

Top Ten Things You Can Do to Plan for Transition

1. Get a Diagnosis of Disability and a Medicaid Waiver

First, get a recent exam from a psychologist (private or through the schools) that shows an IQ score and disability diagnosis. Then apply for a Waiver, which is a bundle of long term care supports designed to make the person with a disability as independent and well-supported as possible while they reside in their community. Waiting lists for the ID (Intellectual Disability) and DD (Developmental Disability) Waiver are long and these are the waivers with the most supports. Get on the waiting list early!

<http://www.thearcofnova.org/programs/waivers/>

Call-	ID Waiver	DD Waiver	EDCD Waiver
Fairfax	703-324-4400	703-246-8628	703-324-7500
Arlington	703-228-1700	703-228-1640	703-228-1350
Alexandria	703-746-3400	703-838-4300	703-746-5700
Loudoun	703-777-0377	540-722-3484	703-777-0353

2. Look into Recreation and Social Activities

We're all happier when we have a place to exercise or have some fun. Explore your county's therapeutic recreation department as well as groups like Eddie's Club, Special Olympics, and Best Buddies for options. Look into People First/Toastmasters and People First for Young Adults, self-advocacy groups run by The Arc of Northern Virginia where everyone learns to share their story and grow their voice.

<http://www.thearcofnova.org/info-referral/calendar/>

<http://www.eddiesclub.org/>, 703-304-2330

<http://www.specialolympicsva.org/>, 703-359-4301

http://www.bestbuddiesvirginia.org, 703-533-9420

<http://www.thearcofnova.org/programs/people-first/>, 703-703-208-1119

3. Transportation

Having great places to go doesn't mean much unless you can get there. Look into Metro's reduced fare or Metro Access program, then apply for Taxi Access. If you receive Medicaid, a free program called Logisticare can provide transportation to and from medical appointments.

http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/metroaccess_service/, 301-562-5360

4. Establish a Special Needs Trust

Consider setting up a Special Needs Trust which is a legal way to protect assets for a person with a disability without disqualifying them from public benefits.

<http://thearcofnovatrust.org/>, 703-208-1119 x115

5. Look Into Public Benefits

If someone has Medicaid under age 21, they are eligible for a program called EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment). This program can provide assistance for medical and non-medical needs. Once a person with a disability is 18 year old, they should be eligible for SSI (Supplemental Security Income) through Social Security. They may also be eligible for SSDI, a disability based benefit. Once approved, the person should also apply for Medicaid.

*Note- someone at or near the poverty level can apply for SSI and Medicaid at any age.

<http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/>, 800-772-1213

http://dmasva.dmas.virginia.gov/Content_atchs/mch/mch-epsdt_fs.pdf, 804-786-6134

6. Explore Guardianship and Alternatives

If someone will need assistance in making safe and healthy decisions or managing resources, consider looking into guardianship or an alternative. All people gain legal rights at age 18, so a good time to start looking into these services is around age 17 years.

<http://www.thearcnofnova.org/programs/info-referral/guardianship/>, 703-208-1119

7. Become Informed About Transition and Employment Resources

Attend all the transition resource fairs, information sessions and educational workshops you can. Read The Arc of Northern Virginia's Transition POINTS Guides: **"Securing a Future for Your Child with a Disability"** and **"Entering the World of Work"**. These guides can be downloaded from our website. See the links below. The Arc of NoVA offers Life Planning Tools Workshops, Lunch Bunch, Transition Boot Camps, First Friday Futures Planning, as well as, other transition workshops throughout the year. Visit our our website for dates.

Check out our transition related video presentations on The Arc of NoVA's youtube channel and download these Transition Guides.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/VideosatTheArcofNoVA>

http://thearcnofnova.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Securing_Jan_2014.2.pdf

<http://thearcnofnova.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ENTERINGWORK-Final.pdf>

<http://www.thearcnofnova.org/events/workshops/>

8. Plan for Transition

Aging out of the school system is a tough time as it seems like all mandated services end overnight. Prepare by getting a waiver (see #1 above), working with your school's Employment Transition Representative (ETR), local Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), and/or hire a private job coach. Tour employment service organizations and have your student complete situational assessments. Plan early!

Alexandria- 703-960-3411, Fairfax- 703-359-1124, Arlington- 703-228-1413 (or 1416 or 1424)

9. Find Family Supports

Talk to other people with disabilities, other families, other siblings. You are not alone and some of the most helpful resources come directly from those who have come before you. Reach out to a local group to find someone who understands just what you're going through. These groups include Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA), Parents of Autistic Children (POAC), Autism Society of Northern Virginia (ASNVA), Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia (DSANV), and the Sibling Leadership Network at The Arc of the United States.

<http://www.jssa.org/>, 703-204-9100

<http://www.poac-nova.org>, 703-391-2251

<http://www.asanv.org>, 703-495-8444

<http://dsanv.org/>, 703-621-7129

<http://www.siblingleadership.org>, 312-884-1756

10. Be an advocate

There are no voices more powerful in changing the world than the voices of a person with a disability and their family. By sharing your story and advocating for local, state, and federal resources you make the world a better place for everyone. You will help create the change we need to see in the world. Attend public hearings, write letters and make calls to elected officials. Consider becoming a member of The Arc of Northern Virginia and join us in advocating for change. Your membership dollars fund free resources for families, trips to Richmond to advocate with legislators, and help support our ongoing programs.

<http://www.thearcnofnova.org/>, 703-208-1119