



THE FAMILY GUIDEPPOSTS

ENGAGING IN YOUTH TRANSITIONS

National
Collaborative on
Workforce and
Disability

NCWD

For Youth



Navigating the Road to Work

Parent and Caregiver Edition



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Information about ODEP and other federal government resources on disability can be found at www.dol.gov/odep.

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Introduction

Overview of the *Guideposts for Success*

The Family Guideposts: Engaging in Youth Transitions (The Family Guideposts) builds on the *Guideposts for Success* developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) in collaboration with the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor. The five youth-centered *Guideposts for Success* are:

1. School-Based Preparatory Experiences;
2. Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences;
3. Youth Development and Leadership;
4. Connecting Activities; and
5. Family Involvement and Supports

The *Guideposts for Success* describe the supports, programs and policies young people

need across five key areas to move toward maximum independence and success in adulthood. Grounded in more than 30 years of research on practices that help youth successfully transition to adulthood, each section of the *Guideposts for Success* first identifies what all youth need to succeed in a specific area and then identifies additional supports that may be needed by youth with disabilities. Utilizing a holistic approach, the *Guideposts for Success* recognize that families, schools, community institutions, and government agencies must all be involved in helping youth transition into the adult world. Engaging families in youth transition helps ensure that students gain the academic confidence and meaningful experiences they need to chart a successful path toward the future. As such, *The Family Guideposts: Engaging in Youth Transitions* series is designed to help families support their youth in these five areas, both directly and through

the support of community organizations and agencies.

The Family Guideposts: Engaging in Youth Transitions is written as two complementary tools to address a range of stakeholder needs. This tool, *The Family Guideposts: Parent and Caregiver Edition*, is written specifically for families of youth in transition. This publication highlights specific action steps that parents and other adult caregivers can take to support their youth in transition in alignment with the *Guideposts for Success*.

The companion tool, *The Family Guideposts: Youth Program Edition*, is written for schools and youth-serving organizations. It is designed to assist educational programs by providing an overview of issues involved in successful transition for youth and their families and to explore approaches for effective partnerships with families of youth in transition. While written for organizations, this tool may also include helpful reference materials for parents in collaborating with schools and agencies to plan for transition.

Both the *The Family Guideposts* and the *Guideposts for Success* tools are based on an extensive review of research, demonstration projects, and effective practices covering a wide range of programs and services. Based on lessons learned from youth development, education, and workforce development programs, they reflect core commonalities identified across disciplines, programs, and institutional settings.

Purpose of *The Family Guideposts*

The goal of *The Family Guideposts* is to help families focus their energy and take specific actions to address the priorities of their transition-age youth.

With or without a disability, late adolescence and young adulthood are critical times in the lives of youth. Characterized by rapid changes in both physical and psychological development, adolescence is a time when all youth are struggling to define themselves and become independent adults. While youth increasingly look outside their families for approval, supportive family relationships remain important in their lives. Families provide necessary emotional, material, and informational support; at the same time, parents need to allow young people space to develop their own senses of identity. Of course, these periods of transition bring about feelings of both anxiety and optimism for the future for the youth as well as the family. Families may need assistance in identifying information and resources to help them support their young adults on the journey to adulthood.

“Family” is defined here broadly as adults and children related biologically, emotionally, or legally, including single parents, blended families, unrelated individuals living co-

operatively, and partnered couples who live with biological, adopted, and foster children.

The Family Guideposts: Engaging in Youth Transitions series links the extensive review of youth development research to evidence-based practices in family engagement. Roles that are emphasized in *The Family Guideposts* are those that assist families as they become fully informed about career and life options; support their youth as they make the most of secondary school and create a pathway toward the future and advocate for school improvement so that their youth and all youth benefit from high quality academic and career transition opportunities.

The Family Guideposts address issues faced by all youth, including those with disabilities, as they transition to adulthood. They can help families focus their energy in meaningful ways to support the development and success of their transition-age youth. Depending on the individual, this might include graduating from high school, going to college, finding a first job, building a circle of friends, participating in community recreation programs, connecting to the adult health care system, or a combination of these experiences. Using the framework of the *Guideposts for Success*, *The Family Guideposts* highlight proactive roles families can play within each Guidepost area.

For organizations and agencies who work with youth and their families, *The Family Guideposts: Youth Program Edition* provides a framework to empower families to contribute to successful adult outcomes for their youth, and to tap into family support more effectively and work more collaboratively

and intentionally with both individual parents and organized parent groups.

For families of youth with disabilities, *The Family Guideposts: Parent and Caregiver Edition* serves as a tool to incorporate research-based strategies into their young adult's secondary education and transition plans. Each family brings unique needs and perspectives to the table. While the primary purpose of *The Family Guideposts: Parent and Caregiver Edition* is to provide a framework to empower families to support their adolescents as they emerge into adult roles, families are also encouraged, where feasible, to consider assuming advisory and influential roles on local school, community, school district, or state advisory boards. Policymakers, schools, and community organizations increasingly recognize the value of parents as partners in systemic accountability as well as the important role they play in their own youth's development.

Underlying Assumptions

The Family Guideposts reflects a key precept of national disability policy that "disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, and contribute to society," (Rehabilitation Act Amendments, 1992).

In addition, the *Guideposts for Success* lists six underlying assumptions shaping each of the five *Guideposts*. These include: 1) high expectations for all youth, including youth with disabilities; 2) equality of opportunity for everyone, including nondiscrimination, individualization, inclusion, and integration; 3) full participation through self-determina-

tion, informed choice, and participation in decision-making; 4) independent living, including skills development and long-term supports and services; 5) competitive employment and economic self-sufficiency, even if with supports; and 6) individualized, person-driven, and culturally and linguistically appropriate transition planning. *The Family Guideposts* builds upon these principles and add the following four fundamental beliefs:

1. All families, regardless of income, education level, or cultural background have dreams for their children and want the best for them.
2. All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning.
3. Parents and school staff should be equal partners.
4. The responsibility for building partnership between school and home rests primarily with school staff, especially with school leaders.

Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, and Davies (2007) advocate for these four fundamental beliefs in *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*. Justifying these statements with research evidence, they challenge schools to use these beliefs as the foundation for building partnerships with families rather than limiting possibilities with negative assumptions about families' lack of participation.

Strengths-Based Approach

The Family Guideposts utilizes a strengths-based approach that moves beyond the notion of family participation (or lack there-

of), to one that seeks to build upon family strength and knowledge. Families are recognized as dynamic and complex and as the best source of information regarding their youth. In a strengths-based approach, schools and community organizations know that families are always engaging with their youth in informal and very meaningful ways. Such a recognition of family strengths and functioning enables organizations to build connections and confidence with families that demonstrate to youth that school and home are aligned in their efforts to work productively for the future.

A strengths-based approach enables schools and youth serving programs to develop insightful two-way communication and quality relationships that are the foundation of successful family partnerships. Building this collaborative relationship will be easier for some parents and organizations than others. To deepen understanding of ways in which educators can best support family engagement in youth transitions, schools and youth serving organization may want to consider family perceptions. Some questions that schools and youth organizations may want to ask themselves are:

- ◆ How can our school or community organization better understand family perceptions as we work to support youth in transition?
- ◆ What are the unique family strengths upon which to build partnerships for youth transition? How can we share *The Family Guideposts* in a way

that support their capabilities and confidence?

- ◆ How can our school or community organization communicate appreciative and authentic interest that will engage families in ongoing collaboration around their youth's transition?

Proactive outreach, planning for access, and focus on building relationships with families are especially important to fostering involvement of families with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A strengths-based approach enables schools and other community organizations to utilize family culture and life experience as a rich resource from which to draw insights during their shared work on behalf of youth. While the task of guiding youth through a myriad of possibilities for their future can be challenging, youth can be well anchored when guided by what they and their families have most valued in their home and community life experiences. Virtually all parents want their youth to feel valued and be valued members of their community. However, no family has to go it alone. Families, schools, and communities all share the responsibility of helping youth grow into capable, contributing adults, and there are a number of places parents and family members may turn for support.

Framework for Family Action in Youth Transition

This section of *The Family Guideposts* is designed for families of a youth in transition. Families of teenagers and young adults may feel alone or overwhelmed when navigating a path for their youth's future. Often youth

don't want parents to "get in the way," and families are concerned that schools either won't take the time to listen or won't understand the perspectives of a parent or family member.

Family engagement in youth transition is as important as family involvement has been throughout all of a young person's schooling. Families are key to understanding the motivation, vision, and goals that a youth holds for his or her future. Family expectation of youth are key, because as adolescents and young adults make their transitions, they begin to internalize these expectations to chart a path for their own future. As youth take on new responsibilities for their own independence, families can assist through working with the schools and other community organization to ensure their success. In fact, it is a responsibility of the school and larger community to support families and youth as they chart a path toward the future. *The Family Guideposts: Parent and Caregiver Edition* provides information on what to look for during your youth's transition and how to get support from the school and community to ensure your youth transition successfully.

In 2007, Appleseed, a nonprofit network of public interest justice centers, published *It Takes A Parent: Transforming Education*. The report summarizes two years of research in 18 school districts across six states and concludes:

"It is clear that as a nation we have not emphasized or financially invested in parental involvement in ways that we should. A renewed focus on parental involvement is a powerful and exciting potential direction for education in the 21st Century...Parental involvement is not a

silver bullet, but is an important part of the solution.” (Preface p. 1)

The Appleseed report identifies three overarching objectives for parents in their partnerships with schools: a) **become fully informed**; b) **support youth** in getting the most out of their education; and c) **advocate for school improvement**. Advocacy may also extend beyond school boundaries into the community.

Families may want to select from among the recommended actions only the approaches that best align with their youth’s needs and goals for the future. For example, if a student has just recently begun high school, a family may initially want to choose just one action across each of the four *Guideposts* (school-based experience, career preparation, youth development, and/or connecting activities). That way youth and family can begin to lay a foundation for future transition and begin by trying out a few ideas to see what feels right.

Alternatively, if a young person is almost finished with high school and has narrowed his or her goals for the future, a family may find that they want to place emphasis on a number of career preparation and work-based learning activities that are closely tied to their youth’s immediate goals. Similarly, the family of an older youth with a disability may want to pinpoint targeted transition services that will enable them to realize their own vision for autonomy and ongoing connections.

Focus on those recommendations that best suit your situation and are most likely to make a difference for you and your family. If you implement even a few of these recommendations, you will be helping to support your youth in reaching their full potential and facilitating a successful transition from education to a job or career of their choosing.

School-based Preparatory Experiences

In order to perform at optimal levels in all education settings, all youth need to participate in educational programs grounded in standards, clear performance expectations, and graduation exit options based upon meaningful, accurate, and relevant indicators of student learning and skills. These should include the following:

- ▶ academic programs that are based on clear state standards;
- ▶ career and technical education programs that are based on professional and industry standards;
- ▶ curricular and program options based on universal design of school, work, and community-based learning experiences;
- ▶ learning environments that are small and safe, including extra supports such as tutoring, as necessary;
- ▶ supports for and by highly qualified staff;
- ▶ access to an assessment system that includes multiple measures; and
- ▶ graduation standards that include options.

In addition, youth with disabilities need to do the following:

- ▶ use their individual transition plans to drive their personal instruction, and use strategies to continue the transition process past schooling;
- ▶ have access to specific and individual learning accommodations while they are in school;
- ▶ develop knowledge of reasonable accommodations that they can request and control in education settings, including assessment accommodations; and
- ▶ be supported by highly qualified transitional support staff that may or may not be school staff.

SECTION SUMMARY: Family involvement in education and career development is a way to make a positive difference in the lives of youth. Parents have a powerful influence on youth education and employment outcomes. Families can help ensure that youth experience high-quality teaching and learning and access appropriate assessments and accommodations on their way to successfully completing high school. Families can also ensure youth have opportunities for work-based learning, and are prepared for postsecondary education. This section provides practical tips on how families can impact the education of their youth with and without disabilities. In order for students to reach their full educational potential, they need to participate in educational programs that are grounded in rigorous state standards. School programs should set clear expectations of skills needed for mastery and provide graduation exit options based upon meaningful, accurate, and relevant indicators of student learning and skills.

