for socializing with others, learning job-related skills, and contributing to society. For some, volunteer work will be a step toward the goal of having a paying job. For others, volunteer work may be an alternative to paid work. If so, make sure your child is not being taken advantage of. If your child can or should be paid for doing a job, they should not be working as a volunteer long term.

Many people are exposed to volunteer work at an early age. Young people who join Girl Guides or Boy Scouts groups, for example, are often engaged in activities that assist other people within their communities. For a young person with a disability, this type of opportunity can be very valuable to assist in the development of skills and work experience to build a resume.

Summer Employment and Other Employment During the School Years

Getting a summer job provides some valuable lessons about what it means to work as well as an opportunity to develop work skills. Summer work experiences also give people the opportunity to find out what kind of work they would prefer. These same kinds of opportunities should be available to teenagers with disabilities.

Similarly, working part-time during the school year, even for a few hours a week, can provide valuable skills and experience that will contribute to a greater opportunity for successful employment in adulthood.

Securing these types of work options may be a little more difficult for your child who has a disability, but they are no less important. You may have to be more actively involved in helping your child find a summer or part-time job and figure out how they can receive any support that may be required to do a job.

Who Can Help?

Finding and keeping work may be more difficult for young people with disabilities than for others. There are a number of individuals, organizations, or government departments that may be able to help. Below are a few ideas.

Family

The help that families provide their children is most important. When families are determined and supportive of their child's goals for work, success is more likely to occur. As you would for any of your children, you should be prepared to take whatever steps possible to help your child with a disability obtain and keep a job. Below are a few practical suggestions you may consider:

- Use your own contacts with family members and friends. Let them know that your son or daughter is looking for work and ask them to talk with their friends about possible job opportunities.
- Encourage your child to think about work and work opportunities. Talk to them early about what work means and what they might like to do. Start with encouraging your child to work in part-time or summer jobs during their school years.
- If necessary, meet with employers who are willing to give your child an opportunity to work. This may involve you in helping plan schedules or in addressing problems that may occur. You know your child better than anyone else. If particular routines or habits are important, employers should know about these and how to accommodate them.
- If necessary, help your child get to and from work. You will want to have your child do this for themselves, but that may not always be possible or practical.
- Get in touch with any local agency that may be available to help your child find and keep a job. You may have to put pressure on an agency to help in ways you feel are important. Be respectful, but also be determined.
- If you have the resources and inclination, help your child set up their own business. You may be able to work with another family or families interested in the same thing. This may be a way of sharing the responsibilities among a larger group of people. Find out what you need to know to start and plan it well.

Community Agencies

There are a number of community agencies in New Brunswick that help people with disabilities to find employment in the community. These employment agencies can help your child with job search assistance, networking, resumes, cover letters, and preparing for interviews. Employment specialists can also connect your child to employers, refer them to appropriate services, help find a job that matches their unique skills and interests and provide follow-up support as required.

Some employment agencies have had much success in their communities in developing work opportunities for people with disabilities. These agencies usually are willing to work with individuals to develop employment opportunities before they leave high school. Where this occurs, the community employment agency becomes a key player in the transition planning process.

These agencies, for the most part, are dependent on external funding (usually government). Their ability to assist individuals in their communities will be limited by the funding and resources they receive. Some agencies can make limited resources go quite far by developing excellent relationships with individuals and employers in the local business community.

If you live in a community that does not have an agency committed to developing community employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the challenges for your child may be greater. You may want to consider being active in helping to put an agency in place that can help. It may be worthwhile to visit some of the agencies in the province that are helping individuals achieve their employment goals in their communities. Otherwise, you may have to rely more on your own initiatives to develop opportunities for your child.

Government Programs

There are a variety of government programs that may help your child get into the workforce. While government programs may be an aid, remember that the actions of family and community will likely be more crucial. Government programs do change and what is available today may not be available in the future. Please make sure you have accurate and up-to-date information about these programs.

Government programs may provide help by:

- Funding may be available for employment counselling, job training (including a job coach), special equipment, worksite modifications to accommodate a person's disability, and for assistance to attend a job fair or job search club (and possibly for other disability related needs). (In New Brunswick this program is currently called TESS – Training and Employment Support Services, which is available through The Department of Post Secondary, Training and Labour
- Funding may be available for developing on-the-job skills or for job experience. Usually, government provides money to employers in the form of wage subsidies that pays some or all of the individual's salary for a specific time. Sometimes employers will agree to keep the person as an employee when the subsidy runs out.
- Specific government programs may provide employment counselling or planning assistance to people looking for work. Sometimes these programs are developed for specific target groups – for example, people with disabilities, youth, or people on employment insurance or social assistance benefits. If your child is receiving social assistance benefits and have a strong desire to work or further education, they could request to work with a Career Development Opportunities Case Manager. This case worker may offer or refer your child to: academic upgrading, employment services, case planning, etc.
- Government programs may provide a referral service for people with disabilities to private sector employers. People register for the referral service by providing information about their skills, abilities, and employment interests and goals. They are then matched with employers who are looking to hire. (In New Brunswick, this government referral service is called Equal Employment Opportunity Program).
- Government programs may also promote the hiring of people with disabilities within the civil service (this may be called "employment equity"). Sometimes the employment opportunities are short-term (lasting from several weeks to a year). There may also be employment opportunities that are more permanent.

Getting Started!

This chapter has provided some information on work opportunities and options you and your child may wish to consider. The main point of this chapter is to prepare for future employment after high school. Having a good idea of what work may mean and look like is a crucial part of the transition planning process. Starting early to plan for the transition from school to work and life in the community will provide a good start and maximize the opportunity for success.



Part III Planning for Transition

Chapter 5 Promoting Successful Transitions - An Overview

Chapter 6 Transition Planning

Chapter 7 Preparing for and Participating in Transition Planning

Chapter 5

Promoting Successful Transition – An Overview

Start with a Quality Education

When students who have a disability receive a well-rounded and inclusive education, they are provided with the tools they will need to transition from school to work and life in the community. During their years at school, students work towards gaining knowledge and a multitude of skills that will be needed for life as an adult. This skillset will equip them to participate as valued and contributing members of society and to lead meaningful lives.



Introduction

The following information will assist you in understanding the steps necessary to support a successful transition from school into the community. Transitions can be challenging; however, by working towards this goal over several academic years, it can be achieved.

In this chapter, we will look at:

- Transition planning - what it is, why it is important, when it needs to start, and how it happens. The crucial roles that your child and family members play are also reviewed.
- What your child may need to learn while they are in school. What kind of subjects and skills would best prepare your child for work and life in the community after high school?
- The importance of opportunities for your child to be exposed to the work field during their years at school (getting a part-time job, taking a co-operative class, volunteering, etc.).
- The importance of involving other people from your community to help with successful transitions for students.



Key Factors for a Successful Transition

The promotion of successful transitions begins with all children receiving a good quality and inclusive education. There are a number of other factors and practices that have been identified as important to the successful transition of youth. These factors and practices include:

- **Schools and school districts understand the importance of an inclusive education.** This means that youth with disabilities are learning in classrooms with peers their age and are actively participating in the classroom and in school activities. Having a quality education means that youth with disabilities learn subjects and skills that will help prepare them for work and adult life after high school.
- **Youth with disabilities learn to make decisions for themselves about their futures.** Youth with disabilities learn to speak for themselves, set their own goals, and be active participants in planning for ways to achieve those goals.
- **Family and friends of youth with disabilities play an important role in planning for the transition from school to work and life in the community.** Families bring insight and commitment to the planning process and should be actively involved throughout their child's school years.
- **Transition planning takes place long before an individual graduates from high school.** Transition planning is well-coordinated and based on achieving specific goals. This will allow for a smooth transition to work and/or life after high school.
- **Youth with disabilities have useful work experiences during their years in school.** There are many ways in which youth are exposed to the work force during their years in school (career planning activities, speaking with a school guidance counsellor, co-operative classes, etc.). Work experience and career education are most effective when there are well-developed links between school and the local business community.
- **Since many youth with disabilities may need some ongoing support and services to work in the community after high school, steps are taken during the school years to make sure these supports and services are available.** Links with people who can provide supports and services are made during the transition planning process.

Adapted from: People With Disabilities Making Transitions, Research Report 3, Canadian Labour Force Development Board, 1994.

An important place to begin is learning about the transition policies, practices, and programs available within your child's school district, as these may vary among schools and districts. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is now giving more information and direction to educators and school professionals about transition planning and how it could be done. You may still have to create your own expectations for what will happen for your child while they are in school. For example, if there is no real transition planning for your child at their school, you may have to initiate steps to make sure it does happen, and that it happens effectively.

"We aren't just being inclusive because the law tells us to, its because if we don't, the world is missing out from knowing some really incredible people"

- Shelley Moore

"Kids need to be in their community schools with their peer, if they aren't, we are limiting their opportunities. And if we are limiting opportunities, we are limiting their potential growth"

- Shelley Moore



What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education is a pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allow each student to feel respected, confident, and safe so they can learn and develop to their full potential. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centered on the best interests of the student, which promotes social cohesion, belonging, active participation in learning, a complete school experience, and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community.

These values and beliefs will be shared by schools and communities. Inclusive education is put into practice within school communities that value diversity and nurture the well-being and quality of learning of each of their members. Inclusive education is carried out through a range of public and community programs and services available to all students.

Reference: <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/rdi.html>

Inclusion is not about fitting a child into a class and hoping for the best. Inclusion is about looking at the ways our schools and classrooms are designed so that all children can participate and learn together. Inclusion is also about finding different ways of teaching so that classrooms actively involve all children.

Key Features of Successful Inclusive Education

Generally, inclusive education will be successful if these important features and practices are followed:

- Accepting, unconditionally, all children into common learning environments and the life of the school.
- Looking at what children can do rather than what they cannot do.
- Developing education goals according to each child's abilities. This means that children do not need to have the same education goals in order to learn together in regular classes.
- Provide as much support to children, educators, and classrooms as necessary to ensure that all can participate in their schools and classes.
- Having principals, educators, parents, and others work together to determine the most effective ways of providing a quality education in an inclusive environment.

The Benefits of Inclusion

There are many benefits to providing children with an inclusive education. Some of these benefits include:

- Children with disabilities become better prepared for life in the community. By feeling that they are a part of the school community and culture, all children are able to develop a sense of belonging.
- Inclusion provides better opportunities for learning. Children with disabilities are often better motivated when they are learning in classes with peers who are their own age. All children are exposed to a wide range of activities and people.
- Successful inclusion aids to develop an individual's strengths and gifts. Presuming competence leads to more success for all students.
- Through inclusion, children are able to work on individual goals while being with others their own age.
- Inclusion encourages the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the activities of their local schools.
- Inclusion provides children without disabilities the opportunity to learn about and accept individual differences and fosters empathy. It also provides students with the opportunity to learn how to support others.
- Inclusion provides all children with opportunities to build positive relationships with one another. These relationships provide role models and opportunities for growth. They are essential to a successful and fulfilling life in the community.

Many of the skills we all need to get along as adults are learned through our day-to-day contacts with others during our school years. Transitions from school to work and life in the community will be much smoother if children learn and grow with their peers in the classroom. A truly inclusive school allows for children to learn from each other and foster positive relationships.

