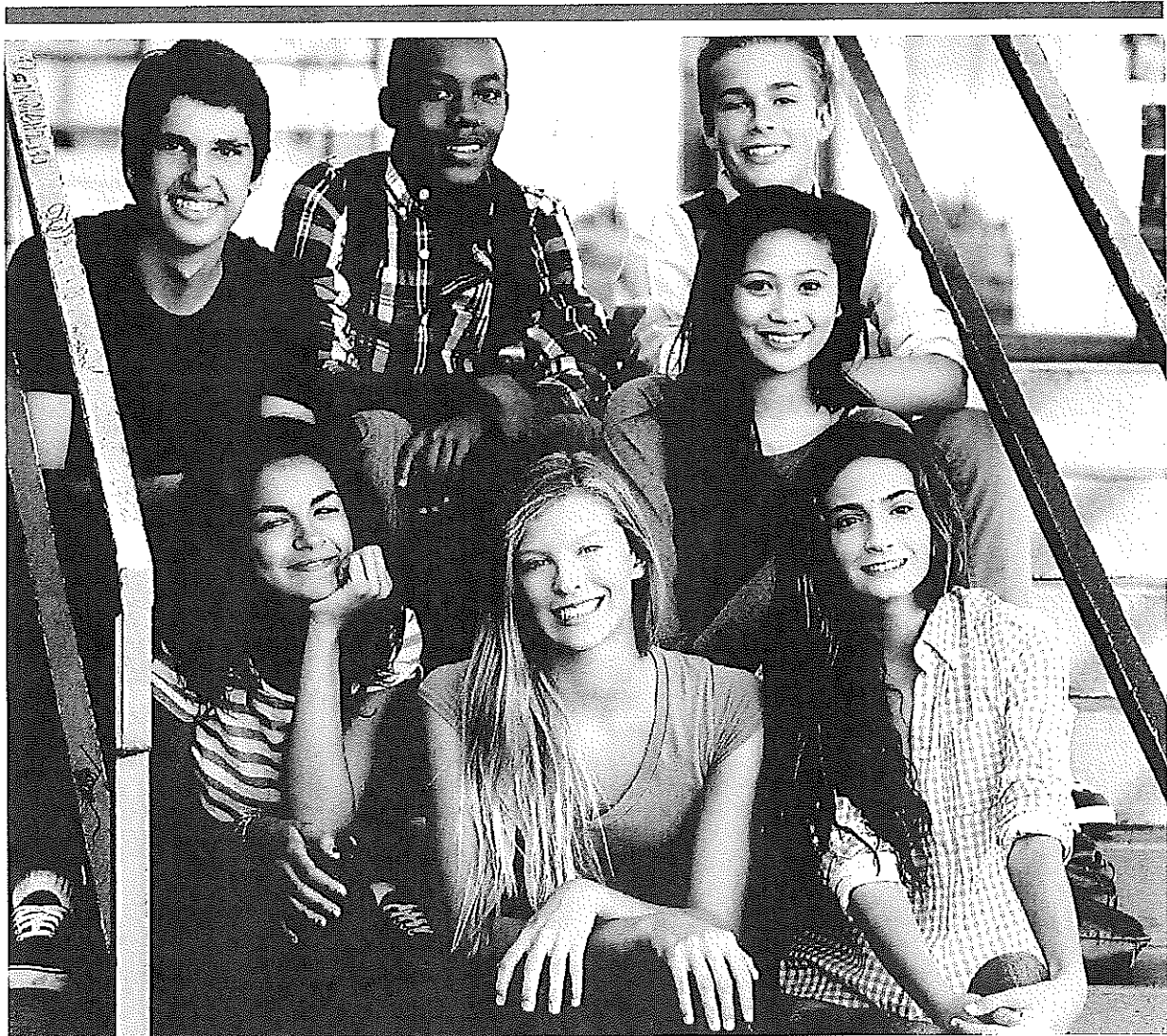


# TRANSITION OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL

BOOK  
2

» *Preparing your Child for after High School*



**AUTISM PROGRAMS**  
School Support Program



Autism Programs and Services  
Toronto Catholic District School Board

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## Introduction

Transitions require planning, preparation, and support. Some of the changes associated with entering high school and any postsecondary environment will involve increased expectations and independence. Also, some services that your child once received will not continue after age 18 and new adult services will begin. It will be helpful to become knowledgeable about the services for adults, and supports your child and family will require as early as possible.