Families play an important role in helping youth understand how earning and learning go hand-in-hand. The more years of schooling, the higher one's income is likely to be and the less likely a person is to be unemployed. In many careers, a high school diploma is only the first educational step. All students, whether they have received their GED diploma, a vocational certification or are pursuing a Ph.D., will find that for every employment field, there is ongoing, lifelong training for those who want to stay on top of global changes in production and service. Some of this training may be offered by the employer, but employees can also seek out this training on their own. Many times, additional training will be available through trade schools, community colleges, online courses, or professional organizations.

While the overall on-time high school graduation rate reached an all-time high at 83%, that figure masks a much lower graduation rate for students with disabilities at just 65% (NCES, 2016). It is unsurprising, then, that youth with an IEP lag behind their peers in planning for and securing postsecondary

education and jobs. They are significantly less likely to enroll in some type of postsecondary education or training or take college entrance and placement tests. In addition, parents of youth with an IEP are less likely than other parents to believe that their children will live independently as adults (78% versus 96%) (Lipscomb et al., 2017).

Although such statistics are discouraging, families can take heart. Research shows that ongoing family involvement in education and support of career development activities makes a positive difference in the lives of youth (Mazzotti et al., 2015). Additional research shows that students with disabilities are going on to higher education in increasing numbers (Raue & Lewis, 2011).

The following section provides families with practical suggestions of actions to increase the likelihood that their youth will stay engaged in school and get the most out of their educational experiences.

When families are involved, students are more likely to:

- ◆ earn high grade-point averages and scores on standardized tests or rating scales;
- ◆ enroll in more challenging academic programs;
- ◆ pass more classes and earn more credits;
- ◆ attend school regularly;
- ◆ display positive attitudes about school;
- ◆ graduate from high school and enroll in postsecondary programs; and
- ◆ refrain from destructive activities such as alcohol and drug use and violence.

Source: Henderson & Mapp, 2002

What families can do to become fully informed about their youth's schooling

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Seek clear information about high school program options and graduation requirements. Request regular updates on your student's progress towards a high school diploma or alternate exit certificate. Inquire whether an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) to help students plan their college and career path is required by the state or school district.
- ◆ Inquire about career and technical program and college options of interest to your student and how these programs align with career, professional, and industry standards. Learn about entrance requirements for those programs and data about student outcomes after completion.
- ◆ Communicate with teachers about course expectations and how they relate to rigorous state college and career readiness standards.
- ◆ Learn how to interpret the school's online report card. States are required to post annual reports on a central website that provide information about progress each school has made. The report card may include the number of teachers who are "highly qualified," data about school attendance and student achievement, and graduation rates.
- ◆ Know your youth's ABCs: Attendance, Behavior, and Course Completion at school. If your student has difficulty in any area above, get immediate assistance from the school counselor to keep your student on course for high school graduation.
- ◆ Look into local resources available to support family involvement, such as parent information and resource centers or family engagement specialists.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Gather information about your youth's disability and its impact on learning. This information can include interventions, supports, assistive technology, and accommodations that can help them learn the general education curriculum and show what they know. This information should be provided under the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or ILP. Additional information may include the extent to which the youth is receiving services in inclusive classrooms (i.e. the least restrictive environment) and the progress they are making on individualized goals and state standards.
- ◆ Understand that young adults must meet certain disability eligibility requirements in order to receive support from adult service agencies once they leave the secondary special education program. Make sure members of these agencies are a part of the transition team.
- ◆ When communicating with teachers about state standards, note if your son or daughter has modified expectations because of disability or limited English proficiency. Ask teachers how they will determine the revised expectations and how that will influence earning high school credits.

What families can do to actively support youth throughout their education

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Emphasize that education is key to achieving dreams and future economic security. Discuss the consequences of important educational decisions such as graduation and diploma options.
- ◆ Discuss your student's strengths and interests and explore together how these can help determine courses, activities, and goals during high school.
- ◆ Support your student to understand how individualized transition planning during their time in school helps achieve future goals. Partner with the school to develop and implement an ILP, if required in your state or school district, or customize an available online ILP to support your youth.
- ◆ Reinforce the development of a positive work ethic (goal setting with high expectations, homework completion, study habits, clarifying expectations, and resilience) when work is challenging.
- ◆ Ensure that your student is taking the courses needed to be admitted to their postsecondary education program of choice, if your student plans to continue education after high school.

- ◆ Accompany your high school youth on visits to college campuses and explore postsecondary programs of interest. Support your youth to consider a variety of options for continuing education. Consider a tour of colleges and universities during summer vacation.
 - ◆ Determine if your youth's high school has an articulation agreement with community colleges or four-year institutions in your state. If so, work with a high school counselor to determine if any of their high school credits will transfer in these postsecondary education options.
 - ◆ Discuss the age at which your youth becomes a legal adult and therefore legally able to make important decisions about education (and other issues). Let your youth know ways in which family will continue to be supportive when faced with such decisions.
- ◆ can be included as an IEP goal, practiced at home to help build self-determination skills.
 - ◆ Share your insights about your youth's strengths, interests, and abilities with the IEP team; ensure that the final plan reflects their individual needs and goals.
 - ◆ Make sure that your student has access to specific and individually appropriate learning accommodations, assessments, assistive technology, and teaching strategies in the classroom as well as functional life skills training tailored to their individual needs, if necessary.
 - ◆ Contribute to the IEP team's transition planning to ensure your student will be college and career ready by graduation.
 - ◆ Participate in the development of your student's Summary of Performance (SOP), ensuring that the school has documented school-based preparatory experiences. The SOP should also state how your student has prepared for college and career as well as the recommendations for support beyond high school.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Help your youth understand how a disability may impact education, both inside and outside the classroom, and mentor youth to learn how to advocate for needed accommodations.
- ◆ Expect and encourage your youth to play an active role in his or her transition planning. Convey this expectation to both your student and school staff. Preparing your student to lead an IEP meeting

What families can do to advocate for school improvement, whether for individual students or the whole system

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Insist that teachers hold all students to high expectations in rigorous content at every opportunity while providing flexibility if needed to address individual student concerns.
- ◆ Communicate with teachers and other school staff about the school's climate for learning and insist that the school address concerns you may raise. Work with other parents to support an inclusive environment for all students and families.
- ◆ Urge schools to provide curricula and program options based on universal design for learning. Consider whether differentiated instruction and other research-based teaching methods are needed.
- ◆ Seek help, if needed, through school and community organizations such as equity, parent centers, and other federally funded support centers.
- ◆ Encourage schools and community organizations to sponsor after school and summer programs that provide youth opportunities to experience the relationship between learning in school and employers' expectations.
- ◆ Urge schools to establish mentoring programs to link students with caring

adults to support personal growth and achievement.

- ◆ Advocate for improving program quality and the adoption of best practices at school board meetings, legislative sessions, and budget hearings. These groups are especially attentive to parent perspectives.
- ◆ Volunteer to serve on school improvement teams or advisory boards, contributing the family perspective on progress and strategic planning.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Advocate for individualized positive behavioral interventions and modification of school policies. Find alternatives to out-of-school suspension for students who have disability-related behavior issues.
- ◆ Advocate for youth self-advocacy training by connecting them to the network of disability self-advocacy organizations. Provide youth with opportunities to understand the implications of their disabilities and become self-determined through involvement in the IEP meeting and transition planning.

Families will find more information on these recommendations in the ***Glossary*** and from the websites and organizations listed in the ***Resources*** section of this guide.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & GUIDEPOST 2

Career Preparation & Work-based Learning Experiences

Career preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential for youth to form and develop aspirations and make informed choices about careers. These experiences can be provided during the school day or through after school programs and will require collaboration with other organizations. All youth need information on career options, including the following:

- ▶ career assessments to help identify students' school and post-school preferences and interests;
- ▶ structured exposure to postsecondary education and other life-long learning opportunities;
- ▶ exposure to career opportunities that ultimately lead to a living wage, including information about educational requirements, entry requirements, income and benefit potential, and asset accumulation; and
- ▶ training designed to improve job-seeking skills and work-place skills (sometimes called "soft skills").

In order to identify and attain career goals, youth need to be exposed to a range of experiences, including the following:

- ▶ opportunities to engage in a range of work-based exploration activities such as site visits and job shadowing;
- ▶ multiple on-the-job training experiences (paid or unpaid), including community service, that are specifically linked to the content of the program of study and school credit;
- ▶ opportunities to learn and practice their work skills (so-called "soft skills"); and
- ▶ opportunities to learn first-hand about specific occupational skills related to a career pathway.

In addition, youth with disabilities need to do one or more of the following:

- ▶ understand the relationships between benefits planning and career choices;
- ▶ learn to communicate their disability-related work support and accommodation needs; and
- ▶ learn to find, formally request, and secure appropriate supports and reasonable accommodations in education, training, and employment settings.

SECTION SUMMARY: Career preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential for youth to develop ideas about the world of work and make informed choices about their future careers. Families have a range of options to offer work-based learning opportunities. They can help their young people explore potential careers and gain work experience by utilizing community organizations, co-workers, and other personal networks. This section provides practical tips on how family members contribute to the career development of their adolescents with and without disabilities.

Families can greatly influence the occupational choices of the next generation. Still, times have changed significantly from the days when a son would automatically succeed his father in the family trade. Today, the global economy has redefined skill requirements across the occupational spectrum. Career pathways in new industries are growing rapidly, and the technological revolution now allows people to work within a virtual work world that did not exist 30 years ago.

Families have always drawn on a variety of formal and informal networks to help their youth prepare for future work. With the changing work environment, however, it is now more critical than ever that families partner with schools and community agencies to support youth in career preparation.

Self-exploration and career exploration enable students to successfully establish and achieve their postsecondary education and career goals. Self-exploration helps students understand their goals interests, skills, and values. Developing such self-awareness can help young people determine whether they are interested in particular types of careers. Through career exploration, youth can then learn more about the activities and educational requirements needed to pursue those careers.

Career planning and management supports students in three ways once a career goal has been identified. First, it helps them acquire the job search skills needed to secure employment. Next, it helps them to think about how they will continue to develop career readiness skills (both generalizable, i.e. soft, and career-specific skills). Lastly, career planning helps students develop the traits, work habits, and behaviors associated with a lifelong commitment to seeking new opportunities for gaining skills and experiences that maximize their employability. Families play a critical role in assisting their youth with these three aspects of career readiness preparation.

Paid or unpaid job experiences are some of the many ways that young people can explore their career interests and learn about different occupations. Not only do these experiences provide valuable learning opportunities for youth in later teen years, but research shows that youth who have participated in job shadowing, internships, or work experiences are more likely to see the relevance of education to their future. They are also more likely to stay in school and earn higher wages when they enter the workforce. In addition, research indicates that youth who have had a paid work experience

during their high school years are more likely to be employed after graduation.

Career preparation and work-based experiences are important for keeping students engaged in school and becoming career ready. Yet while policymakers, educators, and families have begun to realize this, youth and family experiences vary widely, and quality opportunities are not available to many students on a systematic basis. The White House Council on Community Solutions' 2012 report "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth" highlights this reality. It states that despite the billions of federal, state, local, and private dollars spent on disconnected youth and their families, many out-of-school, at-risk youth are not prepared for or faring well in today's labor market.

For youth with disabilities, career preparation and work-based learning experiences are especially critical to reverse current employment trends. Despite legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act, many youth with disabilities continue to experience poor employment outcomes. For out-of-school youth with disabilities or those with significant disabilities, it may be difficult to access general workforce development programs that help individuals to obtain their GED or high school diploma, complete vocational training, and find work.