Inclusion does not mean children may never leave the classroom while they are attending school. Being involved in work experiences, for example, will require being away from the classroom during parts of the school day. This is the reality of all who choose to have work experience as part of their school curriculum.



Having an inclusive education is an important part of preparing youth for adult life; however, additional work is required to increase the likelihood of a successful transition to work and life in the community. The other factors and practices noted earlier must also be in place.

Many of the things you will need to think about and plan for to ensure your child has an inclusive education are discussed in *Achieving Inclusion: A Parent Guide to Inclusive Education in New Brunswick*, which is available from Inclusion NB.

"I graduated with Yves and I thought it was nice to give him some work. He has more confidence now that he's working. Lots of customers ask him where things are. If he doesn't know, he asks us. If he knows, he shows them. He does a good job."

- Daniel, Yves' coworker

Chapter 6

Transition Planning

Introduction

In this chapter, we take a closer look at the ins and outs of transition – what it is; when to start; who to involve; and what role you and your child should play to maximize results. We will also review the ways in which you can encourage your child's participation. We explore the role of support services, resources, and how to develop a plan to support your child to reach their full potential.

What is Transition Planning?

Transition refers to a change in an individual's role, from that of a student to that of an adult working and living in the community. This transition happens to all young people as they near completion of their high school education. Some people continue as students for a number of years by enrolling in community college, university, or other training experiences. Others attempt to go directly into the workforce from high school.

The foundation for successful transitions needs to be laid during the elementary and middle school years. All children and young people should be exposed to the idea of work, including different types of jobs and careers. They should also be given the opportunity to begin to learn the skills they will need to function as adults after graduation from school. This can also happen from community connections, volunteering, job shadowing, Co-op placements, and by joining different groups. It is important to keep the voice of your child at the core of any planning for these activities.

Transition planning is a directed activity that helps to prepare youth for adulthood. There are a number of key elements to transition planning that you should be aware of in order to best support your child through the transition planning process.

- **Transition planning is usually a process that evolves over a number of years.** Planning usually involves the student and his or her family, teachers, guidance counsellors, individuals who may be involved in providing services to the student either during or after school, other family members, friends, and people from the community. Planning is more effective when a "team" of people are involved.
- **Transition planning is also a process that respects student choice at all stages.** The process itself should actually help the student gain a sense of control over their own planning and decisions.
- **Transition planning is a process that takes a broad view of an individual's life.** Planning can involve areas such as work, leisure activities, relationships, self-confidence building, and living in the community.
- **Transition planning is a goal-oriented process.** It attempts to identify the goals the individual wants to achieve in their life once they leave school. People will also identify goals for other areas of their lives.
- **Transition planning is an action-oriented process.** It involves the selection of school and work activities and experiences that will help achieve goals. As much as possible, these experiences should be selected by the individual student and involve other people (for example, teachers, employers, classmates, etc.).
- **In order for transition planning to be successful, it must also co-ordinate school learning, work experiences, and potential adult services prior to the student leaving high school.** Bringing the different pieces together before the student leaves school will help to ensure there is continuity between the school years and adult life once school is finished.



Why is Transition Planning Important?

Transition planning is important because it helps students get the most out of their school experience. It provides the vehicle by which young people with or without disabilities can learn to make decisions and take responsibility for themselves. The goals that you and your child establish through the planning process, with support from the rest of the transition team, will help to identify important pieces along your child's path to success.

With the goals that are established through the planning process, you, your child, and individuals working within the school system who are involved in the transition process will have a clear direction on what is important for your child.

Transition planning will also involve people from outside the school system before your child graduates. For example, your child may become connected to a local employment counsellor, social worker, or a potential employer who may wish to be a part of your child's journey as they prepare to enter adulthood. As a result, your child may discover further opportunities for meaningful experiences, both inside and outside of school.

Starting Transition Planning

Transition planning should start early enough to make a difference. It is never too late to begin transition planning; however, the earlier you start, the better. You will need time to help your child set goals, develop appropriate ways and experiences to help meet those goals, and evaluate progress from year to year.

We suggest that transition planning begin when your child is 14 or 15 years of age. This would mean that planning would begin when your child enters Grade 9 (which is now the first year of high school in New Brunswick). Using Grade 9 as a starting point will provide your child with at least four years during which planning can take place. This should allow some time for planning to evolve and to evaluate whether specific goals are being achieved.



If your child is already in high school, start planning as soon as possible. Reaching out to school personnel to learn about programs that your child could participate in, such as Inclusion NB's Transition to Work Program or other avenues of support, could be a great way to begin the research and fill in gaps or areas that require further support.

Career Planning" may begin sooner than Grade 9. Schools are now being required to talk about career planning with all students as early as Grade 6. Career planning will likely be an important part of transition planning for your child. Starting earlier with career planning will give you and your child more time to think about the transition from school to adult life.

Within the school system, "Personal Development and Career Planning" may begin sooner than Grade 9. Schools are now being required to talk about career planning with all students as early as Grade 6. Career planning will likely be an important part of transition planning for your child. Starting earlier with career planning will give you and your child more time to think about the transition from school to adult life.

What Roles Should You and Your Child Play in Planning?

The roles you and your child play in planning for transition are very important. Your child has the most to gain from planning for what happens after high school.

Too often, the planning that takes place within the school system is driven by professionals (i.e. teachers, guidance counsellors, and others). In many situations, professionals review a student's progress and make decisions about what they think is in a student's best interests. While the role of professionals is important, the transition planning process will be far more effective if a student and their parents are actively involved in setting goals and objectives and making decisions on how to achieve them.

Roles of Students in Transition Planning

Encouraging the participation of your child may be a difficult task, but it is one that will allow your child to feel valued and to develop skills and confidence to make decisions.

Start the conversation early about what “Graduation” means:

- What might their new routine look like? Work? Post-secondary?
- What can they expect when they leave high school? Preparing early for this change will alleviate any potential stress your child may have about transitioning from high school to adult life.

Below are ways to encourage the active participation of your child in the transition planning process:

- As parents, you can help build confidence in your child by having positive attitudes and expectations about their life and future. Remind your child to talk about or express their desires and wishes. Talk to your child about their future after high school.
- Learning to make decisions and speaking for themselves can be a part of your child's education goal. In other words, one of the skills developed through your child's participation in different subjects is the ability to make decisions. Also, providing your child with the opportunity to make mistakes – and learn from those mistakes – will also help to prepare them for future decisions.
- During meetings to discuss transition planning (or other matters) with people from the school, make sure your child is present and sitting at a place that makes them the focal point of the discussion. Make sure questions concerning your child's wishes, fears, or other matters are addressed to your child. Give your child a chance to respond in a way that they find comfortable. Before and after meetings, talk with your child about the meeting.
- Encourage your child to talk with people their own age about the future. Sometimes, people find it easier to relate to others who are in similar situations.



While a disability may create obstacles, it is important that students with disabilities be provided with as many opportunities as possible to express their thoughts and preferences about their own lives.

It is also important that your child, to the best of their ability, participates in decisions that are made concerning transition goals and ways to achieve them.

Roles for Students in Transition Planning

- Take an active role in making decisions about transition planning, who participates in planning, setting goals, identifying potential jobs, etc.
- Participate in meetings held to discuss transition planning. Participation may include discussing personal goals, interests, and satisfaction with the process.
- Tell others involved in transition planning about progress and problems encountered in school, in the community, or on the job.
- Participate in education and training experiences designed to prepare the student for work or other valued roles as an adult. Beginning the process at home with chores helps to teach new skills. Building independence and self-esteem can have a positive influence on personal growth and can allow for increased responsibility.

Roles of Parents

Parents play a crucial role in being the main advocates for their children. This means that parents should also be active participants in planning for the successful transition from school to work for their child. Parents, therefore, should be prepared to make sure transition planning happens, and to be actively involved in the planning process throughout their child's years in high school. Remember, you may feel the need to ask others to help you. This may be another family member, a friend, or someone in your community who is familiar with these issues.

For parents (and students) there are a number of ways to be involved in the transition process, including:

- **Being mindful of how decisions that concern your child are made within the school system.** Students with disabilities who are identified as "exceptional" are required to have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) that sets out goals and objectives for the student. The following members of a student's support team may have input into the PLP: classroom, subject, or resource teacher; members of the school-based education support services (ESS) team; and appropriate district staff, including psychologists or any other members of the support team.
- **Following up with your child's school regularly to ensure the transition goals and plans that are developed are being implemented.** The best way to get plans implemented may be to develop on-going and positive communication with the teachers and other professionals who are responsible for implementing the plans. It is important to revisit these written plans with the professionals involved to ensure they are being carried out as discussed. Following up and having open communication is important as the PLP is a living document. It should be expected that the PLP may change throughout the year as the educational needs of the student adapt or when learning outcomes or goals have been reached. This means you may have to take specific action to ensure the plans are being carried out.
- **Monitor and evaluate the plans to ensure they are working and results are being achieved.** Sometimes, goals that are set are not achieved even though the people responsible have made their best efforts. At other times, not enough effort has been made. Monitoring transition plans may also involve making changes to plans as they are implemented because your child's wishes have changed or the plan was not fully appropriate. (For more information on monitoring and evaluation, see page 6 of New Brunswick Guidelines and Standards Educational Planning for Students with Diverse Learning Needs).



Other Suggested Roles for Parents in Transition Planning

- Provide valuable information on your child's interests and strengths, as well as information that may have either a positive or negative impact on your child's ability to obtain and maintain employment or have other valued adult roles.
- Participate fully in the transition planning process and ensure the transition plan adopts objectives and goals consistent with your child's wishes and interests.
- Involve your child in activities that help him or her become a good decision maker. Support, encourage, and create opportunities for your child to express their own needs and develop skills to speak for themselves.
- Reinforce skills that are learned by your child in school by encouraging their performance at home.
- Ensure that your child is learning in regular, accessible, age-appropriate classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of life in the school. Your child should feel welcomed, valued and included.
- Ensure that job experience in the community is a part of the transition plan and the job experience is effective.
- Be familiar with community organizations that may be able to assist your child to find and keep employment during high school and after high school.
- Maintain a good relationship with teachers and other professionals who are involved in transition planning for your child.
- Hold high expectations for your child, even in the face of fears about the future.

It is also important to remember that as a parent you have rights. You have:

- The right to be fully informed about and involved in decisions affecting your child.
- The right to ask for or seek a second opinion, if you believe it is necessary.
- The right to ask questions and to receive accurate and timely information.
- The right to have your opinions and concerns count.
- The right to ask that people be held accountable for their actions or lack of actions.
- The right to have you and your child treated with respect and dignity.

Focus Primarily on Your Child's Strengths and Interests

Sometimes, people with disabilities get to be known by the things that make them different or by the things that people assume they cannot do. When this happens, people are often seen to have very little potential. Others tend to make plans to "fix" those things seen to be wrong.

A critical part of planning for successful transitions is having positive attitudes towards and high expectations of your child. When you focus on your child's strengths and interests, very different information about your child is often revealed. This information is important when determining what motivates your child.



