

Community Living in the Kootenays

Pamphlet # 4

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TRANSITION
TO TO
ADULTHOOD
SERIES

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A number of options exist for students with developmental disabilities in the college and/or university environment:

- ❖ Advanced academic, technical, and vocational training
- ❖ Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- ❖ Adult Special Education (Transitional Training)

Advanced training, requires students to adhere to competitive academic entrance standards set out by each school and training program. Once enrolled, students with disabilities are able to access a variety of resources and services from the Disability Coordinator at the school.

Adult Basic Education offers all adult students an opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to cope more effectively in personal, work and educational settings. ABE is student centred; student learning plans can be designed with either course credit or skills development as a goal.

Transitional Training, or Adult Special Education, is specifically designed to assist students with developmental disabilities to work on a number of goals including life skills, social and academic skills related to living more independently in the community. The delivery and the format of the Transitional Training programs vary from school to school.

This pamphlet is primarily concerned with Adult Basic Education and Transitional Training programs in the Kootenay region. It is important to note that even when a mainstream advanced training option is selected it is useful for students to identify themselves to the Disability Coordinator at the school to discuss their needs and to ascertain how the available services may be of assistance to them.

"The success of an individual student in accessing post-secondary options and necessary supports for the future depends in part on consistent information flow and advanced planning, as well as establishing firm linkages with other agencies and community partners."

"Special Education Manual", BC Ministry of Education

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & THE DISABILITY COORDINATOR

A Coordinator of "Disability Services" is available at most post-secondary institutions. This person's responsibility is to respond to the needs of students with disabilities by serving as a resource and support to students, and by arranging the necessary services required by students in order to be able to attend the school. The Coordinator is familiar with the various accommodations, support services, assistive technology and funding options that may be available and appropriate for a given student. The office of the Disability Coordinator at a particular school is often then best point of contact for students with disabilities interested in pursuing further schooling. The Coordinator will have a good knowledge of what is available to students in that learning environment as well as the steps required in order to access it.

TIPS FOR AN EASIER TRANSITION

- ❖ **Start preparing for post-secondary-education while still in high school** *(See "Transition" pamphlet of this series for more information)*
- ❖ **Identify your interests, realistic learning goals and support needs prior to entering the post-secondary environment.**
- ❖ **Visit the school and the program ahead of time. Spend time in the classroom, meet the instructors, meet the students and attend an orientation session.**
- ❖ **Do your research. Assess whether the school and the program are a good match with your interests and goals.**
- ❖ **Become familiar with the various services and resource available at the school: Disability Coordinator, guidance counsellor, registrar, library, book store, cafeteria, ...**
- ❖ **Identify yourself to the Disability Coordinator and be prepared to discuss your needs.**
- ❖ **Get to know the geography of the school and consider any barriers ahead of time.**

HIGH SCHOOL: WHEN IS IT TIME TO LEAVE?

Many students continue to learn and grow and are not necessarily ready to leave high school when they are 18. In some circumstances, students may be ready to move on but either arrangements have not been made, or resources are not available, for them to move into another meaningful community setting. For many reasons some adolescents do not graduate with their class but do stay on another year or two in the high school setting. While this is not the typical course of action, it may at times be the most appropriate course of action given the circumstances. If you think this option is a suitable one for you or your family member speak to your school district to explore what accommodations could be made in your particular situation.

EDUCATION IN THE KOOTENAYS

Both Selkirk College, in the West Kootenays, as well as College of the Rockies, in the East Kootenays, offer programs appropriate for individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition to advanced training programs, students can access Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Special Education (Transitional Training).

Adult Basic Education is available at all main and satellites campuses of both colleges (five locations in the East Kootenays and seven in the West Kootenays), while **Transitional Training** is available in only a select number of locations.

Generally, to qualify for ABE or Transitional Training students must be 18 years of age or older, have personal learning goals and be capable of succeeding in college courses or able to perform in an adult environment. In all cases students are encouraged to visit the programs ahead of time, spend time in the classroom and meet the instructors. An interview and assessment are integral components of determining whether a student is suitable for a program.