The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) reported that in 2002, only 2% of juniors and seniors receiving special education

services participated in work-based learning experiences, and:

- ◆ 56% of students with disabilities received no career counseling
- ◆ 51% received no career assessment
- ◆ 64% received no job-readiness training
- ◆ 86% received no job-skills training
- ◆ 64% received no job-search instruction

When used effectively, the employment services and supports that youth with disabilities are eligible for can give them an advantage in the job market that other youth may not have.

Employment Rates

The Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 55% of youth ages 16-24 were employed in July 2018. Rates have been relatively steady since 2010 and are highest for male and white youth.

In 2018, 20.8% of people with disabilities (age 16+) were employed compared with 68.2% of people without disabilities. The unemployment rate of people with disabilities was 8.0% compared to 3.8% for those without disabilities.

Sources: ODEP, 2018; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018

What families can do to become fully informed about their youth's career preparation.

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Learn about the self-exploration and career-interest assessments that are used in high schools. Find out how your student can use those tools and how the results can be shared with youth and families.
- ◆ Learn about career preparation and work-based learning experiences offered at school. Find out how youth are selected for those experiences and how experiences relate to graduation and postsecondary admission requirements.
- ◆ Investigate community organizations that offer youth interest assessments. There may also be organizations that offer exposure to careers and opportunities to practice work-related "soft skills" (e.g., promptness, following instructions, task completion, and problem-solving).
- ◆ Ask to see if the school offers some sort of Individualized Learning Plan or ePortfolio college and career readiness tool.
- ◆ Learn about career exploration and career interest assessments available online.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Investigate how career and vocational assessments are conducted and what kind of evaluative tools are used. Ask for a work-based situational assessment, and request that the results be shared with your family and incorporated into IEP transition planning.
- ◆ Learn about work-related benefits (e.g., health care, work incentives, student earnings rules, etc.) that may be available to youth and how they relate to workplace accommodations and earnings. Schools/agencies may coordinate workshops for parents on these topics in a variety of formats.

What families can do to actively support youth throughout their career preparation

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Hold and convey high expectations for competitive employment and economic self-sufficiency. Recognize youth's individual strengths, interests, and desires.
- ◆ Develop youth's "soft skills," the social skills, work habits, and attitudes that all workers need across all occupations. Soft skills will enable youth to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment.

- ◆ Take an active role in career planning with schools and community partners, utilizing an ILP if used at the school, and ensure that career exploration and work-based learning are included activities. Help youth access information about career-related education and support their participation in those career exploration and work-based learning experiences.
- ◆ Explore career options by talking with military recruiters and visiting job sites. Have youth complete informal job shadowing at a parent's place of employment, neighborhood business, or with other family, friends, or colleagues.
- ◆ Investigate state departments of education and employment services web sites to learn about jobs and career pathways. Find out where services are available through local workforce centers and career and technical education programs. Help youth understand the credentials necessary to pursue specific careers.
- ◆ Look for volunteer opportunities in the local community, including with elected officials, environmental projects, and religious institutions locally.
- ◆ Coach youth on appropriate clothing to wear at work, the importance of being on time, calling in when late or sick, and other expected behaviors. Discuss their work ethic, experiences, and career development, and

teach youth to take the initiative in resolving problems on the job.

- ◆ Use informal family and social networks to help connect youth to possible afterschool and summer internships or job opportunities. Even in today's high-tech interconnected world, networking is one of the most effective ways to find a job.
- ◆ Help youth develop a resume listing their job skills and both paid and unpaid work experiences.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Assist youth in developing an understanding of their disability and how it may affect them in an employment setting. Engage in role playing to practice disclosure.
- ◆ Encourage youth to participate in IEP team discussions of career interests and possible avenues for career exploration and development of work-related skills.
- ◆ Assist youth in learning about employment rights and responsibilities, including those related to people with disabilities.
- ◆ Assist youth in learning how to access employment programs, services, work incentives, supports, and accommodations available for youth and adults with disabilities.
- ◆ Set up mentoring opportunities where youth are linked with a work-related mentor through formal or informal programs.

- ◆ Look for opportunities to introduce youth to successfully employed adults with similar interests, life experiences, or disabilities.
- ◆ Participate in development of the youth's Summary of Performance (SOP) within their IEP. Make sure the SOP includes career and work-based learning preparatory experiences needed for the youth to be college and career ready as well as recommendations for support beyond high school.

What families can do to advocate for improved career preparation programs

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Work with school personnel to promote meaningful career preparation and work-based learning programs. Programs should link to students' courses of study and include activities such as site visits, job-shadowing opportunities, and employer site visit tours. They may also include internship programs and young entrepreneur projects to help them learn about a range of employment options and career pathways.
- ◆ Encourage personalized career development—career planning aligned with each youth's individual career interests, goals, skills, abilities, strengths, and postsecondary plans. If not currently required by the

school or state, advocate for ILPs for all youth so that all students have the opportunity to plan an educational program leading to a career of their choice.

- ◆ Encourage your school to work in partnership with employers and community agencies to provide students with year-round, hands-on work experience opportunities. A goal of these partnerships is for students to apply and strengthen entry-level and technical job skills. For example, in High School/High Tech programs, business-related partnerships provide opportunities for youth with disabilities to explore careers in science, math, and technology.
- ◆ Advocate for school practices that match students with work-related mentors in careers of their interest.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Advocate for school activities that help youth learn about employment rights, including rights for workers with disabilities. Discuss protections and reasonable accommodations that could help them in the workplace as well as when and how to disclose their disabilities in a work setting. Activities should also allow youth to practice asking an employer for a job accommodation. Make sure

that teachers and guidance counselors know about the Job Accommodation Network (www.askjan.org).

- ◆ See that benefits planning and asset development are included in their youth's transition plan, including how benefits may be used to promote self-employment. With careful planning, individuals with disabilities are able to earn an income and retain needed medical benefits.

Families will find more information on these topics in the **Glossary** and from the websites and organizations listed in the **Resources** section of this guide.

Youth Development & Leadership

Youth development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them gain skills and competencies. Youth leadership is part of that process. In order to control and direct their own lives based on informed decisions, all youth need the following:

- ▶ mentoring activities designed to establish strong relationships with adults through formal and informal settings;
- ▶ peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities;
- ▶ exposure to role models in a variety of contexts;
- ▶ training in skills such as self-advocacy and conflict resolution;
- ▶ exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities, including community service; and
- ▶ opportunities that allow youth to exercise leadership and build self-esteem.

Youth with disabilities also need the following:

- ▶ mentors and role models, including persons with and without disabilities; and
- ▶ an understanding of disability history, culture, and disability public policy issues as well as their rights and responsibilities.

SECTION SUMMARY: Families promote youth development and leadership when they encourage their young adults to participate in activities in their school and community. Activities help young people develop stronger relationships with peers and form connections to caring adults outside of their own families. These positive relationships support youth to develop attitudes, beliefs, and responsible behaviors that will serve them well into adulthood.

At home, families help youth build resiliency and self-determination. Families also help youth develop self-advocacy skills and the ability to maintain their physical and mental health.

This section presents information on individualized planning, a process that promotes self-determination and the achievement of long-term goals. This section also provides tips for parents on how to encourage youth development and leadership of young people with and without disabilities.

Youth development and youth leadership are two related but distinct approaches to personal development for adolescent youth. Youth development consists of the processes that prepare young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them gain skills and competencies (NCWD/Youth, 2005). As described in the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth's "Personal Competencies for College and Career Success: What Colleges Can Do," youth leadership is a component of youth development leading to: (1) the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence their opinion and behavior, and show the way by going in advance, and (2) the ability to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses and set academic, vocational, and personal goals with the drive to accomplish them. Youth development and leadership opportunities aim to develop skills and competencies that enable young people to

build their identities and navigate the world around them.

Youth who participate in youth development and youth leadership experiences are more likely to do well in school, engage with their community, and transition positively through adolescence into adulthood. For many youth, these skills and competencies are developed during structured extracurricular activities such as after-school clubs or formal mentoring programs (such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, 4H, or Junior Achievement). Community service experiences sponsored by religious communities or other volunteer organizations, organized sports, art programs, or summer programs can also help youth develop skills and leadership abilities. Youth development experiences have been linked with decreases in destructive youth behaviors such as violence, alcohol use, and substance abuse. They are also connected with positive attitudes, and positive health decisions and improved motivation, academic performance, self-esteem, problem solving, and interpersonal skills. Participation in leadership development experiences also helps

youth develop skills needed for success in the workplace, such as decision-making and working well with others.

Family involvement has a powerful effect on youth development. For instance, research indicates that a high level of perceived autonomy support from families is correlated with a higher level of subjective well-being among youth (Ratelle, Simard, & Guay, 2013).

Supporting youth development can become a balancing act for families. On one hand, family members hope to help youth develop skills they need to become adults. On the other hand, youth strive to establish their independence from their parents and build relationships outside of the family. Families need to discover how to assist youth to independently engage in community activities, explore and reach decisions about future career paths, and to manage their own health care, finances, and day-to-day schedules. A great challenge of this period for parents is encouraging self-determination and independence by being supportive rather than over-protective.

Individualized planning exists in many forms and can help families to assist youth with understanding their roles and responsibilities for the future. These processes focus on an individual's strengths, skills, and interests; identify their personal goals, as well as the steps needed to achieve those goals; and assign responsibilities. A specific individualized planning approach called person-centered planning is often used to assist individuals with disabilities to plan for their future by focusing on identifying the individual's comprehensive set of goals, and then

aligning various tools, services, and supports to support them systematically.

Individualized planning is a strategy that has been used in special education and social service settings for a number of years. Students with disabilities, for example, are required to have an IEP and develop an SOP before they leave school. However, individual goal-setting plans can be helpful for any student. ILPs and other career planning tools, for example, also use a person-centered approach. Both IEPs and ILPs can include specific youth development and leadership goals. Leadership assessments, like "Am I Learning to Lead?" ([www.nclid-youth.info/Downloads/Am I Learning to Lead Self Assmt Youth.pdf](http://www.nclid-youth.info/Downloads/Am_I_Learning_to_Lead_Self_Assmt_Youth.pdf)) can be used to help youth and their families determine what needs to be done in order for the youth to reach their goals.

Outside of school, families and youth can engage in individualized planning through online tools and assistance from the community's American Job Centers (AJCs).

Mentoring activities are another enriching—and often underutilized—opportunity for youth to gain access to valuable resources, advice, and encouragement to build self-determination and develop career readiness skills. Research indicates that in addition to support from parents and teachers, the presence of at least one supportive and caring adult can have a significant positive impact on youth development (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011).

These adult mentors can come from existing networks, such as extended family, neighbors, nearby universities, workplaces, or communities of faith. In most neigh-

borhoods, individuals can also find reliable, formal mentoring programs that pair youth with a dedicated adult mentor who shares similar interests with the mentee. There are also group mentoring programs that match one or more adults with a number of youth who meet in a structured setting as well as work-based mentoring programs that bring students together with employees from a local business.

Peer mentoring programs, which match individuals with slightly older youth role models, have also benefited many youth. Peer mentors help mentees with school work, study skills, attendance or behavior, peer pressure, and other challenges. Many of these programs are appealing to youth because they arrange social events for participants. For students new to postsecondary settings, older peers can help mentees adjust to college life by assisting with time management, study skills, and test preparation.

For youth with disabilities, these opportunities for personal development and leadership development are especially critical. Building self-determination and leadership skills includes learning about disability history, the disability civil rights movement, and disability public policy and civil rights protections. This knowledge can help youth advocate for their rights and the rights of others to participate meaningfully in the workplace and in the community.

Youth with disabilities also tend to have less exposure to extracurricular opportunities at school or in the community. Youth may have been discouraged from participating by individuals who underestimate their abilities, or may need accessible transportation or oth-

er accommodations that require advanced planning and individualized supports. When youth do participate, they may encounter staff who are unwilling or unfamiliar with how to offer accommodations and make programs more inclusive.