Checklist for Preparing for Meetings

Before the meeting

- ☐ I have identified what I am asking for
- ☐ I have identified the “key players” that need to be involved
- ☐ I have a supporter to go with me to the meeting
- ☐ I have written down any points I wish to discuss or questions I would like to have answered
- ☐ I have the following information: the day, date, time frame, and place of the meeting, who will be in attendance, and whether I must bring any materials
- ☐ The scheduled meeting time allows enough time to cover the issue(s) that need(s) to be addressed
- ☐ I have gathered and prepared any materials that I think are necessary for the meeting



During the meeting

- ☐ I arrive a few minutes before the meeting time
- ☐ I record (or have your supporter record):
 - the date and place of meeting
 - who is in attendance with contact information, if possible
 - key points of information, decisions made
 - the date and details of any future meetings
- ☐ I ask participants to clarify any terms or points I don't understand

After the meeting

- ☐ I have asked for minutes to be sent out regarding the meeting with a summary of decisions that were made and issues that were addressed

OR

- ☐ I have sent out an email to all participants summarizing what I understood to be the decisions made and issues that were addressed, with a request for their confirmation of my summary

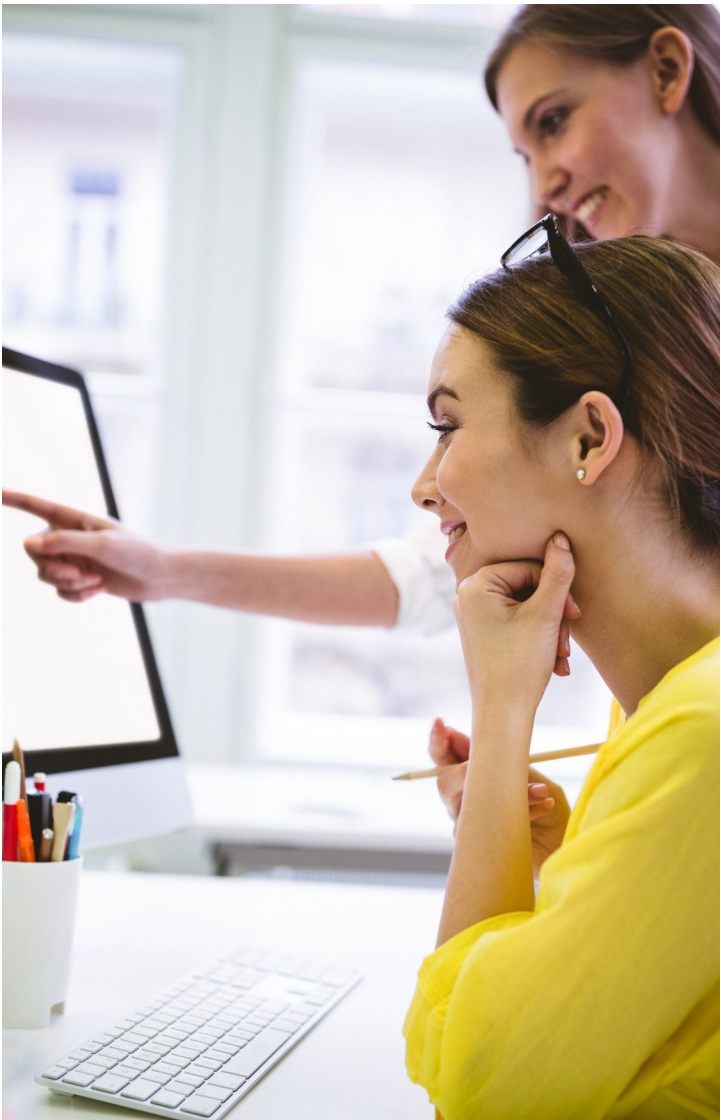


Focusing on strengths and interests does not mean that specific needs or barriers for your child are ignored. Nor does it mean that the goals you set for your child should be unrealistic. Be honest about the things that may limit your child's ability to move forward. At the same time, be prepared to think about how these obstacles can be faced and possibly overcome.

As parents, you will likely be able to identify many of your child's strengths and interests. Sometimes, other people are able to see things in your child that you may not. Ask others who know your child well to help you identify the things that make your child a unique person. Use the space below to write down what you know or discover about your child's strengths and gifts. Keep this information as you plan for your child's life in the community after high school. Share the information with other people who will be involved in the planning process.

Focusing on your child's strengths, gifts and interests will be an important part of trying to plan for the day to day inclusion of your child in regular classrooms and other school activities. As parents, you will likely be able to identify many of your child's strengths and gifts. Sometimes, though, other people are able to see things in your child that you may not. Ask others who know your child well to help you identify things that make your child a unique and interesting person.

Take some time to note some things about your child's strengths, capacities and interests.



My Child's Strength's, Capacities and Interests

Transition Planning and the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP)

A Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) will vary depending on the circumstances of each child. Plans may talk about extensive changes or modifications to the regular school program and curriculum as well as a need for on-going support.

Planning should take place every school year prior to the beginning of the school year (sometimes it does not happen until the school year has begun). The development of a PLP usually involves parents, regular classroom teachers responsible for your child, a resource and methods teacher and sometimes other professionals. Students should also be involved, although this may depend on the student's age and abilities to make decisions for him or herself.

A PLP can be very important as a way to plan for your child's inclusion within regular classes and other school activities. The PLP can set the tone for the expectations for your child throughout the year. While goals and needs for support should be identified, planning sessions should also consider your child's strengths and the ways that your child can be better included within the activities of the regular classes and school. A PLP will only be as good as the commitment of the people involved to make sure that the plan becomes implemented. As parents, it will be important for you to regularly find out if the plans are being put into place and if your child is achieving the objectives that you have set out.



Focus on Strengths and Capacities

All children have strengths and capacities. These are the positive qualities that are often recognized by others. Sometimes, however, people (including people with disabilities) get to be known by the things that are wrong with them. When this happens, children are often seen to have very little potential.

By law, the school district must consult with the parents of a child when decisions are being made to determine if a child requires a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) and during the process of

developing a PLP. This means that you have a direct say in any decisions being made about your child's PLP. You should never be asked to sign a PLP for your child without having been given a real chance to be involved in its development.

While goals and needs for support should be identified, planning sessions should also consider your child's strengths and the ways that your child can be better included within the activities of the regular classes and school.

A Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) can also be used to address issues such as establishing friendships and developing social skills for your child. Transition planning is somewhat different because:

- It identifies longer term goals, including goals for what your child may be doing after high school.
- It is a shared responsibility between you, your child, people from your child's school, and people from the community. It involves a broader group of people and, in particular, people from outside the school system who may have different expertise and who may be involved with your child once he or she completes school.
- It is usually broader in scope than a regular PLP and includes setting goals for employment and other aspects of life in the community (for example, leisure and social activities).



The New Brunswick Department of Education (English Branch) has developed a resource for educators and guidance counsellors called *Guidelines and Standards: Educational Planning for Students with Diverse Learning Needs*. It recommends that a vision for the future and transition goals be included within the PLP during the high school years. It may still be necessary for you to try to make sure that transition planning happens through the regular PLP process.

If goals for transition are to be identified as part of the PLP process, remember that those goals may be different from some of the regular education goals for your child. It may make sense to talk about transition during a meeting, particularly if other people from outside the school system will be involved in transition planning.

There is no recipe for planning for transition from school to life in the community. At some point, however, you will likely be involved in formal planning meetings with people from your child's school or possibly others from your community. There are a number of things you may wish to consider to prepare for planning and for what should happen after a transition plan has been prepared. Remember, this is the process you may have to repeat for three or more years while your child is attending high school.

Transition planning should begin by the time your child enters high school. Transition planning should be seen as a process that identifies specific goals, ways to achieve those goals, and involves continuous evaluation during the time your child is in school. Transition planning is not something that can be seen as a one-time event that happens sometime during your child's time in high school. Transition planning should start at the beginning of the school year, monitored throughout the year and evaluated before the school year ends each year.



Transition Planning Checklist

- ☐ Learn to explain my disability, and what help and support I need
- ☐ Find out my learning style
- ☐ Find out my interests and what jobs I would like to have
- ☐ Get involved in the community and make new friends
- ☐ Learn to use public transportation (if available)
- ☐ Think about getting a driver's license
- ☐ Learn how to use money. Identify what help I need to manage money
- ☐ Be able to tell people my name, address and telephone number
- ☐ Find out what community support systems are available
- ☐ Find out where I would like to live and if support is needed
- ☐ Practice independent living skills. For example: budgeting, shopping, cooking, housekeeping, transportation, and personal care
- ☐ Make sure I have a current Psycho Education Assessment
- ☐ Make sure I am taking the right classes at school so I can get the job I want
- ☐ Get more information on post-secondary programs and the support they offer
- ☐ If post-secondary program s part of my plan, do a thorough check on what I need to do to attend
- ☐ Look at the options for post-secondary education. Find out what courses I need to get into the program I want
- ☐ Inquire about Special Admissions Program with New Brunswick Community College (NBCC Anglophone) if college is a consideration
- ☐ Look at modern technology tools that might help me to get involved in the community and find a job (computer)
- ☐ Look into getting help to write my resumé and cover letter
- ☐ Practice for a job interview by doing some mock interviews
- ☐ Apply for Social Insurance Number before my first job
- ☐ Find out what employment support is available; talk to a counselor at an Employment Agency about things like a job coach or Job shadowing
- ☐ Decide on what job I want. Get the job, with support if needed
- ☐ Practice skills such as getting to work on time, keeping appointments and spending time with co-workers
- ☐ Apply for health coverage from Social Development
- ☐ Apply for Disability Support Program (DSP) at age 19 if supports are required
- ☐ Apply for Training Employment Support Services (TESS) if under the age of 18 and require employment supports



Chapter 7

Preparing for and Participating in Transition Planning

Transition Planning

There are no recipes for planning the transition from school life to the community — no absolute answers, and no guaranteed blueprint for success. There is only solid preparation, informed planning, constant monitoring and evaluation, and commitment to the belief that your child can enjoy the benefits of participation in the community and in the workplace.

Introduction

In this chapter, we'll look at some of the reasons why transition planning is an ongoing process. Here, you'll find:

- A step-by-step approach to the logistics and dynamics of effective transition planning: the questions that need to be asked, the initial formal meeting, identifying who should attend initially, who should participate eventually, and who should lead.
- A worksheet to assist you in outlining goals for the future.
- Guidelines aimed at helping you set positive and realistic goals with your child.
- Suggestions for monitoring and evaluating transition plans and activities.
- A worksheet to help your child keep track of their transition goals.
- A story that illustrates how the transition planning process might work.

Some Steps to Get Ready for Transition Planning

To prepare you and your child to be involved in transition planning, there are a couple of steps you may wish to consider.

Ask Questions

Your family may have a number of questions regarding the future, current education, employment opportunities, available services in community, etc. Write down possible questions so they can be raised at a transition planning meeting. The next page has a list of some general questions you may wish to consider.

"We're in the heart of the community. Hiring Yves shows our employees everyone has a place and that people with a disability have a right to work. "Yves is accepted as a regular employee and everybody knows him. He goes to all the staff parties. At first, I didn't know what he and the job coach should do. But now he's like a time clock. He knows when and what to do, after I've gone out to show him a couple of times. He works on the floor, fills the pop machine, works in the paper section, does pricing and stocking. Everybody respects him. What he does really helps us. Right now, Yves feels good about his work and so do I."