As parents you may need to develop a whole new set of activities, supports, and services that are in line with your child's strengths, interests, and postsecondary goals. Therefore, early planning and developing a pathway/vision for your child is crucial and will impact future goals.

A network of supports is necessary despite the transition point or pathway of interest. Supports can include family members, community agencies and/or government programs. Strong support can assist with your child's goals, interests and desires while preparing them to participate meaningfully in community life.

### About this Guide

This guide is among the many resources developed by the TCDSB, Autism Transition Team, to support successful transitions for students with ASD. It is one of two guides created for parents whose children will be entering grade nine and also for those that are planning the transition out of high school.

**BOOK ONE** contains tips and information to help parents and their children prepare for high school.

**BOOK TWO** focuses on topics related to the transition out of high school. It contains specific information for each of the following pathways; College/ University, work, and community based services. Book two also has a section that focuses on topics related to additional planning considerations as children and parents age, such as financial and estate planning.

The appendix contains planning checklists to further assist with transition planning.

We hope that this guide will help you to:

- plan and prepare for entering high school,
- plan and prepare for graduating high school, and
- feel more prepared for your child's transition to adulthood.
- 



### USE FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS TO SUPPORT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- Your child's school may have already completed or have access to informal assessments related to education, employment and independent living.
- Results from these assessments can help create meaningful goals.

### COMMUNICATE AND WORK AS A TEAM

- As you know parents are key to communicate the needs, interests and strengths of their child – you do know them best!
- All team members, especially your child, will benefit from positive and open communication.
- Encourage your child to be involved in their transition planning.

### HOW TO INVOLVE YOUR CHILD IN THEIR TRANSITION PLANNING

- Invite them to attend meetings that discuss their IEP's.
- Review the IEP with your child and discuss items that relate to transition planning.
- Ask them if there are any items they want addressed.
- Encourage and support them to prepare something to share at the meeting (examples of support include role playing, use of visuals, modeling).
- Encourage and support them to develop attainable goals and action plans.
- Review the purpose of the meeting.
- If an agenda is available, review it with your child and let them know who may be present.

### Helpful Tips for Parents Managing Services

Transitions and accessing services can be overwhelming. These tips may help you to speed up the process, be more prepared, and lessen your stress.

### KEEP A SERVICE FILE WITH ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION IN ONE PLACE

- Examples include a binder, accordian file etc.
- Bring information with you whenever you are meeting with anyone about your child.
- Consider using dividers and labelling categories such as:
  - ▷ history (birth history, milestones, sleep patterns, behaviour logs, etc.),
  - ▷ assessments/reports,
  - ▷ medical,
  - ▷ financial,
  - ▷ school, and
  - ▷ other.

## SECTION I:

# Preparing my Child for after High School: Transition out of High School

During high school you, along with your child, teachers and school staff have been preparing and planning for the transition out of high school. Some of the decisions you are dealing with include, whether your child will stay in school until they are 21, which pathway they will pursue, and what supports may be necessary post high school.

Planning and preparing for the transition out of high school will vary depending on the pathway your child is pursuing. A transition plan specific to your child's needs, strengths and interests would help ensure a successful transition leading toward your child's goals. Your child's school will have a transition plan prepared for your child by grade 10.

As you probably know, there are 3 pathways that can be taken once your son/daughter graduates from high school (college/university, employment, or community based services). Transition activities and planning should be tailored to the most appropriate pathway for your child and should take into account your child's needs, strengths, goals, and interests.

There are different supports and services available outside of school to a person over the age of 18 for e.g. the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Adult Services. Your child must qualify to access adult services. To find out if your child is eligible contact Developmental Services Ontario—Toronto Region (DSO) when your child turns 16 years of age.