In addition to the youth development and leadership opportunities that can be explored during a youth's time in school, many post-school disability programs require individualized plans. These plans are needed for the transition to employment, further education, and independent living. For example, an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is required for individuals with disabilities served in the federally funded state vocational rehabilitation system (VR). Likewise, additional Individualized Service Plans (ISP) or care plans may be required by other agencies serving individuals with disabilities, such as government-funded programs providing supports to people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and state Medicaid waiver programs that provide home- and community-based services to people with significant disabilities. Youth who receive supports from more than one agency will have more than one plan, as each outlines the services that agency will provide to help him or her reach specific goals.

How families can become fully informed about youth development and leadership opportunities

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Learn about mentoring activities available in your school and community. Consider adult mentoring, group mentoring, and peer mentoring through organized programs such as clubs, sports, scouting, and community service projects.
- ◆ Ask schools and local organizations about activities you can do at home to foster youth leadership skills. Find out how families can collaborate with schools and community organizations to provide leadership opportunities.
- ◆ Learn about nearby programs that offer financial literacy programs for youth by checking online or with the school district, community center, American Job Center (AJC), university extension program, or bank or credit union.
- ◆ Learn how to support youth in developing self-advocacy, conflict and dispute resolution and, time management skills.
- ◆ Learn about the youth's interests and research youth development opportunities directly connected to those interests.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ▶ Develop an understanding of your youth's disability and how it affects them. Effects may be physical, emotional, or social. A disability may also impact daily life, learning, or employment. Help youth learn to advocate for supports, accommodations, and services.
- ▶ Learn about disability rights protections under various federal and state laws. Laws that families should learn about include the ADA, IDEA, Rehabilitation Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Air Carriers Access Act, and Fair Housing Act.
- ▶ Learn about the youth programs and other activities available at Centers for Independent Living or other self-advocacy organizations for people with disabilities. Also consider disability-specific organizations, such as the local American Heart Association.
- ▶ Learn about Youth Leadership Forums, Disability Mentoring Day, and other disability-related leadership development, mentoring, and inclusive development programs.
- ◆ Connect with other families of youth with disabilities in your home community or through virtual communities, such as blogs or social media, and learn what they

are doing to support their youth's development.

How families can support youth in developing leadership and personal skills

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Have high expectations that your youth will achieve independence and self-sufficiency. Support them in exercising increasing responsibility for decision-making and reasonable risk-taking.
- ◆ Talk with your youth to help them define their vision for their adult life. Work with youth to incorporate their preferences into an ILP (if required by the school) or individualized career development plan if the youth's school has not adopted ILPs. A number of career planning tools are available online. For example, young adult job seekers can match their interests and strengths to occupations by taking the Interest Profiler available on the O*NET (Occupational Information Network) Website, www.onetonline.org. Other assessments and planning tools may be available at most communities' American Job Center.
- ◆ Encourage youth to participate in clubs such as 4-H, scouting troops, and faith-based organizations led by adult and peer mentors. These relationships can foster mature responses to life's challenges and

encourage youth to take ownership of their life choices.

- ◆ Introduce your youth to trusted adults with similar interests, life experiences, or characteristics who may become friends, role models, or informal mentors.
- ◆ Collaborate with school and community supports to determine your youth's self-determination and leadership strengths and needs.
- ◆ Encourage youth to participate in a peer group activities or community service. Both provide an opportunity for your youth to contribute to the community, and learn tolerance, conflict resolution, and leadership skills while building social relationships.
- ◆ Respect youth's need for privacy. Provide opportunities both for solitude and for privacy with peers.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Support youth in developing an understanding of their disability and in talking about it comfortably. Provide opportunities for the youth to talk openly about their disability at home, at school, and with other young adults with and without disabilities in the community. Discuss how having the disability may affect his or her education, employment, and daily life.
- ◆ Hold youth with disabilities accountable to expectations similar to those set for siblings and peers

without disabilities. For instance, give the youth chores similar to those of the other young people in the household.

- ◆ Encourage participation in school and community-based activities that will foster development of age-appropriate social skills and responsibility. Coach your youth in self-advocating for any supports and accommodations needed. Furthermore, see that participation in extracurricular activities related to the youth's postsecondary goals is included in their transition plan and IEP.
- ◆ Coach youth in taking an active and growing role in developing and amending his or her IEP and transition plan. Support youth in participating in the development of the Summary of Performance (SOP). Make sure the school has included recommendations for appropriate accommodations and support beyond high school.
- ◆ Support youth to practice leadership skills by mentoring younger students with disabilities. Encourage opportunities for youth to speak publicly about how they have addressed issues related to their disability.
- ◆ Support your youth's active leadership in defining their ILP activities, if one is required by the school.
- ◆ Introduce youth to Centers for Independent Living, disability

self-advocacy organizations, and successful adults with disabilities who could serve as mentors and role models.

- ◆ Families of youth with disabilities who require supports from multiple adult agencies may find it helpful to invite representatives from each agency to join their youth in developing an overarching person-centered plan.
- ◆ Help youth look into programs such as Youth Leadership Forums (YLF), which are statewide week-long leadership training programs for high schools students with disabilities. Additionally, every October, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) runs Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) in which numerous national and local business establishments provide job shadowing and day-long mentoring opportunities for youth with disabilities.
- ◆ Assist youth in learning about disability history and culture as well as rights and responsibilities under disability-related laws and public policy issues.

What families can do to advocate for improvements in youth leadership and development programming

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Partner with the school and community organizations to encourage youth development and

youth leadership opportunities. Use your personal and professional connections to expand the opportunities currently available.

- ◆ Serve on committees and work with local leaders to engage youth in civic and community service activities.
- ◆ Encourage meaningful roles for youth on policy-making boards.
- ◆ Action Recommendations for families of youth with disabilities:
- ◆ Work with educators and community organizations to support all youth in transition. Ask them to provide opportunities for young adults to learn how to advocate for and access appropriate accommodations in postsecondary education settings and workplaces.
- ◆ Request that schools establish procedures to support young adults

in playing an increasingly active role in their transition planning, including preparing to lead their IEP meeting to build self-determination skills.

- ◆ Advocate for formalized communitywide and statewide peer, group, and adult mentoring programs, (such as career-focused mentoring), as well as leadership development programs.
- ◆ Advocate locally and statewide for including disability history, disability civil rights, and disability public policy in school curriculum.

Families will find more information on these topics in the ***Glossary*** and from the websites and organizations listed in the ***Resources*** section of this guide.

Connecting Activities

Young people need to be connected to programs, services, activities, and supports that help them gain access to chosen post-school options. All youth may need one or more of the following:

- ▶ mental and physical health services;
- ▶ transportation;
- ▶ housing;
- ▶ tutoring;
- ▶ financial planning and management;
- ▶ post-program supports through structured arrangements in postsecondary institutions and adult service agencies; and
- ▶ connection to other services and opportunities (e.g. recreation).

Youth with disabilities may need one or more of the following:

- ▶ acquisition of appropriate assistive technologies;
- ▶ community orientation and mobility/travel training (e.g. accessible transportation, bus routes, housing, health clinics);
- ▶ exposure to post-program supports such as independent living centers and other consumer-driven community-based support service agencies;
- ▶ personal assistance services, including attendants, readers, interpreters, or other such services; and
- ▶ benefits planning counseling, including information regarding the myriad of benefits available and their interrelationships so that youth may maximize those benefits in transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency.

SECTION SUMMARY: Families can link youth to support services outside of the secondary education system that contribute to their education and employment success. Many youth require assistance and support from public and private organizations after they leave high school. Important services for transitioning young adults include health care providers, financial institutions, housing, employment services, recreation programs, and transportation. For youth with disabilities, additional connections may need to be made to state vocational rehabilitation agencies, independent living centers, assistive technology programs, personal assistance services, benefits counseling, and social security programs. Cultivating informal natural supports in the community is equally important. Families may work with professionals to unite formal and informal systems of support. This section provides tips for parents on how they may access key services and cultivate informal networks of support that benefit youth with and without disabilities.

As youth prepare to leave the familiar structure of the K-12 education system, families, schools, and community organizations all play a role in connecting youth to the formal and informal supports and services that they may need to succeed in adulthood. Depending on the youth, this may include tutoring, mental and physical health services, assistance with accessing housing, assistive technology and transportation, higher education, employment services, financial planning and management, and recreation opportunities.

Linkages to services beyond the secondary education system lead to greater education and employment success of youth. However, connecting youth to new resources can be challenging for families. Young adults ages 18 and over are considered adults in our society and must give written permission for agencies to share information with their parents or actively involve family members in discussions and planning.

According to research conducted by the MacArthur Network on Transitions to Adulthood at the University of Pennsylvania, the transition period from childhood to adult-

hood is longer for today's youth than for any previous generation and may extend well into their mid-twenties. This is because of a "complex combination of factors, from changes in the job market, to greater demands for education, changing ideas on marriage and childbearing, changing expectations of youth and their parents, and the changing demographics of young adults" (Berlin, Furstenberg, & Waters, 2010).

A number of developmental problems may also emerge during the transition years. According to the Office of Adolescent Health (2017), one in five adolescents has had a serious mental health disorder at some point in their life—most commonly depression and anxiety. In addition, youth may deal with many other problems such as bullying, irresponsible sexual activity or abuse, suicidal tendencies, cutting, teenage parenthood, and substance abuse.

Some psychologists have proposed a new developmental period of "emerging adulthood" to describe the years when young people in their late teens through their twenties are no longer adolescents but not

yet adults. Our social institutions are generally not set up to meet the common developmental needs of young people in this specific age range. Collaboration among public and private programs, community organizations, and families and informal supports may be needed to help young adults who need continued support to meet their future goals. In addition, the networking, mentoring, and individualized planning strategies discussed in the previous chapter on Guidepost 3 may be used to help connect youth to needed supports.

Additional education or training beyond high school is essential to survive in today's global economy, as many occupations now require a bachelor's or graduate degree. As young people are planning for their futures, they need to learn about the opportunities that college or other forms of postsecondary and life-long education can afford them. They need to explore a range of postsecondary education possibilities by visiting college campuses and occupational training programs and learning about financial aid options (e.g., state and federal grants, work study, loans, private funders, etc.). They also need to ensure that their high school courses prepare them for entry into their chosen postsecondary pathway. High school guidance counselors can be very helpful in plotting the college exploration process. Family is likely to be the most influential through ongoing encouragement, discussions, enforcement of critical application deadlines, and organizing campus tours. For anyone choosing to pursue a college education, it is important to choose a course of study, know how to finance the entire education, and sort out living and self-sufficiency issues while in

college. Once accepted to a higher education institution and prior to the first day of instruction, it is helpful to visit the campus to learn where classes and important program offices (e.g., financial aid, career center, library, health center, etc.) are located, secure necessary documentation (e.g., e-mail address, student identification card, parking pass, meal coupons, etc.), and acquire textbooks and other necessary instructional materials. College can be very intimidating; often it is helpful for a family member to accompany the youth on such initial campus visits.

Health care is another significant issue for transition-age youth. Youth need to have access to health care, understand how to transition from the pediatric to adult systems of care, live healthy lifestyles, and navigate the complex world of health care finance.

The Affordable Care Act allows young adults to remain on a parent's health plan up to age 26. Since the health law passed in 2010, the uninsurance rate among young people between ages 19 and 25 has fallen by more than 50%, according to the Centers For Medicare & Medicaid Services (2016). Still, young adults are more likely than other adults to be uninsured, with a notable drop in coverage at age 19 when low-income young adults are required to transition from the children's Medicaid system to the adult system.