- A New Brunswick Employer



Preparing For Transition Planning: Possible Questions to Consider

Adapted from: Parent Booklet: Organizer for the Individual Transition Planning Meeting, Manitoba

Transition Project.

- What kind of job will my child be doing after they leave school?
- Apart from employment goals, what other activities can they get involved with?
- How will they get to and from work or around the community?
- Where will they live after they graduate from school?
- Is my child set to graduate on time with their peers? Is there any further preparation that needs to be done in order to prepare for this?
- What community activities will they take part in (for example, sports, hobbies, crafts, clubs, church, shopping, etc.)?
- Who will they spend time with when they finish school?
- Who might their friends be (people at work, in the community, or people they went to school with, etc.)?
- What do they need to learn?

Identify Dreams and Goals for the Future

Planning usually starts with a vision. This means supporting your child to imagine what their life could look like as an adult. Identifying a vision helps your child take ownership, communicate how they see their future, and what they want to accomplish in life. Identifying a vision for the future is hard work, and may require support from parents/guardians, teachers etc., but ultimately requires active involvement from your child. Your child should be at the centre of the planning process and be encouraged to express their ideas, hopes, and dreams for themselves. As part of the vision, your child should find out what kind of work they want to do, where they would like to work, and what other things they would like to do after finishing school. It is important they understand their strengths and consider their interests.

Identifying a Vision of the Future

Be mindful of the number of professionals in a planning meeting. Professionals, such as: teachers, social workers, psychologists, nurses, doctors, etc. – may feel the need to lead the process if too many are involved. This can be very intimidating and overwhelming if you and your child feel like your involvement is limited or your voice is not being heard.

Who Should Participate in Transition Planning?

Planning for transition usually involves people within and outside the school system. There may be other people involved in your child's life or in your community that will have valuable information and advice to offer, and they may be prepared to make some commitment to help your child achieve their goals.

Since transition planning will take place over a number of years, there may be different people who are called upon at certain times as they are needed. It may be beneficial to start the planning with a small group of people and add others over time. This will give you and your child a chance to become familiar and comfortable with the planning process. Try to make sure it is not overwhelming at any stage. There are no rules regarding who should be involved and how many people should be involved in the planning.

As a general guideline, transition planning should include your child and yourself, a teacher who is working closely with your child, a school guidance counsellor, and other individuals who may be able to assist with future educational or employment opportunities (for example, somebody from a community agency who assists people with disabilities find employment in the community). Other people who might participate in the planning at some point may include an employer mentor and other community agencies that help with employment/job skills. You can find more information about this in Chapter 9.

Guidelines for Participation in Transition Planning

Adapted from: Promoting Successful Transitions for Students with Special Needs, The Canadian Council for Exceptional Children.

- Your child should, as much as possible, decide who should attend the first transition planning meeting.
- Encourage the participation of people who are closest to your child (for example, brothers or sisters, other relatives, friends, a supportive co-worker, etc.).
- Limit the participation of professionals who do not really know your child or you, and who do not really need to be there.
- As you need them, include people who provide services in the community to people with disabilities.
- Aim for a group size of five to ten participants and have the flexibility to include other people as needed.
- Remember that over the long term, family ties and personal friendships will outlive professional duty. Professionals, even those who are truly committed to your child, will come and go.



Transition Planning Meetings

If transition planning starts early enough, there will be a few key meetings during your child's secondary school years (Grades 7 to 12). The initial planning meeting will be crucial since it will be an opportunity to discuss the vision your child has for themselves and to set some important long-term goals. Other meetings will likely be required to review those goals and identify a plan of action for the immediate school year. It will be important that you continue keep the vision your child has for themselves at the forefront as you go through this process.

There are a number of things to consider when preparing to set up transition meetings:

Where Should Meetings Take Place?

It is not essential that planning meetings take place on school property. In fact, having meetings elsewhere may help make meetings less formal and involve people from outside your child's school. For example, your home or your child's place of work (if they have a part-time job or participating in a school-arranged work experience program) may be good places to meet. Try to be as flexible as possible about arranging the place and time of meetings.

Who Should Run the Meetings?

Effective planning usually requires that one person be designated to run planning meetings. This person guides the meeting to ensure the purpose of the meeting is achieved and that your child is encouraged to talk and present their ideas.

The person who runs the meeting should:

- be objective;
- be open-minded;
- not have strong views on what your child should be planning for once they finish school;
- be able to objectively guide the discussion about the vision of your child's future, the specific goals that are set, and what actions need to take place to achieve the goals;
- have some experience as a planning facilitator; and
- be skilled in involving everybody present at meetings.

If such a person is difficult to find where you live, you will need to rely on someone within the school system or another individual you know who may be able to help. Some suggestions to consider include:

- the career or guidance counsellor who works in your child's school;
- a resource and methods teacher (preferably one who is not directly involved with your child);
- someone from a local advocacy organization, such as the Association for Community Living;
- another parent whose child has already been involved with transition planning;
- someone from an outside agency who works with people with disabilities in the community.

The person who facilitates transition planning meetings does not have to be a planning expert.

Setting Goals for Your Child

Setting goals is the most important aspect of transition planning. Goals will help decide what kind of experiences and skills your child should have and learn during their last few years of school. Setting goals will also help to clarify the vision your child has for their life as an adult. As a minimum, goals should specify the things your child wants to achieve in the areas of employment, living arrangements, relationships, and community participation (including leisure activities, transportation, etc.).

Here are some guidelines you may wish to consider when setting transition goals with your child.

- Goals should be “positive and possible.”
- As much as possible, goals should indicate specific desired outcomes for employment, community participation, etc. Specific goals may be easier to set as your child moves toward the completion of high school. In the beginning of transition planning, goal statements may sound more general. For example, in Grade 9, a transition goal may be that after graduation, your child will be working in the community for real wages. By Grade 11 or 12, the goal may be that your child is working in a specific occupation (for example, as a stock clerk in a department store) for at least 25 hours a week or enrolled in a particular program at a post-secondary education institution).



- Consider setting both long-term and short-term goals. Long-term goals may be the ones your child wishes to achieve after they leave school. Short-term goals may involve identifying activities your child can be involved in each year to work towards achieving those long-term goals
- Set SMART goals. SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals are established using a specific set of criteria that ensures your objectives are attainable within a certain time frame. Writing a SMART goal entails working through each of those five components to build a measurable goal that encompasses exactly what needs to be accomplished and when, and how you'll know when you're successful. This approach eliminates generalities and guesswork, sets a clear timeline, and makes it that much easier to track progress and identify missed milestones.

Specific - it's clear and concrete, ideally action-oriented

Measurable - you can objectively evaluate whether or not you met the goal

Achievable - it is possible, realistic

Relevant - it connects back to your big objectives and matters to you

Time-bound - has some time component as a deadline or frequency

Here's a quick fill-in-the-blank to help you prepare to write out your goals:

I will _____ (specific action)
 ____ (number of times) by/for _____ (date/
 frequency) so that _____
 (reason).

For example:

"I will secure three job interviews before my graduation date on May 23, 2022, by applying to and following up on one job opening every day"

Specific: The goal establishes what they will do and how they plan to do it.

Measurable: The number of interviews and job openings provide metrics.

Achievable: The metrics can account for other responsibilities they may have, helping it remain realistic.

Relevant: They're about to graduate and are getting an early start on finding a job.

Time-bound: Providing daily goals and an overall deadline creates a timeline.

See how concrete that is? It's easy to objectively measure whether or not you met the goal because you either applied and followed up for a job or you didn't.

- When setting goals, support your child to address concerns they have about their future. Help your child prepare to talk about these concerns and support them during the transition meeting. Remember that goals can always be revisited and revised. Transition planning is not set in stone.
- When transition goals have been set by the student, consider where they are now in relation to where they would like to be in the future. What does your child need to do while in school to make sure their goals are realized?



Setting goals may not always be as easy as it sounds. There may be a tendency to set goals based on immediate problems your child is having in school. There may also be a tendency to replace goals with a list of skills for your child to develop which might not be directly relevant to your child's life as an adult.

"Transition planning must coordinate school learning, work experiences, and potential adult services prior to the student leaving high school. Bringing the different pieces together before a student leaves school will help to ensure there is continuity between school years and life after school."

New Brunswick Community/Government Working Group on School to Work Transition for Youth with Disabilities; Final Report, August 1996

Agreeing on an Action Plan

Before you leave a transition planning meeting, make sure the goals that have been established are accompanied by an action plan. The action plan should identify what specific steps will be taken to help your child achieve their goals.

The action plan can be based on what should happen during an entire school year, or even within a shorter period of time. The planning meeting should identify someone who will be responsible for ensuring the action plan is carried out. This may be yourself or your child, a teacher, a resource and methods teacher, or an employment counsellor.

This does not mean that only one person is responsible for doing everything. It means that one person is responsible for making sure that everyone involved does what they have agreed to do. The goals, action plans, and people responsible for each action should be all written down in a document identified as your child's transition plan. For your own purposes, record the specific action plans agreed to at the planning meeting in the space provided on the following page. Photocopy this page so you can use it as many times as needed.



Transition/Employment Action Plan

Student: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Where am I now?	Network of Support	Getting Stronger	Frist Steps	Positive and Possible Jobs	Dream Jobs

Important Questions	Yes / No	Notes
Do you have your Social Insurance Number (SIN)?		
Do you have transportation?		
Responsibilities at home?		
Responsibilities at school?		
Responsibilities for the transition program?		
Updated resume? Cover Letter? References?		
Volunteer experience?		
Job shadowing?		
Extra-Curricular?		
My Blueprint?		
Interested in Post-Secondary?		
Will you need supports on the job?		

Using the PATH Planning Process

A useful planning exercise has been developed to help young people and their families plan for a positive future. This is called PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). It is usually a two-hour exercise during which an individual identifies their vision for the future as well as specific goals over a short period to help them work towards their long-term goals. The individual and their family decide who should be invited to participate. A facilitator helps to guide the planning and another individual (known as the graphic recorder) illustrates the vision, goals, and action steps on a large piece of paper on the wall. The planning exercise has the following eight steps:

1. **The Dream.** This is very important and sometimes difficult, as it requires thinking outside the box we often call reality. We are asked to think of the 'ideal situation with no limits'.
2. **The Goal.** We move from the Dream to a period of 1-2 years from now. What goals would you like to achieve?
3. **The Now.** This is a snapshot of what is happening now in your life and how close you are to achieving the goals you set for yourself. This section is used for contrast between the "then" and "now".
4. **Enrolling People.** We need to ask people to help, to support us to achieve our goals.
4. **Building Strength.** We need to celebrate; it is critical to be stronger both personally and as a team. During this section, the members of the planning process, including the individual, identify the individual's strengths and what makes them unique.
5. **Actions.** For six (6) months: charting specific actions. Who's doing what, when?
6. **Actions.** For three (3) months: as above, in a shorter term. Who's doing what, when?
7. **First Steps.** What is the next step/action? This needs to happen soon after the PATH. If this doesn't happen, the plan won't happen.

