



10 Transition Tips for Families and Caregivers of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities/Autism

1.

Start early

- Think about the future now! Consider all aspects of your child's future: educational, social, employment, extra-curricular and financial.
- Focus on your child's strengths and develop a vision of what the future could be!

2.

Build Connections and Community Participation

- Connect with other parents, networks and specific disability associations. There are a few parents' groups in Ottawa both in-person and through Facebook or online. Many are listed on [Service Coordination's website](#) or can be found through an online search.
- Build family connections at any of your child's community programs.
- Build your network of family, friends, support people and service providers.
- Maintain connections and build relationships with anyone who has a positive relationship with your child. You never know who may end up being a willing and supportive person in your child's life.

3.

Focus on Person-Directed Planning

- [Create a plan](#) and review it annually. The plan should include work, social life, academics, community, gifts and talents, abilities and needs. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and be creative!
- Think about current and projected needs, community participation, housing and other supports that may be needed.
- Work closely with teachers, service coordination and service providers to create a person-directed transition plan – a plan that focuses on the skills your child needs to achieve their future goals.
- Include your child in the planning process. For some people, this means first-hand involvement. Planning for others involves interpretation of their desires.

4.

Communicate with the School

- The Individual Education Plan (IEP) must include a transition plan ([PPM 156](#)). Make sure you help develop the IEP alongside school staff.
- Emphasize your child's post-high school goals, as well as their social skills, community connections and skill development for independence.
- Ask the school about any updated assessments that your child needs.

5.

Consider Community Participation Resources

- Get to know community resources and programs. There are two types of programs:
 1. **Pay for Service:** Families pay to use the service, often with Passport funding. The service could be provided through an organization that specializes in programming and supports for people with disabilities or any community program.
 2. **Ministry-Funded Programs:** These require an offer to access through Developmental Services Ontario.
- Look for programs, courses, groups or employment based on your child's strengths and interests.
- Register early for all programs, courses or groups. They often fill up quickly!

- [Service Coordination Support \(SCS\)](#) is a great place to start. You can find a list of resources and services using the "[My Search Tool](#)" on the SCS website.
- You can find some community programs through the [City of Ottawa Recreation Guide](#).
- Attend information fairs or virtual events.
- Explore programs offered through [Special Olympics Ottawa](#).
- The [Access 2 Entertainment Pass](#) provides reduced rates for support persons at participating venues.
- Review the [Travel Training Manual](#) by OC Transpo and OCDSB.
- Connect with other parents/caregivers to learn about programs that they are using.

6.

Consider Financial and Legal Tasks

- [Passport funding](#) is part of the Developmental Services Ontario (DSO-ER) application process. Passport funding allows for individualized spending of money to purchase approved services. If your child is looking for daily full-day support, the amount of Passport funding is often not enough to cover the full cost, and personal financial resources will need to be utilized.
- Learn about [City of Ottawa Recreation Funding](#).
- Explore financial planning supports: e.g. [Registered Disability Savings Plan \(RDSP\)](#), [Registered Education Savings Plan \(RESP\)](#) and [Henson Trust](#).
- Consider legal guardianship issues: (e.g. Do you have a will? Is your child able to make their own financial and medical decisions? Does your child need a power of attorney or guardian to make their decisions?). Attend workshops to learn about these topics.
- Save money, if possible, for post-secondary needs.
- Ensure your child has a bank account in their name (it can be a joint account) before the age of 18.

7.

Focus on Developing Independence and Socially Appropriate Behaviour

- Develop socially appropriate behaviour based on your child's strengths and abilities. Regardless of the degree of independence, any growth is helpful.
- Think about independence and social skills that will increase access to the community (i.e. independent self care, personal grooming, waiting patiently, traveling safely and independently, using a cell phone, spending time alone, making plans, making and sustaining friendships, cooking, using a microwave, opening snacks, communicating needs.)
- Use your support network (school, community, family) to support your child's goals for growth.

8.

Encourage Community Participation

- Building community participation helps to develop interests, skills and social connections. These activities and connections may make a big difference in life after the age of 21.

9.

Join a Parent/Caregiver Group

- You don't have to do it alone. Start or join a group for parents/caregivers of students with developmental disabilities and/or autism.
- You can find a list of groups within [Service Coordination's My Search Tool](#).

10.

Remember that Transition is a Life-long Process

- These tips are relevant throughout an individual's life.
- Be prepared to try things out and make adjustments as needed to ensure the person-centered plan is always up to date and meeting your child's needs.