Whether they are covered by health insurance or not, walk-in medical clinics can be very helpful to newly independent young adults. A quick stop to have a cough checked, receive a flu shot, or a referral to other services can be accomplished on the way to a job, class, or recreational event. Walk-in clinics

staffed by nurse practitioners are available at some of the nation's largest drug and retail stores including Wal-Mart, Target, CVS, Walgreens, and RiteAid. These clinics treat minor illnesses, perform examinations and offer preventive medicine such as vaccines for about \$50. Many postsecondary schools also offer similar walk-in health services for registered students. While walk-up and health clinics generally have limited services and are not the best choice for chronic or mental health issues, they do meet many needs. The reduced cost of retail settings makes them a viable option for routine care. Families can help youth access these services by checking for convenient locations at supermarkets and shopping centers and introducing youth to these services.

America's Job Centers (AJCs) provide services for individuals entering the workforce, changing jobs, and training for new careers. AJCs are the nation's largest publicly funded resource for anyone searching for career information or employment. They provide national, state, and local labor market information and a range of other resources and services at one location including job training, career counseling, local and national job database listings, skill assessments, job search assistance, and computer-based tools. AJCs also know about or offer youth development programs that can help eligible youth prepare for and find employment. To be eligible, youth must be low-income, in- or out-of-school, and aged 14-21 with one or more of the following barriers to employment: (1) deficient in basic literacy skills; (2) a school dropout; (3) homeless, a runaway, or in foster care; (4) pregnant or parenting; (5) an offender; or (6) an individual (including a

youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. In addition, up to 5% of youth participants can be served even if they do not meet the low-income criterion.

Some additional community organizations offering services that may be helpful to young adults include libraries, high school and college guidance and placement centers, and community centers. Community education and park programs often provide classes on a wide variety of topics such as crafts, financial management, computer software, while also offering team sports and other recreational activities.

College and university recreational facilities such as pools, bowling alleys, and astronomy labs are often open to the general public and may provide young people with opportunities to meet others and pursue areas of interest while maintaining their health and wellness at little-to-no cost. College and university guidance and placement centers are often overlooked as career resources for young adults. Whether the young person is a registered student or a campus visitor, these resources can usually be accessed through an informational appointment or by an informal visit. A young adult may have to be a graduate of the institution to take advantage of formal placement services and employment interviews scheduled with visiting companies, but there are usually a wide range of resources available on career and education options for the young person doing preliminary research.

Online resources such as city and community-sponsored websites provide information

on local resources and services. Employment and free classified advertising sites can also be helpful for young adults as they search for jobs, transportation, housing, and recreation. Youth may need encouragement and support to investigate community resources; while there are many options, programs may be small, run by a variety of organizations, and disconnected.

Libraries have many resources for young adults. Becoming familiar with these resources and services is beneficial for all ages but especially for young adults. Youth can research information on postsecondary schools, companies, scholarships, available jobs, employment trends, housing options, and a host of other topics. Computers and printers are usually available to the public for free or a minimal cost. Bulletin boards in libraries often advertise community and recreational events, clubs, informal classes, private tutoring, and health clinics. Postsecondary libraries are also generally available to the public, often at no charge or with a community usage fee. For young adults, becoming familiar with a college library is a good first step for transitioning to any postsecondary education facility. Feeling competent and at home in a library provides a unique advantage to freshman postsecondary students and may lessen the high risk of drop-out during the first semester.

Transportation is an essential resource for all youth to ensure that they can access education and employment settings as well as other services and opportunities in their communities. For some youth, securing transportation may involve completing training in order to obtain their own driver's

license, purchasing and insuring a vehicle, or arranging to borrow a vehicle from family. Other youth may be able to access to public transportation options depending upon what their community offers. Youth who need to use public transportation may require assistance with identifying and learning to navigate the transportation system, including finding and learning how to use accessible public transit. Some youth with disabilities may need travel training or orientation and mobility training. Travel training should include but not be limited to understanding what services are available in their community, finding accessible bus routes, and navigating the public transit systems. Local disability organizations, such as Centers for Independent Living and the National Federation of the Blind, can be a resource orientation and mobility training and travel training.

Learning financial responsibility is a particularly challenging journey for youth as well as their families, since it is not often taught in schools and can be a difficult subject for a family to teach. Fortunately, there are many tips and strategies families can use at home to help prepare youth to manage their own finances. For family members who are hesitant or do not feel qualified to teach their youth about money management, most credit unions, university extension programs, 4-H clubs, and other organizations such as Junior Achievement offer financial education classes.

For youth with disabilities, IDEA requires the school to connect youth with adult agencies that could potentially provide services as students are transitioning out of

high school. Depending on the individual's needs, the services available might include tuition assistance, resume development, work skills training, job placement, counseling and health care, transportation, housing assistance, financial planning, leisure or recreational activities, and assistive technology. Referral and connecting activities should occur in high school within the transition components of the IEP.

Federal and state coordinated programs

each have their own application and eligibility guidelines. Most of these governmental programs, such as state vocational rehabilitation services, developmental disabilities agencies, public mental health services, centers for independent living, and social security benefits, have legal requirements and specific eligibility guidelines, and most provide funding to agencies for specific services to particular populations. Families and youth need to know what questions to ask as they are determining support options for their youth's pending adulthood. It is critical that referral and application procedures are completed well before graduation to ensure that youth are provided the services they are deemed eligible for before they leave high school and not placed on a waiting list. The student's SOP can also be useful in linking the youth with appropriate services after graduation from high school.

Differences between special education entitlement system and adult eligibility service systems

are significant. IDEA requires that schools identify students with disabilities and provide appropriate individualized services. There is no similar entitlement to services provided by the various systems

servicing adults. Each program has different eligibility requirements and young adults may not qualify for all the services they received as a special education student. Due to limited agency resources, they may also find they are placed on a long waiting list before they receive services. Unlike the special education system, there is no coordinator responsible for convening a multi-disciplinary team or coordinating services of adult agencies. Young adults and their families who need formal supports may find themselves working with a number of case managers and agencies, each with their own eligibility requirements and service plan. Although service coordination is sometimes provided by organizations, for the most part families and the young adults themselves must be prepared to carry out this role.

Families have a broad perspective of the needs of their youth, not limited by boundaries of professional expertise, the requirements of service systems, or age-defined eligibility constraints. However, families can be limited by their knowledge and experience and are often overwhelmed by the confusing array of services and eligibility or service limitations. The parent information and training centers in each state are a valuable resource for families as they learn to navigate these adult service systems.

For students whose disabilities make employment goals especially challenging and for those who will need more intensive supports or creative approaches to job development, it is often helpful to involve a vocational rehabilitation counselor as early as possible. If a student qualifies for services from the state vocational rehabilitation agency, a VR coun-

selor can help clarify that agency's role in the student's future.* VR counselors specialize in assisting adults who have disabilities. They are knowledgeable in a wide range of topics that are often outside the expertise of most families as they learn to navigate these adult service systems. In many states the VR counselor meets the young adult and his or her family at an IEP meeting during their junior or senior year of high school. Parents or individuals with disabilities can also arrange for a meeting separate from the school system. There are no age restrictions on services and students should become connected to VR prior to departing school.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are nonresidential, private, nonprofit corporations that provide services to individuals with significant disabilities to assist them to function more independently in family and community settings. Authorized for funding in the Rehabilitation Act, several CILs exist in every state. Core services provided by CILs include advocacy assistance, independent living skills training, information and referrals, and peer counseling. Some CILs offer services at no cost, while others have fee-for-service or third party payers, such as VR or other state agencies. Centers also work with local communities to remove barriers to independence and provide advocacy on a wide

range of disability issues such as ensuring physical and programmatic access to housing, employment, transportation, communities, recreational facilities, and health and social services. Many offer programs specifically designed to help transition-age youth with disabilities build the skills they will need to be successful adults. CIL transition programs aimed at youth may include volunteer opportunities, leadership skills building and mentoring programs, classes for youth to learn functional living skills such as cooking or self-advocacy and decision-making, and recreational and social events. Information on CIL locations can be found at www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory.

In order to live independently in their communities, youth with significant disabilities may need **personal assistance services** (e.g., interpreter, reader, personal care assistant). Some state agencies may be helpful in providing those supports such as the Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) agency, VR, and Medicaid or Health Services. The Developmental Disabilities Act authorizes services and supports to help people with I/DD live in their communities as independently as possible. I/DD programs are constructed somewhat differently in every state. Community-based organizations in-

* Not all special education students are eligible for VR services. To be eligible for VR services, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment; be able to benefit from VR services in terms of employment; and require services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment. Because of limited funding, not even all individuals who meet these basic eligibility requirements are able to receive VR services. State VR agencies are required to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities first. Individuals who are eligible for VR services but have less significant disabilities, are put on a waiting list or not served at all. Each state has its own criteria to determine which individuals are served first. This is called the state's "order of selection."

cluding Centers for Independent Living and Deaf or Blind organizations, may also be able to assist with identifying and obtaining personal assistance services

Social Security Administration (SSA) can assist youth and adults who are not able to work once they turn 18. Social Security programs provide a very limited amount of financial assistance as well as health care coverage to individuals with disabilities who meet stringent eligibility requirements. SSA's two main benefit programs for adults with disabilities are Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). SSA also offers a "Ticket to Work" program to help adults who receive SSI or SSDI, including transition-age young adults, obtain rehabilitation and employment services to help them make a gradual transition to employment and financial self-sufficiency without losing their benefits in the process.

SSI provides monthly benefits to individuals with disabilities who have limited income and few financial assets or resources. Eligible individuals receive a monthly check to meet very basic needs for food and shelter and gain access to services such as food stamps and Medicaid (the name varies in some states). Medicaid covers all of the approved health care expenses of the individuals receiving SSI. Even if people have never worked or paid Social Security taxes, they may be eligible for SSI.

Although youth under the age of 18 may have qualified for SSI benefits as children, when they turn 18, SSA will again determine eligibility. If a youth becomes ineligible for SSI as a result of this process, he or she will

also lose Medicaid coverage. The majority of young people who receive SSI benefits as minors remain eligible for SSI benefits as adults. However, an estimated 25% to 30% of these young adults with disabilities are found not to be eligible. If SSA determines that a young adult is ineligible for SSI during the age 18 redetermination process, families have the right to appeal.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) pays benefits to a person who has a disability if the person worked and paid Social Security taxes for a certain period of time. Individuals with disabilities who receive SSDI receive Medicare coverage to help pay for hospital and doctor bills. Medicare coverage will go into effect after an individual has received SSDI benefits for at least 24 months. Medicare pays roughly 80% of reasonable health care expenses.

Students who qualify to receive SSI benefits may also use the SSI program's work incentives. Work incentives allow students to have paid work experience during and after high school. SSI work incentives available to transition-aged students include Earned and Unearned Income Disregards, Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE), Impairment-Related Work Expense (IRWE), Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS), Blind Work Expense (BWE), and Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS). Additionally, students receiving SSI can participate in AmeriCorps and receive a small stipend. AmeriCorps is a national network of service programs that engages Americans to meet the nation's needs in priority areas like disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families.

AmeriCorps service members can have a valuable work-based learning experience and become more familiar with community-based supports in their area.

These incentives can be helpful in designing community-based, paid employment transition programs for students without decreasing the cash assistance benefits provided by the SSI program. SSI work incentives can be built into a youth's transition IEP plan to help him or her gain meaningful employment. However, these work incentives can be complicated, and families are advised to locate a benefits planner to ensure an understanding of the way work incentives can best help youth achieve their goals.

It is important that youth who access these income support programs learn how to use them as a tool to achieve their educational, career, and independent living goals; in other words, SSI or SSDI should be viewed as a means to an end, not an end in itself. In 2017, the average monthly SSDI benefit was around \$1,100 per month, which is just above the federal poverty level for an individual. With the right professional guidance, families play a critical role in helping their youth learn how the income supports can assist them in achieving their goals and dreams.

