

Community Living in the Kootenays

Pamphlet # 1

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TRANSITION
TO TO
ADULTHOOD
SERIES

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ABOUT THE PAMPHLET SERIES

At the suggestion of family members, the Kootenay Society for Community Living Regional Office has decided to develop resource information concerned with the issue of transition from adolescence or school to adulthood.

This pamphlet introduces a series of pamphlets focusing on the changes in service needs and delivery associated with the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Pamphlets # 2 to # 5 of this series focus on four issues that people with developmental disabilities are required to address at this stage of their lives: housing, employment, education and financial support. While the focus of this series is transition from adolescence to adulthood, the information contained here is by no means exclusive to transition of youth and will be useful to people considering change at any point in their lives.

This resource is not meant to be an all-encompassing directory of service/resource options in the Kootenays. Rather it is designed to help you orient to the world of adult services, offer some considerations regarding access to these services and point you in the right direction. It must be recognized that each individual is unique, and thus their circumstances and service needs will necessarily reflect their uniqueness. It is for you to decide what is right for you or your family member, given what is available and what is possible to realize. We hope that in some small way these pamphlets will inform, empower and inspire you to make informed and timely choices.

"An increased proportion of 17-yr-old youths to have transition plans for adult services"

An objective outlined in the Ministry for Children and Families'
"Resource Management Strategy for Community Living Service Delivery"
(October, 2000).

ABOUT TRANSITION

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a significant step in everyone's life. Where once school provided a centralized source of education, guidance and recreation, young adults must orient to many new resources. The entitlement to public education ends and families are faced with a multitude of service options to which entitlement is not always guaranteed. Restrictive eligibility criteria, long wait lists and uncertain funding are all part of this reality.

Many people experience this time of moving from the familiar school environment to adult community living with confusion and uncertainty. For this reason it is important for adolescents and their parents to consider and discuss transition before services from the school have ceased. Identifying the challenges that students may encounter as adults, and assisting them to meet these demands successfully, requires careful planning beginning while the student is still enrolled in school. Outlining a transition plan based on the young adult's personal goals provides the framework for carrying out the necessary activities that will help a student achieve their personal goals and make a successful transition to adult life.

WHAT ABOUT A TRANSITION PLAN?

A transition plan is "the framework for identifying, planning, and carrying out activities that will help a student make a successful transition to adult life. It identifies the type of skills to be learned, ... which transition services will be provided, and the party responsible for providing them." *"Transition Planning for Success in Adult Life", The National Transition Network from Minneapolis*

One strategy for engaging a transition plan is to establish a team of professionals, family members and friends to come together to develop and act upon an action plan that will lead to successful adult living. A planning team can help to identify personal preferences and interests, identify agencies and resources helpful in planning transition and help to make all the pieces fit together. Formal transition planning may be handled through Individual Education Plans (IEP's) in high school and Personal Service Plans (PSP's) conducted by social workers at the Ministry for Children and Families. However, not waiting for a formal planning meeting, and beginning to plan yourself (whether as a family or as a planning group) has many advantages: you have more control over the process, can begin the process when you feel it is most appropriate and meet as often as you like. No matter how you start and who you involve, do communicate your dreams and priorities with the Ministry for Children and Families social worker. Many services aimed at adults with developmental disabilities are managed by the Ministry for Children and Families. Involving the Ministry social worker may be an important component to realizing your plan.

"Begin planning for the child's transition to adulthood by the age of 15, or grade 8. Transition to adult services may mean accessing services provided by different ministries such as the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security (SDES), The Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MoAETT) and the Ministry for Children and Families." *"Transition Checklist", Ministry for Children and Families*

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW TO PREPARE

Below is a list of activities that young adults can work on to prepare for a transition to community living:

- ❖ Examine values, interests, skills and desires for the future.
- ❖ Establish personal goals related to community living.
- ❖ Learn to effectively communicate interests, preferences, and needs.
- ❖ Identify the support services and programs that exist in your community.
- ❖ Assess how existing services can help meet personal goals for community living.
- ❖ Investigate assistive technology necessary or helpful for community involvement.
- ❖ Learn and practice interpersonal, communication and social skills appropriate for different settings.
- ❖ Learn and practice informed decision-making.
- ❖ Explore a variety of community activities and establish friendships.
- ❖ Identify and practice skills required to live independently: including personal health, housekeeping and money management skills.
- ❖ Match work interests and skills with post-secondary education, training programs and/or community work experiences.
- ❖ Identify interests and options for future living arrangements, including required supports.
- ❖ Determine when and how to apply for financial support (GAINS) and explore other available funding.
- ❖ Develop an action plan that addresses projected adult needs and the skills that the adolescent needs to learn while still in school.
- ❖ Inform the school based IEP team and/or the Ministry for Children and Families social worker of the goals and skills identified in your transition plan.