In New Brunswick, several individuals (including people in the school system) have been trained as facilitators and recorders for the PATH process. For more information about facilitators in your area, contact the Inclusion NB (see the contact information on page 2).



Monitoring, Evaluation, and Follow-Up Meetings

Monitoring means making sure the things which are supposed to be done actually get done.

Evaluation means finding out whether the goals that have been set by your child are being achieved.

Follow-up meetings are an important part of monitoring and evaluation.

Well-prepared transition plans will be of little value unless there is commitment to act upon the plans and to determine whether the goals are being achieved.

Monitoring means making sure the things that are supposed to be done actually get done. It means staying on top of what is happening so that problems can be solved as they arise. Monitoring provides opportunities to fine-tune the action plans in between planning meetings.

There should be an expectation of all members of the transition planning group to let others know if problems arise. As a parent, you may want to ask questions about whether the specific actions or activities outlined in the transition plan are actually being done. Talk to your child and to people from your child's school regularly to find out what is happening.

If something is not being done or not working well, do not wait until the next scheduled meeting to resolve problems. If you are given reasons for lack of action that do not satisfy you, be prepared to follow-up with other people or call a meeting of the transition planning group.

Monitoring should also be the responsibility of everyone in the transition planning group. A teacher or other professional from your child's school who is part of the transition planning group may be given some specific responsibility to monitor what is happening. This person could be your contact with the school system.

Evaluation means finding out whether the goals that have been set by your child are being achieved. This should be part of the responsibility of your child's transition planning group. You may not be able to evaluate some of your child's longer-term goals while they are in school, but there will be other shorter-term goals to help you evaluate the effectiveness of transition planning and the actions taken to implement the plans. Evaluation will be much easier if your goals are more specific. Specific goals will allow you to find out whether or not the goals have been achieved.



Follow-up meetings are an important part of monitoring and evaluation. After each transition planning meeting, make sure you set a date for a follow-up meeting. Follow-up meetings will allow you to bring your full group together to:

- review your child's vision and goals and to find out what has happened since the last meeting (perhaps the goals need to be changed);
- discuss goals that have been met;
- solve problems that may have arisen; and
- set out the next steps for achieving the goals your child has set and for getting commitments from people in the group for further action. You may want to have one or two follow-up meetings during the school year.

If it becomes necessary to change some of the goals that were agreed upon earlier, you may wish to consider the following:

- Who is suggesting that the goals be changed?
- If the original goals are seen to be unachievable, have all of the people responsible for achieving the goals made their best efforts?
- Ensure that your child is in charge of leading the changes to their goals. Also ensure that they are comfortable with the change they are making.



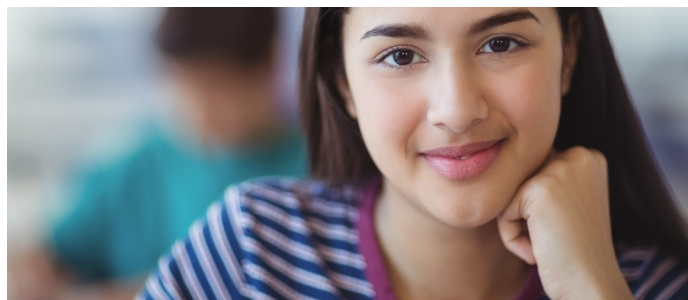
Transition Planning for Sally Jones

(Note: This is a fictional story designed to illustrate how the transition planning process might work.)

Sally Jones lives in an urban area in southern New Brunswick. She is an active 14-year-old girl who enjoys being with other teenagers and making friends. She has a good memory for details and enjoys doing things with other people. Sally likes social occasions and likes to help plan for social events. She has a particular interest in movies and the theatre. She goes often with her family and once in a while with friends from her neighbourhood. Sally also has Down Syndrome. As a result of her disability, Sally has some difficulty with speaking and finds reading and working with numbers a challenge. When she is active, Sally tends to tire easily.

Sally has received her education within an inclusive education system from the beginning. She is about to enter Grade 9, the first year of high school. For the past few months, Sally and her parents have been thinking about what Sally will be doing after she graduates from school. Sally's parents recently received a copy of a transition guide for parents who have sons and daughters with disabilities. The guide talks about the need to be active in planning for what will happen when school is finished. Sally's parents want her to have the best academic education possible as well as learn skills she will need to work and be active in the community after she graduates from high school.

During her previous years in school, Sally's Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) has focused on improving her communications skills (especially speaking), her basic reading skills, and her ability to work in groups with other students on special projects. Sally also has been encouraged to participate in the Drama Club in middle school and participated in the Special Events Committee planning school dances and other events. Like all of her schoolmates, Sally has had some exposure to information about occupations and jobs through career education exercises during elementary and middle school. Sally knows she would like to have a job when she finishes school, but isn't sure what exactly she would like to do.



Planning for Sally's Transition from School to Work Entering Grade 9

Sally's Personalized Learning Plan will take on an added dimension. In addition to traditional academic goals, Sally's PLP needs to address transition planning until Sally graduates from high school. Sally's school guidance counsellor has been assigned responsibility by the school district to make sure that transition planning is built into Sally's PLP. In the fall of Sally's Grade 9 year, a special PLP meeting is called to talk about transition planning.

In Sally's school district, transition planning meetings for exceptional students are facilitated by the school guidance counsellor with assistance from the District Transition Co-ordinator. Sally's parents are asked to attend and be active participants in the planning process. Sally is also to be present at meetings. It is understood that as part of the transition planning process, Sally will be encouraged to participate and speak for herself about her goals for the future. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to make sure Sally actively participates.

In addition, Sally's homeroom teacher is expected to be involved in transition planning. Unlike regular PLP's, however, transition planning is expected to involve people from outside the school who may act as a resource for planning, particularly as it relates to Sally's future work-related goals. Initial transition planning meetings identify who else should be participating in this process. As the facilitator, the school guidance counsellor stresses that transition planning will be at least a four-year process to help Sally set goals for the future, identify specific school-related and other activities that will help achieve these goals, and identify people who may need to be a part of any transition activities.

Early on, the group of people involved in transition planning help Sally and her parents identify some broad goals for Sally's life after school. There is particular emphasis on work-related goals, but other interests such as recreation and leisure are also addressed. As part of work-related planning, the transition planning group reviews some types of careers that may be of interest to Sally as well as employability skills she may need to learn during her years in school.

For Grades 9 and 10, the transition planning group decides that communication skills, reading skills, and the ability to follow instructions and to work effectively with other people will be integrated into Sally's school curriculum. In addition, the transition planning group identifies the need for Sally to learn to use the public transportation system since this may be crucial to her ability to get to and from work or to participate in other activities as an adult. Sally's family takes on the prime responsibility for teaching her how to use buses and taxis.

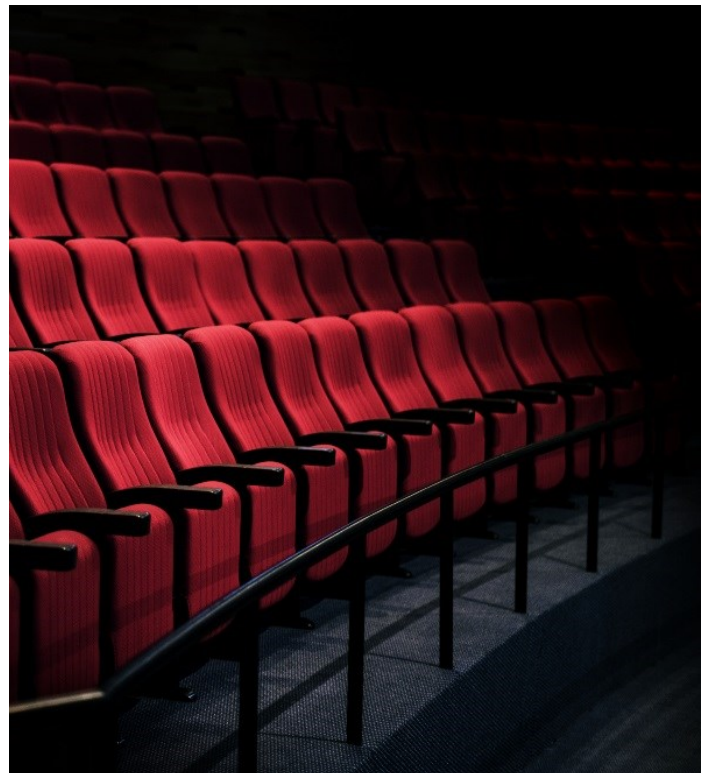
Transition Planning for Sally, Two Years Later

As a 16-year-old Grade 11 student, transition planning for Sally starts to identify some more specific goals for work and life after school as an adult. Planning also involves two or three different work experience activities during Grade 11. The transition planning group has expanded to include an "employer mentor," a local businessman known to Sally's family. The planning group also includes a representative from a government department that operates programs for youth. These individuals assist with identification of potential work opportunities and help identify the kind of support Sally will need to effectively work in the community.

When she was in Grade 10, Sally started to develop her own career portfolio outlining her skills, achievements, and activities related to work. This portfolio is expanded in Grades 11 and 12 as Sally adds to her accomplishments. It includes Sally's experience with a summer job she had after Grade 11, working part-time in a variety store. Some of Sally's school-arranged work experiences have indicated the types of work Sally would not enjoy. For example, one work experience placement in the kitchen of a restaurant only lasted a few days because Sally did not like the work.

By Grade 12, Sally's transition planning group is being co-facilitated by the school guidance counsellor and a friend of Sally's family who became involved when Sally was in Grade 10. The focus on work planning has shifted to occupations which are consistent with Sally's personal interests. An approach is made to a local movie theatre to see if Sally could get some job experience as a ticket taker. The employer was agreeable to allowing Sally to work the matinee shows. Adaptations and breaktimes were necessary as a result of Sally's tiredness.

The job experience worked out well for Sally. In addition to being a ticket taker, Sally turned her job into a greeter of the movie theatre patrons. As a result of the success of the job experience, Sally's transition planning group has started to discuss the possibility of Sally staying on at the theatre and increasing her hours after her graduation. Sally's boss expressed his interest in keeping Sally as an employee. In addition to work-related planning, Sally's transition planning group has helped identify some other goals for Sally's life as an adult. Through a member of the planning group, Sally is introduced to someone who is involved in a local drama club. Sally is invited to attend the rehearsals to help out with the club.



Part IIV Transitions from School to Work

Chapter 8 Developing Employability Skills and a Career Portfolio

Chapter 9 Career Education and Work Experience During School

Chapter 10 Education and Training After High School

Chapter 8

Developing Employability Skills and a Career Portfolio

Introduction

In today's dynamic and competitive business landscape, there is rapidly increasing pressure on businesses both large and small to be on the cutting edge of innovative practices, processes, and products. In the face of an aging population, and a shrinking labour pool, employers are looking for workers who bring a diverse skill set to the table. There is a greater willingness to build a more inclusive workforce and move from focusing on technical or job-specific skills to employability skills. Employability skills, which differ from academic skills, are transferrable skills that are useful in nearly every job. Now, more than ever, there is an opportunity for persons with a disability to enter the workforce in roles of their choosing.