Community-based mental health services are available for children and youth with severe emotional and behavioral disorders in their homes, schools, and communities. This wrap-around or holistic approach requires that a program effectively collaborate and network with multiple agencies and institutions. In the wraparound model, case managers coordinate the provision of services from

multiple service providers and involve families in a participatory process of developing an individualized plan focusing on youth and family strengths in multiple life domains. The wraparound process can eliminate barriers to service delivery while strengthening and supporting families. As services vary from state to state and often among counties, the local social services department should be contacted for information. It may also be helpful to connect with local self-help and peer support and advocacy organizations such as those affiliated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Mental Health America (MHA).

There are young adults with all categories of disabilities living and working in their communities, going to school, benefitting from job training, owning their own homes, volunteering, and engaging in social events and recreation. Some young adults attend regular postsecondary programs while others participate in long-distance learning opportunities from their own homes. Some young adults will request workplace accommodations or make use of technology such as Bluetooth communication. Others will develop natural supports and reciprocal relationships such as being picked up for work by a co-worker (natural supports) or helping a neighbor carry grocery bags in exchange for transportation to the store (reciprocal). Some will follow traditional paths similar to their parents and siblings and others will create new independent living options. Parents may feel there is a risk in allowing their son or daughter to develop new relationships and friendships, but building natural and re-

ciprocal relationships in their community is an important first step for all young adults.

The **disability services office** on campus is an important resource where families and youth can learn about the disability campus culture and the kinds of accommodations the youth might need. In order to receive accommodations in college, youths must have an up-to-date assessment and be determined eligible based on their disability. It is important to know that the scope of accommodations typically provided in postsecondary settings is frequently more narrow than what is available in secondary settings.

How families can become fully informed about connections for their youth

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Learn about public and private agencies and organizations that provide employment preparation, job search, and placement services. Search out local AJCs and youth employment service organizations.
- ◆ If the youth is covered on a family medical insurance plan, learn whether their coverage will end when they are no longer a full-time student or over the age of 26. Investigate any provisions for continued coverage after high school and options available through public assistance programs.
- ◆ Become knowledgeable about signs of youth needing extra supports (e.g., substance abuse, bullying,

sexual irresponsibility or abuse, and teenage mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, etc.).

- ◆ Learn about community resources to address other youth transition needs such as housing, transportation, recreation, additional educational opportunities, etc.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Investigate state guidelines for the Summary of Performance (SOP) and learn ways that the SOP can be used to speed up the determination of eligibility with adult service providers, including colleges and universities, adult service agencies, and employers.
- ◆ Find out about the state vocational rehabilitation agency. Services may include providing tuition assistance, conducting disability determinations and career interest and aptitude assessments, and providing assistive technology and other accommodations. The agency may provide supports for postsecondary education, independent living, job placement, the workplace, and follow-up. Learn about the application procedures and eligibility requirements, including guidelines for "order of selection." While youth may not qualify for any or all of the possible services, the local vocational rehabilitation office also provides

referral services to other agencies that may be appropriate.

- ◆ Investigate other adult service systems that may provide support to transitioning youth, such as I/DD, public mental health, and centers for independent living.
- ◆ Meet with a benefits planner to learn about available benefits. A benefits planner can also assist a young adult to understand how he or she can earn an income while transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency.
- ◆ Learn about the services of disability resource coordinators (DRCs), or similar positions where they exist, at the local AJCs and how they could support youth in finding a job.

How families can provide support to their youth in making connections

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Help youth understand how individualized planning tools can connect them to their community participation and independent living goals.
- ◆ Expose youth to transportation options, including how to use public transportation to travel to and from work, school, community events, and to visit friends and family.
- ◆ Help youth obtain a driver's license, learn to drive safely, and purchase

automobile insurance. If the youth has access to a vehicle, teach them to be responsible for it and to learn basic automobile maintenance.

- ◆ Ensure that young men register for selective service by age 18. Failure to do so will affect eligibility for government assistance, including financial aid for postsecondary education.
- ◆ Coach youth on how to budget money responsibly, arrange financing for post-school training or tuition, and use other financial planning services available from banks and community organizations.
- ◆ Talk about family finances with youth. Encourage them to participate in financial education programs for youth offered in the community and to check out resources available on the web sites of the Jump\$tart Coalition, Junior Achievement, or the National Endowment for Financial Education.
- ◆ Guide youth toward safe and affordable housing options during postsecondary education and training and when they are ready to leave home.
- ◆ Encourage youth to build a safety net of natural supports by developing relationships with family members, friends, and other supportive adults. Encourage them to develop mentoring relationships with supportive adults who have

experiences aligned with their future goals.

- ◆ Coach the youth in managing, directing, and financing their medical and personal care, making the transition from pediatric to adult care, finding and working with physical and mental health care professionals, and health care-related record-keeping.
- ◆ Support the youth in developing a healthy lifestyle that includes good nutrition, regular exercise, and a routine of preventative health care. This will enable them to maintain wellness and provide opportunities to practice making informed decisions as health problems arise.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Coach youth to participate with the IEP team in the development of their Summary of Performance (SOP). Assist youth to use the SOP to effectively to access services from adult provider systems, including higher education institutions, employment programs, vocational rehabilitation, etc.
- ◆ Assist youth in learning how to access independent living programs as well as other services, supports, and disability self-advocacy

organizations available to young adults with disabilities.

- ◆ Connect youth with benefits planners to assist them in understanding how disability income supports may help them achieve their goals, including receiving health care until they are fully covered by their employer. If they choose to receive Social Security benefits, instill in them the need to keep accurate records. Youth should use the benefits as a temporary tool and be careful about overpayments once they secure employment.
- ◆ Make sure that youth who need it receive appropriate evaluations for and secure assistive technology, both low technology and high technology.
- ◆ Educate youth about using and financing personal assistance services (e.g., personal care assistants, interpreters, readers, etc.). An effective strategy is to connect youth to peer mentors who can help them understand the intricacies of managing their PAS.
- ◆ If youth need adaptive tools to drive, encourage them to connect with businesses and organizations who can help them determine what kind of equipment they need and how to get it installed in their vehicles.

How families can advocate for systemic improvements

Action recommendations for families of ALL youth

- ◆ Encourage schools to work in partnership with community organizations to offer supplementary services within the curricular program. Schools can include extra-curricular and summer options that will familiarize all youth with adult services and supports available for them in the community.
- ◆ Advocate for coordinated school-community programs that connect youth with community-based learning experiences and with mentors. These connections can positively influence their future career and lifestyle choices and help them to be college and career ready upon graduation.
- ◆ Volunteer to testify before school, community, and state funding authorities about the need for services to support transition of youth with and without disabilities. Share family stories and the impact that these services have had or could have on your youth's success in school and adult life.
- ◆ Encourage collaboration among state and local agency leaders to consider interagency methods of cost-sharing to create more seamless systems of support and services.
- ◆ Serve on community agency advisory bodies (e.g., transportation, housing,

health, recreation, etc.) to better connect them with schools and vice versa.

- ◆ Tap into networks of political leaders, community organizations, and employers to engage in improving transition services and supports.
- ◆ Advocate for ongoing professional development for youth serving professionals across systems that impact transition-age youth.

Action recommendations for families of youth with disabilities

- ◆ Encourage school personnel to develop systemic procedures to provide families information about adult disability service agencies. Information should be provided on vocational rehabilitation, I/DD agencies, mental health service providers, centers for independent living, and assistive technology. Seek out and serve on the advisory/governing bodies of these programs.
- ◆ Partner with IEP team and community service personnel to explore emerging assistive technology as appropriate to meet the learning, working, or living needs of transitioning youth.
- ◆ Advocate for continued federal and state support for benefits planning, work incentive counselors, disability employment specialists, and similar professionals who assist youth and

adults to navigate the multiple systems. Encourage ongoing professional development for these specialists.

Families will find more information on these topics in the **Glossary** and from the websites and organizations listed in the **Resources** section of this guide.

Conclusion

The Family Guideposts: Engaging in Youth Transitions has been developed as a resource tool for families and youth programs—broadly defined—to assist transition-age youth, including those with disabilities, to make a smooth transition from school to additional education, work, and independent living. In addition to providing thought-provoking examples of how families can become informed, supportive and engaged in their youth's transition, *The Family Guideposts* also provides information that youth service professionals can use to empower, engage, and support families.



Glossary

Accommodations: Changes made in a classroom, work site, or other settings that assist people with disabilities to learn, work, or receive services. Accommodations are designed not to lower expectations for performance in school or work but to alleviate the effects of a disability.

Adult services: Services needed by people when they reach adulthood; these services often include (but are not limited to) assistance in finding a job, assistance in the home, assistance at work, and provision of various therapies or medications.

American Job Centers (AJCs): The nation's largest publicly funded resource for anyone searching for career information or employment. They provide national, state, and local labor market information and a range of other resources and services at one location including job training, career counseling, local and national job database listings, skill assessments, job search assistance,

and computer-based tools. AJCs also know about or offer youth development programs that can help eligible youth prepare for and find employment. To be eligible youth must be low-income, in- or out-of-school, and aged 14-21 with one or more of the following barriers to employment: (1) deficient in basic literacy skills; (2) a school dropout; (3) homeless, a runaway, or in foster care; (4) pregnant, or parenting; (5) an offender; or (6) an individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. In addition, up to 5% of youth participants can be served even if they do not meet the low-income criterion.

Articulation agreement: A formal arrangement between high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions in which current student courses are matched to degree requirements at another institu-

tion. Students use course articulation agreements to receive course credit at the institution to which they are transitioning.

Asset development: Assets are investments that appreciate over time. Examples are cash savings, investments, and retirement accounts, as well as material possessions such as a house, automobile, or small business. To be economically secure, families need both income and assets. Regular income helps families pay for daily living expenses. Assets help families weather financial hardships and prepare for the future by saving for retirement or investing in their children's education. Asset-development policies promote financial opportunity for all members of society and allow people to earn good incomes, save money, buy a home, start a business, and live securely in retirement.

Assistive technology: A device or service that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of an individual with a disability.

Autonomy: The ability and opportunity to operate independently.

Benefits planning: Helps people with disabilities who receive public benefits understand the impact work and other life choices will have on their benefits (such as Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Income, and Medicaid). Benefits planners based in social security offices or American Job Center are available in every state to help individuals with disabilities analyze and understand complex rules and procedures in order to plan how to prepare

for, obtain, regain, retain, and advance in employment.

Career assessment (formal and informal): Career assessment refers to a comprehensive process conducted over a period of time, involving a multi-disciplinary team with the purpose of identifying individual characteristics, education, training, and placement needs. Such assessments provide educators and others with the basis for planning an individual's school and career development program. Career assessment may use both formal and informal methodologies and should provide the individual with insight into his or her vocational potential (Leconte & Neubert, 1997).

Career preparation: Core activities that help youth become prepared for a successful future in careers or postsecondary education institutions including career awareness activities that expose young people to information about the job market, job related skills, the wide variety of jobs that exist and the education and training they require, as well as the work environment where they are performed. Core activities also include: 1) career assessments (formal and informal); 2) opportunity awareness including guest speaker informational interviews, research-based activities such as wage comparisons and Web searches, community mapping, and exposure to postsecondary education such as campus visits and college fairs; and 3) work-readiness skills such as soft-skills development, computer competency, and job search skills.

Career and Technical Education (CTE): CTE refers to a sequence of courses that provide individuals with rigorous academic content and relevant technical knowledge and skills

needed to prepare for further education and careers in current or emerging professions, which may include high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations. CTE provides technical skill proficiency or a recognized industry postsecondary credential, which may include an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or an associate degree. CTE may include prerequisite courses (other than a remedial course) that meet certain requirements. The term also includes competency-based, work-based, or other applied learning that supports the development of academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, employability skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills, and knowledge of all aspects of an industry, including entrepreneurship, of an individual (Perkins V: Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, Public Law 115-224).

Competitive employment: In general, competitive employment is a job where an individual is working for pay in an individual, community-based job where the individual is paid directly by the employer. An agency may use its own definition of “employment,” so the meaning may vary slightly across programs.