## Pathways

When planning for postsecondary options it would be helpful to be aware of the high school graduation requirements for the pathway they will pursue.

| PATHWAY                                    | PATHWAY DESCRIPTION AND POSSIBLE HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS  |
|--|--|
| College/<br>University                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Refers to typical College/University programs.</li> <li>▶ The student that takes this pathway is a credit earning student and would graduate with an OSSD. Universities require students take academic level courses in high school.</li> </ul>   |
| Employment,<br>“Real Work for<br>Real Pay” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Refers to a variety of competitive employment options, such as supported employment, customized employment and self-employment.</li> <li>▶ Students that take this pathway can be credit earning or not, and would have varying abilities. They could graduate with an OSSD, OSSC, or COA.</li> </ul>   |
| Community<br>Based Services                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Refers to community based services, such as Developmental Services Ontario (DSO), community participation (day programs), and leisure/recreational based activities.</li> <li>▶ The student that takes this pathway usually takes non-credit earning courses (k-coded) or a combination of non-credit and credit earning courses not exceeding 14 credits. They may be in an ME classroom and graduate with a COA.</li> </ul> |

*Grade 12, the fourth year of high school, is when many students graduate. Depending on your child's needs there is an option of remaining in school until June of the year that he/she turns age 21.*

## Resources for College/University Pathway

| NAME OF WEBSITE                         | DESCRIPTION   | LINK   |
|---|---|--|
| eINFO                                   | Information about university programs and prerequisites.                  | <a href="http://www.electronicinfo.ca">www.electronicinfo.ca</a>   |
| Ontario Universities                    | Information and Online Application.                                       | <a href="http://www.ouac.on.ca">www.ouac.on.ca</a>                 |
| Ontario School Counsellors' Association | Student and parent information on apprenticeships, colleges, universities | <a href="http://www.osca.ca/en.html">www.osca.ca/en.html</a>       |
| OSAP website                            | Online application, school search.  | <a href="http://osap.gov.on.ca">osap.gov.on.ca</a>                 |
| Ontario Universities Fair               | Held at the end of September  | <a href="http://www.ouf.ca">www.ouf.ca</a>                         |
| Ontario Colleges                        | Information and online application.                                       | <a href="http://www.ontariocolleges.ca">www.ontariocolleges.ca</a> |
| School Finder                           | List of schools—college, university, and career colleges                  | <a href="http://www.schoolfinder.com">www.schoolfinder.com</a>     |

### Accessibility/Disability Services Offices

There will be much less direct support for your child in College/University; however postsecondary institutions do have accessibility/disability offices. It is suggested that you and your child visit the accessibility/disability services office of the College/University before applying and after acceptance. These offices provide services specifically for students who have self-identified as having a disability and who have submitted supporting documentation. Services may include; assisting students with navigating the school, promoting self-advocacy, developing more effective learning and coping strategies, disability-related counselling, and determining and arranging appropriate academic accommodations.

### After You're Accepted

#### TIPS: ONCE YOU'RE ACCEPTED

- discuss the disability/accessibility services that are available with your child,
- contact disability/accessibility services to arrange an appointment as soon as you're accepted,
- ensure all necessary documents reach the office in time, and
- practice skills your child may need e.g. set up "check in" appointments with your child (similar to disability/accessibility services in College/University) etc.

- understands the services that are available to them, and
- understands they need to actively seek help, and make and keep appointments with disability/accessibility services.

### **Accommodations in College/University**

While your child will be able to access accommodations, do not assume that they will be entitled to the same accommodations that were given in high school. Your child will be required to complete the same work as their peers. There are no modifications to coursework, only accommodations. The specific types of accommodations your child may access will vary depending on the institution, program, and professor. Common accommodations include additional time, use of a separate space, and the use of a computer. It is imperative that your child seeks out the accommodations they need.

### **Skill Development for College/University**

Independence, organization, self-advocacy and social skills are key areas of development in this pathway. These are skills that may need to be explicitly taught. This can be done through role playing, modeling, and explaining the information in a visual way.