This chapter offers advice for you and your child to help:

- understand employability skills relevant in today's labour market;
- find solutions to workplace barriers; and
- prepare a career portfolio outlining your child's strengths and accomplishments, including helpful supporting documents.

Developing Employability Skills

Most employability skills can be learned in all areas of life and are not school-specific. It is helpful to look at all activities and real-life experiences through the lens of transferring these desirable qualities to the workplace. Here are 10 common employability skills that employers look for:

Communication – a method of receiving and giving information. Talking and listening are the conventional means of communicating, but there are other methods of communication such as sign language, facial or physical cues, and written notes or emails that may also be used effectively. For individuals who do not communicate with words, there are various augmentative communication systems that can support individuals to communicate more effectively and independently, as well.

Teamwork – being able to work with others to achieve goals and accomplish tasks. Taking responsibility for your share of the work, willingness to help others, and not disrupting or interfering in the work of others are examples of working in a team.

Reliability – the ability to be counted on. This may mean showing up consistently and on time, meeting deadlines, keeping promises, and completing tasks assigned.

Problem-solving – recognizing when a problem arises and knowing the implications. Problem-solving can be an independent activity or simply having the awareness to ask for help or clarification.



Organization and planning - identifying tasks, prioritizing them, creating schedules for them, and completing them on time.

Initiative – taking on tasks and responsibilities without being asked. It may be as simple as stopping to pick up a piece of garbage or knowing what task to complete next without prompting.

Self-management – being able to work with minimal supervision to complete tasks satisfactorily. Self-management is being self-motivated.

Leadership – leaders may not always be managers. Being a leader may mean being a positive role model, having a great attitude, and having others learn from you.

Learning – the continuous process of learning new tasks and developing new skills. All individuals learn at different paces and in different ways; however, everyone has the capacity to learn, especially with knowledge and support.

Technology – valuable technical skills range from gaming, word processing, emailing, video editing, to computer programming.

The skills listed above can be used for developing some goals and action plans that will make up your child's transition plan. It is important to know that all individuals have skills and qualities that are valuable to an employer. It is equally important to recognize that your child may be at the beginning stages of developing employability skills and that there is always room for growth! Look for examples of behaviour and action that fit within the employability skills listed above and record them in a Career Portfolio (to be discussed later in the chapter), and make effort to build these skills in every day life.

A Word About Employability Skills

For some, the list of employability skills may seem unrealistic and unattainable. If so, when thinking about your child's ability to learn skills, remember the following:

- Employers are not expecting an employee to have mastered all skills, especially for entry level positions. Having some skills will improve your child's chances of getting a job or pursuing post-secondary education after graduation from school. This building of skills is a life-long process.
- All individuals have the capacity to learn. Setting goals and expectations for skill development will produce results. Aim high! Celebrate achievement.
- Recognize transferrable skills in everyday activity. Your child is displaying employability skills daily. It may require thinking outside the box to identify the skill and communicate it to them in terms of how it could translate into a job and workplace setting.
- Building academic skills in the school setting and strengthening life skills at home or in community are also a big part of achieving your child's overall visions and broader goals for their future. Employability skills increase the chances for success in finding and maintaining real work opportunities for real pay, but they are not the only determining factor.

Employment Accommodations

While it is important for your child to learn to do as much for themselves as possible, they may need ongoing help to learn new tasks and accomplish certain skills in the workplace. Figuring out how to provide this help on the job may be just as important as learning new skills.



Sometimes, simple and creative “accommodations” at the workplace can make a real difference. Accommodations are steps taken to ensure that a worker with a disability can perform a job. Most often, accommodations are changes or adaptations that make common sense (with a little bit of imagination). Most accommodations can be made with little or no cost to the employer.

"Virgil's very conscious of time. He starts work promptly and does what's needed to be done. He's better than a lot of the young people we have. He won't stand around doing nothing. Virgil takes the initiative. He wants to work. Virgil needs to know all the tasks he is to do upfront, and then he's OK for the day and he won't need to ask or be told to go on to the next item. "

A New Brunswick Employer

Examples of Employment Accommodations

- **Application and interview support** – Employers are increasingly open to allowing support to fill out online applications and to participate in an interview. While it is not permitted to give answers to skill testing questions or to respond to interview questions, support persons can clarify questions and prompt responses, or simply be present to reduce anxiety. Organizations or agencies may assist in interview preparation.
- **Workplace accommodation** – Within the workplace, there are numerous possible accommodations. These may include flexible schedules; adaptation of job descriptions; visual aids such as posters, symbols, or other visual cues; audio versions of written training materials or job descriptions; easy-read resources; large print alphabet; colour coding; sensory accommodations such as noise cancelling headphones or florescent light shades; assistive technology to provide task lists or alarms to signal an end to breaks or time to move to another task; pencil grips or page turners; peer mentors to promote socialization or a “buddy system” for training or troubleshooting; or independent job coaches for training.
- **Life skills coaching** – Support outside the work environment may be beneficial to success while employed. Time management, good hygiene practice, anger management, conflict resolution, interpreting social cues, and knowing when to interact with co-workers or when it is time to complete tasks are some of the many skills that may be beneficial to gain and maintain employment.



Developing a Career Portfolio for Your Child

A Career Portfolio is a written record of a student's activities, accomplishments, and goals. It illustrates the unique accomplishments, experiences, and personal strengths of an individual. It also helps to identify the skills learned or needed to be prepared for achieving personal employment or career goals after school has been completed.

In New Brunswick, schools are now using a resource called 'myBlueprint' which is a platform for students to build an individualized portfolio and to plan for transitions. 'myBlueprint' is designed to assist all students in planning for their futures and it is intended to be updated regularly by students with help from parents, teachers and counsellors. This portfolio promotes the need for all students to develop goals, reflect on interests and have a long-range career plan. It contains sections on the following aspects of career and employment development:

- **Learning About Yourself and Others.** Students are encouraged to learn about and record important things about their lives, such as personal interests and strengths; areas for improvement and personal goals; participation in school clubs, social activities, sports, leisure activities and hobbies; past experience with volunteer work and part-time employment; and the learning of employability and other skills.
- **School-to-Career Planning.** Record, from year to year, activities for planning for a career or employment following the completion of high school. Include summaries of work experience, volunteer experience, transition activities, employability skills check lists, etc.
- **Learning to Learn.** Keep track of courses and grades, highlights for each year, and the subjects liked most. Include educational goals, study skills self-assessments, information on learning styles, etc.
- **Learning to Work.** Plan for and keep track of activities that will prepare them for work following graduation from school. Promote and record activities in the areas of career exploration, career awareness, and work experience. Include information about communication skills, teamwork skills, time management skills, problem-solving skills, organizational skills, learning and listening skills, etc.



A Career Portfolio can be an important way to record the progress your child is making toward developing employability skills and a plan to ensure the successful transition from school to work. Additionally, your child's portfolio might include specific items or documents that may be helpful when looking for a job, including:

- a letter of recommendation from a previous employer (perhaps one who was involved in a school work experience program) or other notable members of the community;
- an actual performance evaluation by a supervisor at a previous job;
- photos or a short video showing your child in a work setting;
- copies of certificates or awards received for special accomplishments; and
- a written or taped reflection that talks about their career goals and experiences.

Career Portfolios can also include carefully selected items (photographs, a story of a previous work experience, etc.) that illustrate how a previous employer effectively made changes or accommodations in the workplace which allowed your child to perform a job in an efficient way. Your child's portfolio can be adapted or changed to show a relevant set of experiences and skills depending on the specific job your child is seeking.



Chapter 9

Career Education and Work Experience During School

The Importance of Career Education and Work Experience

Career education and work experience offer opportunities to learn about work, to experience different types of work, and to develop the skills necessary to be part of the workforce. Career education and work experience should be key parts of transition planning for all students.

Introduction

This chapter explores how you can prepare your child for the transition from school to work by:

- providing career education and work experience opportunities;
- developing the skills necessary to be a part of the workforce;
- making career education and work experience part of transition planning for your child; and
- evaluating work experiences during school years.

This chapter also explores career education and offers some concrete activities to learn about career interests. As well, this chapter looks at ways to offer your child on-the-job experience and provides suggestions for specific exploration activities.

Understanding Career Education and Work Experience

Career education simply means learning about work, different types of jobs, and the skills necessary to be part of the everyday workforce.

Work experience means having opportunities to actually experience different kinds of jobs and one's own role as an employee. Having opportunities for career education and work experience will be crucial for your child's successful transition from school to work.

Schools in New Brunswick do a good job of providing career education and work experiences for students with disabilities. Many schools offer classes that can contribute to your child's employment goals and plan. Classes like Career Exploration 110 and Cooperative Education 120 can be offered for your child beginning in Grade 11. These courses integrate classroom learning with actual workplace experiences and require a partnership among education, business, industry and labour that usually involves students, teachers, parents, employers, and employee supervisors.

There are also programs offered through the Inclusion NB that can be explored with your child's resource team. These programs can provide effective school-based career education and work experience opportunities for your student.





Four or five years ago, Eileen wasn't working. She stayed around her home and was afraid to meet people. But today, that's all changed. As the secretary of People First, Eileen says, "I enjoy meeting people."

Now she's involved in everything from line dancing and parties, to clothes and music. She's even got her license and wants to buy a second-hand car.

Key Elements of Career Education and Work Experience

- Believing that work is an appropriate goal for your child.
- Effective planning and implementation involving activities for career education and work experience.
- Work and career awareness activities that start early (preferably during the elementary grades).
- Activities that will improve your child's self-motivation and ability to relate to other people.
- Having a variety of career and work exploration activities during high school.
- Being part of an effective co-operative education program that provides appropriate support for your child.
- Evaluating your child's career education and work experiences to ensure they are benefitting your child.

Adapted from: Promoting Successful Transition For Students with Special Needs, The Canadian Council for Exceptional Children

Career Education, Work Experience, and Transition Planning

A significant amount of time should be dedicated to career education and work experience during the transition planning process. Decisions about career education and work experience will likely have to be made during each year that you and your child are actively involved in planning. In fact, career education should begin long before a transition planning group is called together during your child's first year of high school (Grade 9).

Decisions about career education and work experience opportunities for your child should relate to the goals you and your child have set for employment after high school. Decisions will need to be reviewed and updated as goals become clear and more specific. As a guideline, we suggest that you consider the following process for making decisions:

1. Identify a long-term employment goal with your child (what they will be doing after high school) based on their wishes, strengths, and interests. The goal may be that your child is involved in some kind of employment, either with or without additional support. The goal may also include your child receiving further job training (for example, going to your local community college). The goal will likely become a lot more specific as your child nears graduation. As your child gets older and forms a better idea of what they would like to do, their plans may change, and that's okay – as long as the plan remains positive and possible, your child will be set up for success.
2. Based on the goals that your child and you have set with the help of the transition planning group, design activities that will help your child achieve their goals. These activities should be based on two major considerations:
 - a. Ensure that your child builds on what they have already learned. For example, career awareness activities should be followed by career and work exploration, and then by longer-term work experiences in the community.
 - b. The skills that have been identified as important for your child's future employability should be developed. You will likely want to select certain skills to work on during each year of high school. The learning of these skills should be integrated as much as possible into your child's regular school activities.