Differentiated instruction: Differentiated instruction is a way of teaching that responds to the needs of all learners by providing multiple options for learning new information and assessing progress.

Employment: Regular engagement in skilled or unskilled labor or service activities for payment.

Family: Adults and children related biologically, emotionally, or legally including single parents, blended families, unrelated individuals living cooperatively, and partnered couples who live with biological, adopted, and foster children.

Family involvement: The support for the social, emotional, physical, academic, and occupational growth of youth that is provided by parents and/or other family, either independently or in collaboration with professionals.

Functional-behavioral assessment: An approach that incorporates a variety of techniques and strategies to determine the causes of problem behaviors and identify interventions needed to address them.

Functional-life skills: Basic skills in the context of real world situations; the variety of skills that are frequently demanded in domestic, vocational, and community environments.

Individualized learning plan: A strategic planning tool intended to help all students identify and achieve college and career ready goals is required in many states and school districts. Referred to by different names in different states, an ILP outlines career development and exploration activities and helps students choose high school courses that will prepare them to reach their postsecondary goals.

Informed choice: The process by which an individual arrives at a decision. It is a pro-

cess that is based upon access to, and full understanding of, all necessary information from the individual's perspective. The process should result in a free and informed decision by the individual about what he or she needs.

Interpersonal skills: The ability to communicate with another individual or group on a social or professional basis. Level of aptitude is based on ease and comfort of all parties involved.

Intervention: Instructional strategies provided by specially trained personnel to provide students the additional instruction necessary to become proficient in the general education curriculum.

Late adolescence and young adulthood: A stage of human development from approximately age 16 to 24 when youth emerge from childhood and enter adulthood.

Mentee: A person who is guided by a mentor.

Mentor: A wise and trusted counselor, teacher, or other caring adult.

Mentoring programs: A trusting relationship, formalized into a program of structured activities, which brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. Types of mentoring include one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, peer mentoring, and e-mentoring. Typically in formal mentoring programs there will be an extensive matching process to ensure a strong relationship, and it is expected that the commitment will be for one year or lon-

ger. Informal mentoring relationships based on shared interests and personal affinity can be developed without the assistance or guidance from an organization.

Natural supports: Personal associations and relationships typically developed in the community that enhance the quality and security of life for people, including, but not limited to family relationships; friendships reflecting the diversity of the neighborhood and the community; association with fellow students or employees in regular classrooms and workplaces; and associations developed through participation in clubs, organizations, and other civic activities.

Person-Centered Planning: Planning processes that focus on an individual's needs and desires and promote self-determination. In transition, person-centered planning focuses on the interests, aptitudes, knowledge, and skills of an individual, not on his or her perceived deficits.

Personal Network: People an individual knows, with whom that individual interacts, who are willing to provide that individual with information, job recommendations, or other forms of support.

Positive behavioral interventions: A problem-solving approach to managing problem behaviors in the school setting that changes stimulus and reinforcement in such a way that problem behaviors are prevented or negligible and teaches students new skills, making problem behaviors unnecessary. Schools are required to conduct functional behavioral assessments and use positive behavior support with students who are identified as having a disability and are at risk for

expulsion, alternative school placement, or more than 10 days of suspension. Some prevention strategies are used on a school-wide basis with all students; other strategies are geared to students who do not respond to these initial strategies and are at risk for academic failure or behavior problems. A third set of prevention programs, called intensive or individualized interventions, focus on students who display persistent patterns of disciplinary problems.

Postsecondary: Term used to describe settings that follow high school (such as trade school, college, or employment).

Resiliency: The ability and wherewithal to recover from adverse situations through having learned how to avoid such situations in the future or how to maintain a positive mode of coping.

Self-determination: The right and ability of all persons to direct their own lives, as well as the responsibility to accept the consequences of their own choices. Some of the skills that make someone self-determined or a successful self-advocate are the following: knowledge of one's strengths and limitations; belief in one's ability to achieve goals; ability to start and complete tasks; ability to assert one's wants, needs, and concerns; and ability to make decisions and see other options.

Service learning: A method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual communi-

ty needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community.

Social networks: Often informal collections of employees or friends based on either demographic criteria (age, race/ethnicity, gender) or interest (employees who are carrying for aging parents).

Soft skills: The skills, traits, work habits, and attitudes that all workers across all occupations must have in order to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment. These include being dependable, responsible, punctual, adaptable, honest, honorable, well-mannered, positive toward work, and appropriately dressed/groomed. Soft skills also refer to such attributes as ability to get along with others, work in teams, attend to tasks, work independently, and provide excellent customer service, both within the company and externally.

Summary of Performance (SOP): As required by IDEA, schools must provide special education students who are due to graduate with a regular diploma, or exceed the age eligibility for a free appropriate public education under state law, with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance that includes recommendations on how to assist the youth in meeting his or her postsecondary goals.

Transition: In the context of the Guideposts for Success, transition refers to the period of time that begins when a young person starts planning the move from secondary school to postsecondary school, vocational training, the work world, or adulthood. Youth aged 14 to as high as 24 (depending on individual

factors and program definitions) can be considered “in transition.”

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): A framework for designing educational environments that help all students gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning. A universally designed curriculum supports all learners by simultaneously reducing barriers to the curriculum and providing rich support for learning (Rose & Meyer, 2002). In a classroom using a universally designed curriculum one might find books on tape, interactive software, magnifiers, or highlighted materials.

Vocational rehabilitation (VR): The process of assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain, regain, maintain, and advance in employment through diverse services tailored to meet the needs of eligible individuals. Each state has a public VR agency.

Work-based learning: A supervised program sponsored by an education or training organization that links knowledge gained at the worksite with a planned program of study. Experiences range in intensity, structure, and scope and include activities as diverse as site visits, job shadowing, paid and unpaid internships, structured on-the-job training, and the more formal work status as an apprentice or employee.

Wraparound services: Individualized, community-based mental health services for children and youth with severe emotional and behavioral disorders in their homes, schools, and communities. This wrap-around approach, sometimes described as serving participants “holistically,” requires that a program effectively collaborate and network

with multiple agencies and institutions. In the wraparound model, case managers coordinate the provision of services from multiple service providers and involve families in a participatory process of developing an individualized plan focusing on youth and family strengths in multiple life domains.

Youth development: A process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated series of activities that build on their capabilities and individual strengths and by addressing a full range of developmental needs.

Youth leadership: The ability of youth to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behavior of other people, analyze one’s own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, identify community resources, establish support networks, participate in community life, and affect positive social change.



Resources

Guidepost 1: School-Based Preparatory Experiences

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

www.cast.org

This website offers supports and information for individuals interested in innovative, technology-based resources and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness.pdf

School Connectedness is a resource that outlines six strategies for engaging students' families and educators working to increase protective factors for youth engagement in schools.

Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) Hub

www.parentcenterhub.org

This resource helps families find federally-funded parent centers that assist families of children and youth with disabilities with education issues in their state.

Center for Parent Information and Resources

www.parentcenterhub.org/inclusion

This website provides additional links and resources for parents to learn about promoting an inclusive education.

College Scorecard

<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>

College Scorecard is a tool for youth and families to find colleges that best suit their needs to help them make the most of their investment in higher education.

IEP & Transition Planning

www.ncset.org/topics/ieptransition/default.asp?topic=28

This resource from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) discusses strategies that support students, families, and professionals to participate in developing a student's IEP and transition plan.

Individualized Learning Plans

www.ncwd-youth.info/solutions/individualized-learning-plans

NCWD/Youth provides information on individualized learning plans (ILP), a tool that students in secondary school use – with support from school counselors and parents – to define their personal interests and goals related to their career and postsecondary education and to plan what courses to take and what activities to participate in during high school to further their interests and achieve their goals.

Individualized Learning Plans How-to Guide

www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/promoting-quality-individualized-learning-plans-throughout-the-lifespan-a-revised-and-updated-ilp-how-to-guide-2-0

NCWD/Youth's *Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans Throughout the Lifespan: A Revised and Updated ILP How to Guide 2.0*, is designed for schools, educators, and other professionals who assist youth with college and career readiness and transition planning.

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials

<http://aem.cast.org>

The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) provides support, resources, and technical assistance regarding the implementation of AEM in educational and workplace settings.

National Center for Education Statistics – The Nation's Report Card

www.nationsreportcard.gov

This website features state profiles that present key data about each state's testing history and results and links to the most recent state report cards. The site also provides links to each State's Department of Education website where you can find information on individual school and district report cards.

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth)

www.ncwd-youth.info

NCWD/Youth is a national technical assistance center which offers information about employment, education, and transition to adulthood for youth with and without disabilities. NCWD/Youth offers various briefs and other resources related to transition for families and professionals working with youth and families.

National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities

www.ndpc-sd.org/resources

The NDPC-SD website provides links to a variety of dropout prevention resources for parents as well as practitioners and state and local education agencies.

National Parent Teacher Association

www.pta.org

This website contains tools from the nation's largest volunteer child advocacy association that support parent and family efforts to help their children be successful students.

National School Climate Center

www.schoolclimate.org/services/measuring-school-climate-csci

The Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI) is an empirically validated school climate survey that has been used by thousands of educators, students, and

parents nationwide as a tool for school improvement.

National Service Learning Clearinghouse

<https://gsn.nylc.org/clearinghouse>

The National Service Learning Clearinghouse is a resource which may help youth and families explore service learning.

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)

www.transitionta.org

The NTACT website provides information on evidence-based and promising practices ensuring students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, graduate prepared for success in postsecondary education and employment. The website also includes contact information for transition professionals at each state department of education and links to other state transition resources and activities.

PACER Center

www.pacer.org

With an emphasis on parents helping parents, the PACER Center website provides information for parents on participating in the education of youth with and without disabilities as well as guidance related to vocational training employment, bullying prevention, and other services for children with disabilities.

ThinkCollege.net

www.thinkcollege.net

This website offers information and links for those interested in finding out more about postsecondary-education possibilities for youth with intellectual disabilities.

Understood

www.understood.org/en

This website offers personalized tips and tools for parents of young people with learning and attention issues.

U.S. Department of Education

www.ed.gov/parents

This website lists a variety of U.S. Department of Education resources for parents.

U.S. Department of Education - Part B State Performance Plans (SPP) Letters and Annual Performance Report (APR) Letters

www.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/partbspap/index.html#mn

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) posts its responses to the IDEA-related state performance plans and reports states submit to OSEP each year. Tables accompanying state determination letters provide information on a state's achievement in 20 areas. (Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14 specifically focus on outcomes for and services to transition-age youth with disabilities.)

U.S. Department of Education - State Contacts and Information

www.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html?src=gu

Find your state department of education, state contacts, and other state information using U.S. map or pull-down menus. Your state department of education website will have information on individual school and district report cards.

Guidepost 2: Career Preparation & Work-based Learning Experiences

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities

www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/the-411-on-disability-disclosure-a-workbook-for-youth-with-disabilities

This publication by NCWD/Youth was designed for youth and adults working with them to learn about disability disclosure.

Benefits Planning InfoBrief

www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/benefits-planning-for-youths-with-disabilities

This NCWD/Youth InfoBrief contains information on government programs and other resources youth and families may use to become more self-sufficient, productive participants in their communities.

Career One-Stop

www.careeronestop.org

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, this site provides current information about careers, education & training, salary & benefits, resumes & other resources.

Frequently Asked Questions on Career Guidance and Exploration

www.ncset.org/topics/career/faqs.asp?topic=1

This resource from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) provides answers to frequently asked questions about career activities in school.

High School/High Tech

www.ncwd-youth.info/solutions/transition-models/high-school-high-tech

This resource by NCWD/Youth contains information and a program guide for school-community partnerships that provide work-based learning opportunities for youth with disabilities in careers in math, science, and technology.