Skills your child may need assistance with

- time management and prioritizing tasks, with limited supervision,
- using visual supports such as an agenda, checklists, reminders, smart phones, graphic organizers, or colour coded systems to assist with organizational skills,
- social skills (involvement in extracurricular activities that increase opportunities to connect with others with similar interests),
- strategies for studying,
- setting up and keeping appointments (similar to how they would use accessibility/disability services)
- stress reduction, knowing where to go, who to talk to, what to say, and what activities will help, and
- how to break down large tasks.

### **Tips: Once your Child is Enrolled**

- if the program allows, consider taking a reduced course load, especially in the first year,
- consider what supports would be necessary if your child will be living on residence,
- develop a plan for extracurricular activities to foster social relationships,
- discuss and clearly list registrar deadlines. For e.g. deadlines for choosing classes and dropping classes without penalty,



## How to Gain Employment Experience

Work experience while in high school is valuable and an indicator of future success.

- encourage opportunities for work experience and/or co-op while still in high school,
- use preferred interests to help decide where to look for employment options,
- seek out employment services that are suited to helping individuals with a disability find employment,
- look for an employer that has a good Social Inclusion and Diversity Policy, and
- consider volunteer work.

## Transition Activities

To help with job finding skills and prepare for work settings there are a variety of activities that can be done,

- create a portfolio of work, this should show potential employers capabilities rather than relying solely on interview skills,
- practice situations that will be necessary for employment such as mock interviews,
- discuss appropriate clothing and hygiene,
- consider using and adjusting the visual and technological supports that are necessary in school/home for the work environment,
- consider ways of making visual supports more discreet and appropriate for the work environment e.g. Using an app vs. calendar,
- discuss the “soft skills” needed in a workplace, such as small talk, importance of greetings, explaining idioms, workplace mannerisms, dress code, etc., and
- practice job finding skills, such as resume writing, phone contact, and interview skills.

## Self-Advocacy/Disclosure

It is not necessary to disclose a disability to an employer or to colleagues. It is an individual choice. It may be considered useful to do so if the individual feels that they may need some accommodations in the workplace. Accommodations such as a quieter space for work, using headphones while at a desk, a partition for a cubby, written instructions vs. verbal instructions, a change in lighting, white noise, etc. can be discussed. Pros and cons of disclosure should be carefully considered. In order to be an effective self-advocate, it is essential to understand one’s own diagnosis and learning style.

### **Planning Activities while Waiting for Services**

After high school there will likely be a period of waiting for services. An option while you're waiting for ministry funded services is to investigate fee for service programs. These are services you would have to pay for yourself. You can also, involve your child in the community to maintain and develop skills.

Suggestions include;

- church,
- recreation centre's,
- libraries,
- shopping mall,
- grocery store,
- chores and functional activities at home,
- network with other families, organize activities/outings together, and
- involvement in activities of high interest areas and hobbies.

### **Independence Skills**

Take all opportunities to foster independence; your child's level of independence can make a difference when applying to and being accepted to various programs.

### **Ways to Foster Independence**

- have your child be an active participant in decisions and activities,
- allow your child to express their needs without always anticipating what they need,
- develop a way for your child to indicate their needs,
- TTC training,
- independent toileting routine, and
- practice skills in real settings where the skills are most likely to be used.

### **Skills for the Community. Prepare them for Active Participation**

To help you determine what skills would be most essential for your child to learn, think "If my child doesn't learn the skill, will someone else have to do it for them?" Regular practice is key in acquiring and maintaining skills. For e.g., if the goal is to make a purchase at the grocery store then this should be practiced once a day not once a week.

## SECTION 2: Long Term Planning

As a parent, there are many things to consider as you plan for your child's future. This involves long-term planning to address your child's changing needs as they age. There are adult services to assist with your adult child's needs.

