

Printable Guides on Transition Services

Federation for Children With Special Needs (FCSN)

The Federation for Children with Special Needs has developed a helpful guide on Transition Services for families.
<http://fcsn.org/transition-guide>

Autism Speaks Transition Tool Kit

The Autism Speaks Transition Toolkit was created to serve as a guide to assist families on the journey from adolescence to adulthood.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit>

ATN/AIR-P Puberty and Adolescence Resource

A guide to increase families' understanding of puberty for pre-teens with ASD.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/wordpress-tags/puberty-and-adolescence-resource-guide-parents-adolescents-autism-spectrum-disorder>

Transitioning Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autism Consortium)

A guide with resources and timeline planning for adult living.

<https://www.respiteservices.com/app/media/4069>

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Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Massachusetts



Autism Commission

A Resource Guide for Transition Aged Youth and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (14–22 years of age)

About the Autism Commission

In August 2014, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts enacted landmark legislation Ch. 226 of the Acts of 2014, the "Autism Omnibus Law" that established the Autism Commission as a permanent entity. The Commission is charged with making recommendations on policies impacting individuals with ASD across their lifespan, and to file an annual report with the Governor and the Legislature. The Commission is comprised of 35 members, including representatives from state agencies, advocacy organizations, parents and a self-advocate. The first Executive Director of the Autism Commission was appointed by Governor Baker in March 2016. For more information about the Autism Commission please visit our website at www.mass.gov/autism

Please note: State agencies and public school districts have interpreters and translation services available, when needed to assist families and individuals with ASD.

The information set forth in this pamphlet has been compiled to help families and individuals better understand the types of resources that exist in the Commonwealth, and which may be available to an individual with ASD. A brief description of these resources and direct links to helpful websites for the state agencies and to other additional resources was gathered to support families and individuals with accessing these resources.

This pamphlet is intended to inform families and individuals about resources that MAY BE available to an individual with ASD, IN ADDITION, to special education services that are provided by school districts under an individualized education program (IEP).

What are Special Education Transition Services?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), transition services are the services public school districts must provide to transition-age (14–22) students who receive special education services to prepare them for postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community participation. Transition services vary from student to student according to their individual needs, strengths, preferences, and interests.

During the IEP (Individualized Education Program) period when the student will turn 14 years of age (or earlier if appropriate), parents should discuss age appropriate transition assessments (formal or informal) with the school. This will enable the IEP Team, including the student, to develop a comprehensive transition plan, to prepare them for life after high school.

The Transition Planning Form (TPF) is a document to be used by every IEP Team annually beginning at age 14. This form is used to brainstorm and draft the student's vision for adult life called "postsecondary goals", disability-related needs and an action plan detailing what steps can be taken to prepare the student for life after high school. The TPF is not a legal contract and is not part of the IEP. The student's vision for adult life is then pasted into the IEP, and the IEP Team develops goals, objectives and transition services based on that vision and the student's unique needs. Elementary and Secondary Education has issued technical advisories for parents and school districts on transition planning.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2014-4ta.html>

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2017-1ta.pdf>

Transition Timeline

Ages 14–16

- Starting at age 14, the student is invited to attend the IEP meeting. If the student attends, prepare the student to participate. If the student does not attend, the team should include the students' strengths and what they want to do next after high school.
- Begin the conversation of what the student's life may look like when they exit the school system (further education/college or community college, employment, independent living, community participation)
- Use the Transition Planning Form (TPF) as a tool to brainstorm your child's vision for adult life. Develop goals, objectives and post-secondary services, which must then be included in the student's (IEP)
- Discuss age appropriate transition assessments with the school related to education, employment and where appropriate, independent living
- At age 14, consider applying to MRC for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Additional Resources (continued)

Federation for Children With Special Needs (FCSN)

The Federation for Children with Special Needs provides information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities. <http://fcsn.org/>

Guardianship

Is a legal process in which the court may appoint a person or agency to make decisions on behalf of another person and is the most restrictive form of legal protection for an individual. Only individuals with mental health, intellectual, or medical disabilities so severe that they cannot make informed decisions for themselves would meet the criteria for guardianship. Parents should consider whether full or limited guardianship is appropriate or a power of attorney.