Parents and others can:

- ❖ Encourage the young adult to explore and communicate his/her preferences for the future.
- ❖ Encourage the young adult to establish positive relationships.
- ❖ Assist with the development of practical independent living skills, e.g. shopping, cooking and housekeeping.
- ❖ Involve the young adult in activities that will help him/her to practice decision making and self-advocacy skills.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for the young adult to practice skills in real-life situations in the community.
- ❖ Talk to other young adults and parents who have already gone through the transition process.

*"Transition Checklist", Ministry for Children and Families
"Transition Planning: A Team Effort", NICHY*

"Successful transition from school to adult life requires effective planning, school experiences, services and supports so that students can achieve their desired outcomes" *"Best Practices in the Planning from School to Adult Life"* (<http://busyboy.sped.ukans.edu/~ktip/1-2.htm>)

USEFUL RESOURCES

BC Association of Community Living (BCACL): A federation of local associations serving individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Their main function is to lobby, educate and advocate with and for persons with disabilities and their families. (604-875-1119), <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/bcacl/welcome.html>

BC Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (BCCPD): A provincial cross-disability advocacy organization. Their mandate is to raise public and political awareness of issues relevant to persons with disabilities. (604-875-0188), <http://bccpd.bc.ca>

Family Support Institute (FSI): A province-wide organization with a purpose to support and strengthen families who have a member with a disability. FSI offers a workshop on transition from school to adult community living. (604-874-1119), <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/bcacl/fsi.html>

PLAN: Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network: Supports families to plan a secure future for relatives with disabilities by facilitating a future "plan" and personal network; providing information and referral on estate planning, creating trusts, home ownership and guardianship; and offering advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities. (604-439-9566), <http://www.plan.ca>

Local Associations in the East and West Kootenays: Some of the following associations provide direct services while others do not. Each is a good starting point for finding out about the services available in your community.

* Trail Association for Community Living	(250) 368-3504
Kootenay Society for Community Living, Castlegar	(250) 365-2624
Kootenay Society for Community Living, Nelson	(250) 352-6968
Creston District Society for Community Living	(250) 428-2296
Cranbrook Society for Community Living	(250) 426-7588
Kootenay Society for Community Living, Kimberley	(250) 427-2934
Elk Valley Association for Community Living	(250) 423-7635

(* Trail ACL houses the regional lending library)

Ministry for Children and Families Resources:

"Leaving the Nest" (Transition to Adult Services): Autism Spectrum Disorder Provincial Resource Directory.

"Children with Special Needs". Ministry for Children and Families.

http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/special_needs/autism_resource_dir.../autism_10.html

"Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities". (Pamphlet) Ministry for Children and Families.

Ministry of Education:

The Ministry's **"Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines"** outlines transition planning and IEP's in the school system. A new guideline relating to transition may be in progress.

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialized/ppandg/iep_3.htm

In the U.S. transition planning is a part of federal law. While the U.S. legislation is not applicable to BC, many of the ideas and concepts tied to transitional planning are. Below are articles located on two useful Web sites:

"Transition Planning for Success in Adult Life". National Transition Network, 103 U-Tech Centre, 1313 SE 5th St., Minneapolis, MN 55414, Tel: (612-627-4008) <http://ici2.coled.umn.edu/ntn/pub/briefs/tplanning.html>

"Transition Planning: A Team Effort". National Information Centre for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHY). P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013, Tel: (202-884-8200)

http://www.idonline.org/ld_indepth/transition/nichcy_TS10.html

This pamphlet series was produced by the **Kootenay Society for Community Living Regional Office**. 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, (kscl@direct.ca) 5/2001