3. Determine your child's progress from year to year. Have the career education and work experience activities been successful? Consider whether the goals that have been set need to be changed or made more specific.

Throughout this process, seek out and involve people from outside of the school whose experience may be helpful to you and your child. On page 42, we mentioned the possibility of using an employer "mentor" to help plan for employment goals. In addition, someone from a community agency who helps people find jobs may also benefit the planning process. These individuals may be able to provide useful advice on career education or work experience activities for your child. They may also be able to assist with finding employers who would be willing to provide short- or long-term work experiences for your child while they are in school.

"Herman loves his job and hates to miss a day. Working and the social interaction with the staff has made a big difference to him personally. He works more independently every day."

A vocational trainer discussing Herman, who is busy every morning cleaning, stacking, sweeping, and moving products and boxes at a busy building supply outlet.



Career Education

Career education involves learning about different occupations, various roles of workers, the importance of work, and having a good attitude towards work. Career education will also involve your child learning more about themselves and about their interests in future work.

Career education should begin during the elementary and junior high school years. If this has not happened for your child by the time you start planning, you should research what classes your child's school offers, such as Career Exploration or Co-operative Education classes.

An important part of career education is learning about the social skills needed to be successful on a job. Some of these skills are listed on page 38. In particular, learning to work well with others is crucial. The development of these skills can be easily incorporated into regular classroom activities.

Career education is also about starting to match your child's interests with potential careers or jobs. Use the questions below to help your child identify their interests with potential work.

Identifying Your Child's Career Interests

As an exercise to get your child thinking about careers and work, help them answer the following questions. Write down the answers for your records.

- What do I like to in my spare time? What makes me happy about doing these activities?
- What subjects do I like best in school? What makes me happy about these subjects?
- What subjects do I like least in school? What makes me unhappy about these subjects?
- What do people compliment me about (teachers, parents, friends)?
- What is my greatest strength?
- What new activities would I like to try? How could I learn to do those activities?

Adapted from: Transition to Work Readiness, Inclusion NB, All About Me Module, 2020.



Examples of Career Education Activities

Note: These examples may be part of a career education class or be included in regular school subjects such as English, Math, Social Studies, etc.

- Visit various worksites and have students gather information (with help, if necessary) about job duties, pay, benefits, work environment and employees at each worksite.
- Have students identify job opportunities within their local community by reading employment ads, job websites, talking to employers, etc. Invite employers into classrooms to discuss particular job openings.
- Have students talk about safety rules within various workplaces.
- Invite an employer or personnel manager into the classroom to discuss the importance of a clean, neat appearance and the importance of being on time for work.
- Help students identify the value of work that people do, especially the workers with whom they come into contact during any particular day (for example, bus driver, teachers, store clerks, etc.).
- Help individual students understand how their personal interests and strengths are related to their choice of career or job by having the individual identify three jobs they would like to do and three jobs they would not like to do, and the reasons why.

Adapted from Teaching the Possibilities: Jobs and Job Training, Minnesota Educational Services, 1994.

“The provision of work education opportunities during the high school years is central to the transition of students with special needs to gain meaningful work as adults.”

Promoting Successful Transition for Students with Special Needs, J. Richard Freeze, The Canadian Council for Exceptional Children.

Work Exploration

Work exploration is an opportunity for your child to look at real jobs that align with their own skills and interests. It can give your child practical experience and opportunities to showcase what they have learned throughout their career awareness education. Work exploration is important because it will:

- help your child identify their own work interests;
- allow your child to explore a range of different jobs or occupations through hands-on experiences;
- allow your child to become familiar with a variety of work settings; and
- assist your child in developing skills that may be required for employment.

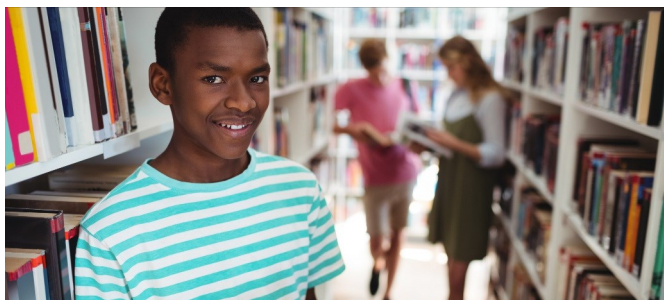
Work exploration activities can begin as early as middle school. For most students, work exploration will happen during high school.

Examples of Work Exploration Activities

- **Job shadowing:** This involves your child spending time with an employee on a real job site. The employee is responsible for showing your child the duties of the job and the workplace in general.
- **Volunteering:** A time-limited volunteer experience provides an opportunity for your child to explore their interests, as well as various fields of work. It allows your child to build their resume, work on developing new skills, and gain exposure to various types of jobs. It is important to remember that volunteer placements are meant to provide meaningful experiences for students rather than long-term unpaid employment.
- ◊ As a career exploring option, volunteering is an experience that can assist in obtaining more long-term paid employment.
- Participation in summer employment programs and activities. These activities should be arranged as part of your child’s transition planning.

For work exploration activities to be useful, keep the following in mind:

- Activities should provide hands-on experiences at workplaces within your community (with the provision of whatever help your child may require).



- Activities should be linked to the transition goals you and your child have set.
- Activities should be determined based on your child's interests and abilities.
- Activities should start with short-term work experiences in a variety of regular workplaces and work toward longer-term experiences with potential to turn into real work for real pay.

Making decisions about the best possible work exploration activities for your child should be part of formal transition planning. Any specific activities that are identified will become part of the action plan for your child. When thinking about career exploration for your child, consider the questions below.

Work Exploration - Questions to Consider

- What type of work exploration activities (job shadowing, Co-op placements, etc.) will best suit your child at this time?
- What jobs or workplaces should your child explore at this time?
- Do the work exploration activities provide your child with the necessary experiences to make decisions about future work choices?
- Are the activities related to your child's interests or does your child develop new interests as a result of the work exploration activities?

"The genuine inclusion of students with special needs in co-operative education, rather than the provision of segregated alternative work experiences for them, is probably the single most important reform high schools must make to meet students' needs at the secondary level."

Promoting Successful Transition for Students with Special Needs, The Canadian Council for Exceptional Children

Co-operative Education

As mentioned, co-operative education is a program through which students are provided opportunities for academic study and on-the-job experience. The program is a joint effort between the business community and the school or school district. Through cooperative education programs, students gain skills and insights specific to various jobs, while strengthening the academic skills needed for obtaining employment.

Traditionally, students participate in cooperative education in the final year of high school. They participate for one semester only (one half-year). During that time, they "work" for up to three hours each day. All of this work is done during school time and the students receive credit towards their high school graduation. Working with your child and their resource team, there is potential to add multiple co-op placements into their school plan starting as early as Grade 11.

This program is open to all students who meet the qualifications. Primarily, students must have good academic standing, good attendance records, and have made a career choice, or at the very least have established a "career cluster." Students complete an application for co-operative education when curriculum choices are traditionally made.





Cooperative education is important for students for a number of reasons:

- It provides positive work experiences that assist in the development of skills and motivation for employment in regular workplaces.
- Since cooperative education is managed by schools or school districts, there are opportunities to provide support that students may require to do a job and to assist employers to include individuals in regular workplaces.
- Cooperative education generally increases opportunities for employment upon completion of high school. Access to these opportunities would provide students with important contacts with employers and opportunities to develop their own career portfolios.
- Planning for your child to participate in their school's cooperative education program can begin in the early stages of their transition plan. If your child has had opportunities to develop a list of potential career paths, they can use this as a starting point for planning their co-op placements. Having a general idea of where your child would like to go on their placements will help the entire transition team to plan classes, career awareness activities and make connections early on to make the transition to adulthood as successful as possible.

Evaluating Work Experiences

Work experiences during school are an important aspect in the transition to life after high school. Work experiences not only provide students with practical work-related experience, they also provide relevant career information that helps students make decisions about employment after high school.

Having quality work experiences during school is important for your child. You and your child's transition planning group should be prepared to evaluate the quality of the work experience for your child. Evaluation means that people take the time to determine the effectiveness of the work experience. There are some general questions you may wish to consider:

- Was the work experience desired by your child and supported by you and the transition planning group?
- Has the work experience been consistent with the goals set out in your child's transition plan?
- If your child required help on the jobsite, was it adequately provided? How much responsibility have the employer or your child's co-workers taken to provide the support?
- Has the workplace generally been a positive experience for your child? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Has the work experience provided the practical application of skills your child has learned while in school?
- Has the work experience assisted your child in acquiring new social and work-related skills, and in developing a positive attitude towards work?
- Has the work experience provided your child with a connection to the adult world and community?

Use the above questions to evaluate each of your child's work experience opportunities while in school. Add other questions that may relate more specifically to your child's situation. It will also be important to get the employer's views of your child's work experience. The employer may be willing to attend a meeting (or more than one meeting) of the transition planning group to discuss the work experience and potential opportunities for the future.

Chapter 10

Education and Training After High School

Introduction

In this chapter, we look at post-secondary education and training opportunities for people with disabilities.

We also review resources and programs aimed at improving employability and job success. These include:

- Current training opportunities for people with disabilities;
- Community agency supported employment services;
- Government programs; and
- Employer-based training opportunities.



Post-secondary education is usually offered in universities and community colleges. New Brunswick's universities are well-known for their expertise and instruction in fields such as engineering, computer science, forestry, arts, nursing, biology, law, technology, translation, music, criminology, and social work.

Located across the province, New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) locations deliver courses in support of specific industry needs. The colleges offer certificate and diploma-based programs and offer a wide range of job training opportunities. Today, post-secondary education institutions have made significant strides when it comes to including people with disabilities in program study. For example, New Brunswick's Community Colleges offer a Special Admissions process that provides students who had adjusted learning plans in high school to attend college. Each year, the college allocates a number of available program seats for these students. Each year the updated list can be found on NBCC's website under Special Admissions Programs. Students apply under regular conditions and are then contacted for an interview with a panel of representatives, such as the NBCC learning strategist and an Inclusion NB representative to answer a series of questions to determine if they are a good fit for their desired program. To increase the student's chances of success with their Special Admissions interview, they are encouraged to do the following:

- Apply early (Before January 1st)
- Have well developed career goals or employment plan
- Research the program of choice
- Attend Student for a Day, Open houses, etc. offered by NBCC
- Reach out to Inclusion NB for planning and guidance

(Source: <https://nbcc.ca/admissions/special-admissions>)

Post-Secondary Education

Steven Austin, a Carpentry instructor at the Moncton Campus, and the Welding faculty at the Saint John Campus are 2020 recipients of the Canadian Association for Community Living's National Inclusive Education Award. The award recognizes an individual or team who has made a positive and significant contribution to inclusive education in the early learning, public school and post-secondary systems.

Working with the campus learning strategist and the student's tutor and family, the instructors developed alternate methods of instruction and coordinated their schedules to offer one-on-one instruction outside of instructional hours. The student's engagement and confidence have grown, and the other students in the class have learned the importance of inclusion.