While some programs have no wait list and students can enter throughout the year, others have wait lists of up to a year. It is recommended that you contact the school a year in advance. The tuition for Adult Basic Education and Transitional Training is usually covered by ABESAP or the Ministry for Children and Families. Other funding may also be available based on a student's individual needs.

Below is a brief description of the Transitional Training programs available at the various locations in the Kootenays. While the programs differ based on the instructors, the community, and the needs of the students, they all integrate independent living skills training into the curriculum. For more details contact the programs.

Trail: The "Food Services Worker Program" provides an opportunity for students to learn skills for the food service industry in combination with life skills, vocational skills and academic upgrading.

Castlegar: Independent educational plans are developed based on students' interests, needs and abilities. Training includes academic upgrading, work place skills, independent living skills, self-advocacy skills, personal management and computer skills.

Nelson: The curriculum is student driven. Independent education plans reflect students' interests and goals. Social skills and "safety issues" development underscores all training.

Grand Forks: There is no formal program. "Students access regular courses but may have a larger component of life skills, work experience, learning assistance, and/or assessment than other students."

Creston: A half-time individualized program focusing on "functional skills" transferable to the community setting. Use of an on-site kitchen is incorporated into skills development.

Cranbrook: An individualized program that provides skills and training in a number of areas with an aim to enable individuals to become more independent in the community.

RESOURCES

FUNDING:

Programs are available to help out with both the direct cost of education, as well as some of the costs related to the provisions required in order to access education. Below is a list and short description of some of the programs. Contact the Disability Coordinator at your school for more information.

Canada Student Loans and Provincial Assistance Programs

Available to students enrolled in post-secondary education; including academic, career, technical and vocational programs. Full-time studies for individuals with disabilities are considered to be 40% of the regular course load.

Canada Study Grant

Students with disabilities may be eligible for up to \$5,000/yr from the federal government to cover exceptional related costs associated with permanent disabilities.

ABESAP (Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program)

Funding assistance for direct educational costs for students enrolled in academic upgrading and adult special education.

Assistance Program for Students with Permanent Disabilities

Grants for students with disabilities to purchase goods and services that will assist them to access post-secondary education; such as technical aides, computer technology and support services

<http://www.aett.gov.bc.ca/studentsservices/other.htm>

Scholarships and Bursaries

Some non-government organizations also provide funds to students. These funds are usually provided on the basis of the subject of study, whether the applicant falls into a particular "interest group" and/or grades.

"Federal and Provincial Assistance Programs for students with disabilities recognize the additional costs students with permanent disabilities face." <http://www.aett.gov.bc.ca/studentsservices/disab.htm>

Colleges in the Kootenays:

Selkirk College:

Castlegar:	(250) 365-7292	Nelson:	(250) 352-6601
Trail:	(250) 368-5236	Kaslo:	(250) 353-2618
Kettle Valley:	(250) 449-2655	Nakusp:	(250) 265-3774
Slocan:	(250) 359-7564		

College of the Rockies:

Cranbrook:	(250) 489-2751	Creston:	(250) 428-5332
Golden:	(250) 344-5901	Fernie:	(250) 423-4691
Sparwood:	(250) 425-7104	Invermere:	(250) 342-3210

* While staff representing the programs are able to answer questions at each campus, only the main campus at each college (in Castlegar & Cranbrook) has a Coordinator of Disability Services.

In addition to the education options available in the Kootenays it is important to also consider that distance learning both at the secondary and the post-secondary level is also available. Your local college or school board can provide you with more information.

This pamphlet series was produced by the **Kootenay Society for Community Living Board of Governors**. KSCL offers networking, information, referral, advocacy and education for people with developmental disabilities and their families in the Kootenays. Tel: (250) 352-1600 / Fax: (250) 352-7748 (ksclbog@direct.ca) 4/2001