The following are some helpful suggestions for you to consider:

- ensure your child is registered with Developmental Services Ontario (DSO),
- access The Community Resource Directory on the Surrey Place Centre website, see Resources and Publications. (The Community Resource Directory is a comprehensive listing of agencies in Toronto that provide a variety of services to children, adolescents and adults with autism and their families),
- obtain a case manager,
- encourage social inclusion of your adult child,
- stay connected to friends, extended family members and community members,
- take account of your personal needs as you get older,
- explore housing and community participation support (day programs) options through DSO or other independent, creative means, and
- apply to funding sources to support respite and special programs.

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*Respite services. Consider flexible breaks from caring. You can access respite services through DSO. This can include overnight breaks in a setting which might become a long-term placement in the future.*

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# 2

SECTION

LONG TERM  
PLANNING

## Estate Planning

Estate planning can assist in developing a plan for an individual with a disability as they age and preserve their entitlement to government support programs. It is advisable to consult with a lawyer, accountant and other specialists.

Here are a few items to consider investigating:

- **Special Needs Planning Group:** The “Special Needs” Planning Group is an organization that is made up entirely of parents of people with disabilities. They use a team approach to planning using Planners, Lawyers and Accountants, all of whom are specialists in planning for people with disabilities.
  - ▷ [www.specialneedsplanning.ca/index.html](http://www.specialneedsplanning.ca/index.html)
- **Henson Trust:** Information on how to keep assets for individuals with disabilities without disqualifying them from receiving government funds.
- **Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, Ministry of Attorney General:** Can provide assistance and information regarding guardianship, wills, estate planning and power of attorney. Usually involved when there is a need for a substitute decision maker or there is a question of capacity.
  - ▷ <http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/family/pgt/>
- **Trustee Selection and Duties.**
- **Planning Giving:** a set of ways a donor (parent) can leave money or assets to their beneficiary (child) in their will to provide future income
- Look for reference guides that provides information to families on wills, trusts, tax programs, investment programs etc.

## Applying to Apprenticeship Programs

### HAS YOUR CHILD?

- explored apprenticeship programs of interest?
- spoke to people in the trade?
- spent time observing the job?
- reached 16 years of age or older?
- enrolled as a full time high school student?
- completed 16 credits towards my OSSD?
- examined which trade they want to pursue?
- examined apprenticeship course requirements and expectations?
- fulfilled the required hours of on the job training to obtain their license?
- fulfilled the required hours of in school training to obtain their licence?
- examined which college offers apprenticeship program?
- enrolled in appropriate high school courses?
- completed appropriate high school courses?
- visited apprenticeship college campuses?
- explored tuition requirements?
- investigated financial aid applications?
- investigated financial aid application (OSAP, Ontario Special Needs Bursary, Scholarships)?
- explored the application process?
- registered with the Ministry of Training College/University
- researched the requirements of enrolling in the Ontario College of Trades?
- made a decision regarding apprenticeship college program?
- made a decision regarding apprenticeship school?
- registered for a college transition program?

Note: having a job while in high school is an indicator of the likelihood of being employed post high school.

## Planning for Pathway to Community Participation

### HAS YOUR CHILD?

- registered with DSO (once they turn 16)
- participating in the DSO intake meeting
- on a "Community Needs List" with DSO for Post -21 placement
- receiving/or waiting to receive Passport Funding
- receiving ODSP
- TTC trained
- participating in a Work Experience placement at the school level
- transitioning into the possible post-21 placement
- in a Day Program, Employment Support Program, Fraser WETP or Humber CICE for Post -21
- involved in the Community (Extra-Curricular Activities)
- helping with chores at home
- creating a Portfolio (file) with assessments, IEP's, report cards, etc.
- participating in the Graduation Ceremony, Grad Photo, the Prom, etc.
- practicing life skills at home i.e. Personal hygiene, table setting, grocery shopping, laundry, etc.
- registered with Parks and Rec programs (if 1:1 assistance is required, please request)
- visiting possible post-21 placements i.e., Day programs, Employment Support Programs, Colleges (including Fraser, Humber CICE) and Universities)
- volunteering and or has work experience possibilities in the community
- socializing with peers (network with other parents to have the young adults socialize together)

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APPENDIX

SECTION