(Source: NBCC Website: <http://nbccstories.ca/nbcc-faculty-members-receive-national-inclusive-education-awards/>)

Students who are accepted into Special Admissions will then have access to a number of supports ranging from an Inclusion NB Transition Facilitator to specialized Assistive Technology to help them complete their studies. Transition Facilitators will work with the student, family, school, etc. to ensure the student is well-supported and successful during their college career.

Students also have the option to apply to NBCC under regular admissions and complete their program of choice under regular programming. There are still many supports available to students through NBCC's accessible learning centres. Accessibility services are also offered at many of the universities across the province in order to ensure students are provided with equitable services and accommodations to complete their studies.

Employment Training Programs

Government Programs

The cost of attending a post-secondary education institution must be considered. Government programs can provide support in a number of ways:

Funding may be available for individuals with diverse learning needs to pursue academic studies and specific skills training. This may include funding for expenses or services, such as:

- Note-takers and readers
- Books in alternate format
- Tutors
- Attendant Services
- Transportation costs associated with a person's disability
- Assistive Technology
- Interpreter Services
- Advocacy and/or Navigational Support
- Tuition
- Medical Assessment
- School supplies

Other Community Resources/Agencies

It is important to note that funding for these services may be limited and only available if a career goal or employment plan has been identified by the person with the disability.

- Programs may also provide funding to cover tuition fees to attend a training program. These may be in the form of student loans and grants that are available to the general population. Funding programs such as the Canada Study Grant may also provide assistance to people with disabilities.

There are many opportunities for funding and supports that students can access if they choose the post-secondary education route. Students will be well supported throughout their studies and can have ongoing and personalized help during their time in school.

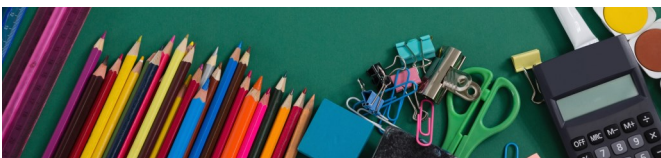
Current Employment Training Opportunities

"Employees with an intellectual disability rank above average on other performance measures, as well. In an Environics Research study, employers rated employees with an intellectual disability with an average score of 84% in the following categories: high productivity, dependable, engaged in their work, motivated, great attendance records and strong attention to work quality."

(Source: Ready, Willing, and Able Website: <http://readywillingable.ca/blog/stories/employee-raises-bar-kent/>)

There are a number of programs that may be available to help your child develop skills that may be required to make the transition from school to work. Because most rely on government funding, there is no guarantee these programs will exist in the future.

Many of the training programs for individuals provide on-the-job training. This type of training often works well because people are able to use the skills they learn directly at the workplace.



Government Programs

Government programs can provide training opportunities in a number of ways:

- Funding is available for on-the-job supports for job coaches, assistive technology, and any other accommodations an individual may need while on the job.
- Government may also fund “skills training partnerships” which provide a short-term (for example, 10 weeks) training for individuals in specific businesses or industries. These programs are usually organized by a community organization in partnership with employers.
- Funding may be available to assist individuals to develop job skills through job experience programs. These programs involve the government providing money to employers to pay for wages for a limited time. While these are not formal training programs, individuals can receive on-the-job training and develop job skills through the work experience.

Over time, the goal is to have individuals become independent in the workplace, so funding may phase out over time. Long-term support is also available if required by an individual to be successful in their employment.

Assistance from Community Agencies Providing Supported Employment Services

Community agencies that provide supported employment services are actively involved with job training. There are various agencies across the province that offer different training services and opportunities for individuals looking to enter the workforce. Local employment agencies can help with job searching, resume and skill building, employment classes, etc. There are also agencies like Neil Squire that can assist with workplace accommodations that an individual may need to get them workplace ready.

Some agencies also offer employer subsidies to help employers provide work experience to individuals. These subsidies may cover partial or full wages for a limited time during the job training process. It is important to keep in mind that the goal of utilizing a wage subsidy is to learn the necessary skills required to be become a paid employee once the wage subsidy ends.

Employer-Based Training Opportunities

Many employers provide training to the people they hire to work in their businesses. Larger employers often have human resource departments and formal training programs that provide new employees with skills and opportunities to be successful in their employment

In the past, it has been assumed that people with disabilities require outside help with on-the-job training. Many employers have felt they are not equipped to provide training to new employees who have disabilities, which has created barriers for this population to achieve employment

With that being said, today's workforce is more diverse than ever before. Many employers are implementing inclusive hiring practices and providing support and training to people with disabilities internally. In some situations, it may be required to access external help for the employer to develop the knowledge and skills to train and support an employee who has a disability. If an employer is interested, there are community resources available, such as Inclusion NB and local employment agencies that provide information sessions to workplaces to inform and educate employers and their employees on the benefits of having an inclusive work environment.



Part V Conclusion

Chapter 11 Building the Bridges

Chapter 11

Building the Bridges

A Shared Responsibility

Successful transition is a shared responsibility amongst many people who support the vision and goal of full participation for people with disabilities.



A Final Word

Throughout this guide, we have covered a wide range of information and topics we hope will help you and your child through the transition planning process.

Building bridges to a successful transition from school to work and community participation will take time, effort, and patience on the part of you, your child, and others. It is important to plan and act year by year, month by month, and day by day. Essential keys to helping your child experience a successful transition include:

- Families, educators, employers, and others committing to the goal of community participation for your child.
- Actively involving young adults and their families in the transition planning process. This includes a commitment to making sure that your child will develop the ability and confidence to make decisions for themselves.
- Families encouraging their children to develop skills, relationships with others, and opportunities to participate both inside and outside of school. This encouragement should start as early as possible.
- Planning early for the eventual transition from high school to work and adult life. Effective planning involves setting goals and expectations and figuring out how this will be accomplished through activities and experiences both inside and outside of school.
- Making sure that children and young people receive their education in classrooms alongside students their own age. Participating and learning with peers is crucial for the development of opportunities for participation in community life after school is finished.
- Being exposed to career education at an early age and having positive work experiences during the school years. Work experiences can include summer or part-time jobs as well as job experiences that are arranged by the school.
- Having adequate support from others who share the commitment of families for an active and productive life for their children. Sources of support could include teachers and other educators, guidance counselors, employers, friends, co-workers, community, and government agencies.

Ideally, building bridges to successful transitions will involve all of the key elements listed above. Many individuals and their families may experience barriers putting the appropriate pieces in place, but with the proper support, it can be done.

We hope the information and suggestions contained in this guide will help build a bridge to a bright future for your child.

Financial Resources

New Brunswick's Disability Support Program

Once your child reaches the age of 19, they may be eligible for the New Brunswick's Disability Support Program (DSP), which is funded through the Department of Social Development. This program provides personalized, flexible disability supports for persons with disabilities. It allows for the provision of independent facilitation and the use of person-centered approaches to planning and designing disability supports as needed. To assist with the transition to independence, a person can apply to DSP up to six months prior to their 19th birthday.

Applicants should go to their local Department of Social Development office and request an application to determine financial eligibility. Further information on DSP can be accessed at: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.200972.Disability_Support_Program.html or by speaking to a representative at Inclusion NB.

Family and Support for Persons with Disabilities Program

The Family Supports for Children with Disabilities program provides social work support and financial resources to families to assist with the care and support required to meet the developmental needs of their child with disability.

To apply for the program, a parent or guardian contacts the local office of this department. A family who meets the pre-assessment qualifications will be contacted by a social worker to make arrangements to complete the application process. The application process includes providing information about the child and family's strengths and unmet needs and the names of professionals or organizations providing



services to the child and family. Information about family income will also be gathered to determine the amount of family financial contribution towards services, if any.

Service options provided to eligible families depend on the unmet needs of the child and family and the resources available. Examples of service options include relief care reimbursement, supplementary childcare for children over the age of 12, assistance with medical transportation, medical and rehabilitation equipment. Further information on DSP can be accessed at:

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.10195.Family_Supports_for_Children_with_Disabilities.html

Disability Tax Credit

The Disability Tax Credit reduces the income tax that a person with a disability has to pay. If you don't need to use some or all of the tax credit because you have little or no income, you may be able to transfer all or part of it to your spouse, common-law partner or other supporting person. To get the credit, you must complete a Disability Tax Credit Certificate (Form T2201), have it signed by a qualified medical doctor, optometrist, audiologist, occupational therapist, psychologist or speech language pathologist, and return it to the Canada Revenue Agency. If your children are under 18 and qualify for the Disability Tax Credit, they may be eligible for the Child Disability Benefit which is a supplement to the Canada Child Tax Benefit. It helps low and modest-income families who care for a child with a severe and prolonged mental or physical impairment. To apply, families must obtain a signed Disability Tax Credit Certificate and the Canada Child Tax Benefit application form (RC66) for the child.

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)

A registered disability savings plan (RDSP) is a savings plan that is intended to help parents and others save for the long-term financial security of a person who is eligible for the Disability Tax Credit – they need not actually be taking advantage of the Disability Tax Credit but need only qualify for it. This was announced by the federal government as part of the 2007 Budget Initiatives. There is no annual limit on amounts that can be contributed to an RDSP of a particular beneficiary in a given year. However, the overall lifetime limit for a particular beneficiary is \$200,000. Contributions are permitted until the end of the year in which the beneficiary turns 59 years of age. A Canada Disability Savings Grant (CDSG) is an amount that the government of Canada contributes to an RDSP. The government will pay matching grants of 300, 200, or 100 percent, depending on the beneficiary's family income and the amount contributed. An RDSP can receive a maximum of \$3,500 in matching grants in one year, and up to \$70,000 over the beneficiary's lifetime. A grant can be paid into an RDSP on contributions made to the beneficiary's RDSP until December 31 of the year the beneficiary turns 49 years old. A Canada Disability Savings Bond (CDSB) is an amount paid by the government of Canada directly into an RDSP. The government will pay income-tested bonds of up to \$1,000 a year to low-income Canadians with disabilities, regardless of the amount contributed. The lifetime bond limit is \$20,000. A bond can be paid into an RDSP until the year in which the beneficiary turns 49 years old. Contributions to an RDSP are not tax deductible and can be made until the end of the year in which the beneficiary turns 59 years of age. Contributions that are withdrawn are not to be included as income for the beneficiary when paid out of a RDSP. However, the CDSG, CDSB and investment income earned in the plan will be included in the beneficiary's income for tax purposes when paid out of the RDSP. For more information about the RDSP, visit the CRA website at: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/rdsp-reei/menu-eng.html.



Registered Education Savings Plans

A Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) is a special savings plan that can help you, your family, or your friends save for education after high school. RESPs are registered by the Government of Canada to allow savings for education to grow tax-free until the person named in the RESP enrolls in education after high school. The Government of Canada has special grant programs to help you save by increasing the amount you put aside for a child's education with:

- a Canada Education Savings Grant that is 20% - 30% - or 40% added to the money you put into an RESP – depending on your family net income; and
- a Canada Learning Bond, an additional grant worth up to \$2,000 to help modest-income families start saving for the education after high school of children born on or after January 1, 2004.

For more information about taxes and RESPs call 1-800-959-8281 or visit the Government of Canada website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/education-savings/resp.html>

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Government of Canada, Canada Revenue Agency, Savings and pension plans, Registered disability savings plan (RDSP) www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/rdsp-reei/menu-eng.html

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