Innovative Strategies

www.ncwd-youth.info/innovative-strategies

NCWD/Youth's Innovative Strategies features workforce development programs and practices that serve youth with disabilities, either as a target population or as part of other youth populations, with the purpose of improving services to youth with disabilities throughout the workforce system by making available information on quality workforce development programs and practices.

NCWD/Youth's Innovative Strategies briefs include:

- ◆ *Using Career Interest Inventories to Inform Career Planning* – This brief provides practical examples and resources used by promising and exemplary youth programs to conduct career interest inventories with youth. www.ncwd-youth.info/innovativestrategy/using-career-interest-inventories-to-inform-career-planning
- ◆ *Engaging Youth in Work Experiences* – This brief provides practical examples and resources used by promising and exemplary youth programs to engage youth in work experiences. www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/engaging-youth-in-work-experiences-an-innovative-strategies-practice-brief
- ◆ *Career Exploration in Action* - This Innovative Strategies Practice Brief provides practical examples and resources used by promising and exemplary youth programs to engage youth in career exploration. www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/career-exploration-in-action-an-innovative-strategies-practice-brief

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

www.askjan.org

JAN provides free consulting services for individuals with physical or intellectual limitations that affect employment. Services include one-on-one consultation about job accommodation ideas, requesting and

negotiating accommodations, and rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related laws.

Jump\$tart Coalition for Financial Literacy

www.jumpstart.org

Jump\$tart is a coalition of organizations that share a commitment to the financial education of youth. Their website contains links to free online resources as well as other materials available for purchase.

Money Smart for Young Adults

www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/young.html

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) hosts a series called Money Smart for Young Adults, The Money Smart curriculum materials helps youth ages 12-20 learn the basics of handling their money and finances. The free curriculum is distributed on CD.

National Career Development Association (NCDA)

www.ncda.org

The NCDA website provides information on self-assessment, the career development process, occupational information, employment trends, military information, distance education, and more.

O*NET (The Occupational Information Network)

<http://online.onetcenter.org>

O*NET is a comprehensive source for occupational information; more than 900

occupations are described in detail with the profiles of skills, knowledge and abilities in demand.

Personal Assistance Services in the Workplace

www.askjan.org/media/PAS.html

This publication discusses personal assistance services in the workplace and providing answers to frequently asked questions, including their use as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act from the Job Accommodation Network.

The Road to Self-Sufficiency: Guide to Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities

www.ncwd-youth.info/road-to-self-sufficiency

This guide by NCWD/Youth promotes the benefits of entrepreneurship education and self-employment for all youth, including youth with disabilities.

Transition to Work Resources

www.worksupport.com/resources/listContent.cfm/27

This website provides links to a number of resources related to navigating the transition to work for young people with disabilities and their families from the Virginia Commonwealth University RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention.

Work-Based Learning and Future Employment for Youth: A Guide for Parents and Guardians

www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1222

This resource from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) explains and explores a variety of work-based learning program strategies and the benefits for youth with disabilities.

Youth at Work

<http://youth.eeoc.gov>

This website was created by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to help all youth learn what their rights are in the workplace, what constitutes employment discrimination, and what to do if discrimination has occurred.

YouthRules!

www.youthrules.dol.gov

This U.S. Department of Labor website is aimed at increasing awareness of Federal and state rules concerning young workers.

Guidepost 3: Youth Development & Leadership

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities

www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/the-411-on-disability-disclosure-a-workbook-for-youth-with-disabilities

This publication by NCWD/Youth was designed for youth and adults working with them to learn about disability disclosure.

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's Resources on Adolescent Development

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth
www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention

The CDC's websites on Adolescent and School Health and Violence Prevention are both useful source for information on adolescent health and wellness as well as risks and prevention strategies. The Adolescent and School Health site covers a range of health and wellness issues, including physical fitness and nutrition, sexual health and risks, alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse, injury and violence, suicide prevention, and more.

Facts for Families

www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/FFF-Guide-Home.aspx

This website offers concise and up-to-date information on issues that affect children, teenagers, and their families from the

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Forum for Youth Investment

www.forumfyi.org

This national nonprofit organization provides various publications on strategies for promoting youth development, youth leadership and civic engagement, and preparation for transition to adulthood.

Kids As Self Advocates

www.fvkasa.org

This resource is a portal created by youth with disabilities to educate society about issues concerning youth with disabilities and special health care needs.

National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD)

www.ncpad.org

This site provides information and resources that enable people with disabilities to become as physically active as they choose to be.

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth

<http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/>

This website, sponsored by the Family and Youth Services Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, aims to educate families and youth service providers about the research and effective practices that can improve the long-term social and emotional wellbeing of families and youth. NCFY's

resources include Introduction to Positive Youth Development online training modules available at: <http://ncfy-learn.jbsinternational.com/course/category.php?id=7> and podcasts (see <http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/tools/podcasts-multimedia>).

National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth

www.nclld-youth.info

The National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth (NCLD-Youth) offers youth-led resources, information, and training center for youth and emerging leaders with disabilities featuring resources on youth development and leadership.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC)

<https://gsn.nylc.org/clearinghouse>

NSLC supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade twelve, community-based organizations, tribal programs, and all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning.

National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN)

www.nyln.org

NYLN is a clearinghouse for resources focused on developing the next generation of disability leaders.

Parent Further

www.parentfurther.com

This website developed by the Search Institute offers research-based resources, tips, ideas, and strategies for raising smart, strong, responsible kids.

P.R.O. Filer Personal Portfolio & Filing System

www.ncset.org/publications/related/profiler/manual.pdf

This resource from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) is an innovative tool designed by students for students to organize important documents, keep records, and create a personal portfolio to showcase student accomplishments.

Self-Advocacy

www.selfadvocacy.org

Advocating for Change Together (ACT), a grassroots disability rights group developed this website to support youth with disabilities to practice self-advocacy in their life and work.

Supporting the Dynamic Development of Youth with Disabilities During Transition: A Guide for Families

www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1432

This resource from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) is a guide for families with useful

information about adolescent development.

Youth on Board

www.youthonboard.org

This website features links to resources for youth development to assist young people and adults to share decision making and engage in strategies that support youth voice in positive social change.

Youth.gov

www.youth.gov

This U.S. government website provides information on youth programs and services nationwide, youth facts, funding opportunities, and tools for assessing and mapping community assets and services relevant to youth.

YouthHood.Org

www.youthhood.org

This website is a resource that helps young people plan for their future.

Guidepost 4: Connecting Activities

Benefits.gov

www.benefits.gov

This easy-to-use portal helps youth and families identify ways to pay for additional education and training.

CareerOneStop

www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/service-locator.aspx

America's Service Locator assists users in locating the nearest American Job Center.

Developing Financial Capability Among Youth: How Families Can Help

www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/developing-financial-capability-among-youth-how-families-can-help

NCWD/Youth offers many resources for families including this brief that includes information on financial literacy.

Education Resources: Families with Teens

www.extension.umn.edu/family/families-with-teens

This website offers an information series for parents and caregivers of teens covering issues such as developing parenting skills, building the parent-teen relationship, facing tough issues, and preparing for the future.

Family Voices

www.familyvoices.org

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of family advocates with information on family-centered, comprehensive, and culturally competent health care services for children and youth with special health care needs.

Financial Aid for Individuals with Disabilities

www.heath.gwu.edu/2015-2016-planning-ahead-financial-aid-students-disabilities-0

This resource paper from the HEATH Resource Center at George Washington University discusses various financial aid options, particularly concerning disability-related expenses.

Independent Living Centers

www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory

The ILRU Directory of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Associations website provides a helpful directory for locating centers for independent living which are consumer controlled, community based, cross disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agencies designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities to provide an array of independent living services.

National Aging and Disability Transportation Center

www.nadtc.org

The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center is a clearinghouse offering over 90 free resources on transportation topics.

National Alliance on Mental Illness

www.nami.org

The National Alliance on Mental Illness is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons living with serious

mental illness and their families. NAMI organizations are found in every state and in over 1100 local communities across the country, and they work collaboratively on advocacy, research, support, and education. NAMI's quarterly magazine, *Beginnings*, and its guide, *Parents and Teachers as Allies*, are free to education professionals.

National Mental Health Association

www.nmha.org

The National Mental Health Association is the country's oldest and largest nonprofit organization addressing all aspects of mental health and mental illness. NMHA works to improve the mental health of all Americans, especially the 54 million people with mental disorders, through advocacy, education, research, and service. NMHA has more than 340 affiliates nationwide.

"Parental Roles and Active Lifestyles for Youth with Disabilities"

http://www.ncpad.org/wellness/fact_sheet.php?sheet=450&view=all&print=yes

This fact sheet provides information on parental roles in facilitating and supporting an active lifestyle for a child with a disability and was produced by the National Center on Physical Activity and Disabilities.

Service System Supports during the Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood: Parent Perspectives

http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1466&context=psych_cmhsr

This report from the National Association of Mental Health Program Directors offers parent input on supports from a number of adult and youth service systems, their helpfulness, and policy considerations.

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

<https://rsa.ed.gov/about-your-state.cfm>

This resource offers a way to find the nearest VR office to where you live.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://www.samhsa.gov>

SAMSHA focuses attention, programs, and funding on improving the lives of people with or at risk for mental and substance abuse disorders. Core priority areas include co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders, criminal justice, children and families, mental health system transformation, homelessness, and disaster readiness and response. Centers and services include the following:

- ◆ *Center for Substance Abuse Treatment*
www.samhsa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/offices-centers/csat
- ◆ *Center for Substance Abuse Prevention*

www.samhsa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/offices-centers/csap

- ◆ *Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator*
<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>
- ◆ *Peer Support and Social Inclusion*
www.samhsa.gov/recovery/peer-support-social-inclusion

Understanding the New Vision for Career Development: The Role of Family

www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/understanding-the-new-vision-for-career-development-the-role-of-family

This NCWD/Youth brief provides information for families about the three phases of career development: self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management.

U.S. Department of Education – Student Resources

www2.ed.gov/students/landing.jhtml

This website is a gateway to the resources of the Federal government that help youth plan for college, apply for Federal student financial aid, e-file their taxes, request a change of address, find a job, consolidate student loans, or register for selective service.

The Work Site

www.ssa.gov/work

This website was created by the Social Security Administration and contains information on the Ticket to Work program and work incentives.

Guidepost 5: Family Involvement and Supports

Beach Center on Disabilities

www.beachcenter.org

This website offers research-based and practical information focusing on the impact of policies and programs on families of youth with disabilities. The Center also develops training and support for practitioners serving families and their children with disabilities.

Center for Parent Information and Resources

www.parentcenterhub.org

This website provides a central repository of information and products for the network of Parent Centers serving families of children with disabilities. It also has a directory of contacts for parent training and information centers across the country.

Family & Community Engagement Network

www.iel.org/fce

The Institute for Educational Leadership's District Leaders Network on Family and Community Engagement (FCE) is a peer network that brings together district leaders

from across the nation and provides the most up-to-date resources, professional development, and best practices to ultimately improve student achievement.

Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (FFCMH)

www.ffcmh.org

FFCMH is a family-run organization focused on issues of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs and their families.

Making the Move to Managing Your Own Personal Assistance Services (PAS)

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/making-the-move-to-managing-your-own-personal-assistance-services-pas-a-toolkit-for-youth-with-disabilities-transitioning-to-adulthood>

NCWD/Youth offers many resources for youth and families, including this toolkit for youth to assist them to manage their own personal assistance services.

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)

www.ncset.org

This website features many resources written for and of interest to the families of youth with disabilities. NCSET was originally funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs.

PACER Center

www.pacer.org

With an emphasize on parents helping parents, the PACER Center website provides information for parents on participating in the education of youth with and without disabilities as well as guidance related to vocational training employment, bullying prevention, and other services for children with disabilities.

Parent Further

www.parentfurther.com

This website developed by the Search Institute offers research-based resources, tips, ideas, and strategies for raising smart, strong, responsible kids.

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