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp/guardians/>

<https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/family-involvement/guardianship/>

Independent Living Centers (ILC)

Offer a range of services to people with disabilities including peer mentoring, skills training, information and referral, and advocacy. Young adults with disabilities can get help with housing, employment, transportation, equipment, and other transition-related issues.

www.masilc.org

Massachusetts Advocates for Children Autism Center

Massachusetts Advocates for Children Autism Center works with elected officials and partners to create laws and regulations to ensure that children and young adults with ASD have access to the services and resources they need in order to reach their full potential.

<http://massadvocates.org/autism>

Social Security

Offers an online disability application you can complete at your convenience and is funded by the Social Security Administration providing benefits to eligible individuals with disabilities.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/basic-needs/financial/ssi-ssdi/>

Additional Resources

ARC of Massachusetts

The Arc of Massachusetts provides information, resources and support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities including autism and their families. The Arc Fact sheets, Transition Timelines Guide and webinars are available on the website. The Arc also organizes a statewide biannual Transition Conference for families. <http://thearcofmass.org/>

Asperger/Autism Network (AANE)

AANE works with individuals, families, and professionals to help people with Asperger Syndrome or similar autism spectrum profiles build meaningful, connected lives by providing information, education, community, support, and advocacy--all in an atmosphere of validation and respect. <http://www.aane.org/>

Autism Housing Pathways

Autism Housing Pathways (AHP) was created to provide information, support and resources for families looking for supported housing for their adult children with disabilities.

<http://autismhousingpathways.org/>

Turning 18 Checklist

http://autismhousingpathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Turning18checklist_01-18.pdf

Turning 18 and Applying for Section 8 Voucher
www.18Section8.org

Council Empowerment Program

A grant program that reimburses up to \$250 of your expenses to attend relevant conferences or other events in Massachusetts.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/council-empowerment-funds-program>

Exceptional Lives

Exception Lives offers a free Resource Directory and free How-to Guides, which walk people step by step through processes like special education, health insurance, guardianship and SSI.

<http://ma.exceptionallives.org/>

Family Ties of Massachusetts

Family Ties is a directory of resources for families of children and youth with special needs.

<https://www.massfamilyties.org/>

Transition Timeline (continued)

- IEP Team should consider work based learning (internships)
- At age 16, families and students should begin applying for adult services from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Apply to MassHealth, they cover a range of services that are available to eligible students with ASD such as ABA services, augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC), personal care attendant (PCA) services and adult foster care (AFC). Families should explore what services their child's is eligible for and which services are appropriate to meet their needs
- Discuss the issue of the student remaining in school until age 22 or graduating at age 18

Ages 17–18

- The IEP Team should update the Transition Plan at the annual IEP meeting.
- Discuss what will my child's life look like when they turn 22?
- At age 17 start to discuss Transfer of Parental Rights which occurs automatically at age 18. Parents should begin guardianship process to ensure guardianship, where appropriate, is in place when the student turns 18 years of age.
- School should generate the 688 referral to state agencies if the student plans to seek adult services upon graduation or when they turn 22 years of age
- At age 17 apply for DDS Adult Eligibility. The process should be completed and eligibility determined by age 18
- At age 18 apply for Social Security (SSI)
- At age 18 apply for section 8 housing
- At age 18 register to vote
- At age 18 males register for Selective Service
- Look for employment and internship opportunities in your community
- Ask your IEP Team about college experiences through MA Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI)
- The IEP team should discuss whether the student is expected to graduate or remain in school to receive special education until they turn 22 years of age

Age 19–22

- The IEP Team should update the Transition Plan at the annual IEP meeting
- Discuss what will my child's life look like when they turn 22?
- Work with your child's teachers on your students' schedule to include multiple opportunities to be out in the community, self-care, social inclusion, self-advocacy and independence
- Consider working with MRC on employment and internship through their (Pre-ETS) program, which is available to student's ages 14–22
- If the student will require adult services, a 688 referral should be made by the school district at least two years before the student leaves school, and once the

Transition Timeline (continued)

student is determined eligible by a state agency, that agency should be invited to your IEP team meeting

- Social Security (SSI) application and determination processes should be completed
- If found eligible for Adult Services, develop an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) at least one year before they leave the public school system

State Agencies

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) provides funding for family support programs and services across the state designed to provide information, assistance, and an array of supportive services to families with children and adults with disabilities who are living at home.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dds/>

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

DMH offers specific services and supports that are designed to meet the unique needs of youth and young adults ages 16-22. The goal is for Transition Age Youth and Young Adult (TAYA) to start on a positive life path into adulthood – toward the goals of personal stability, community housing, employment, education and positive family/social relationships. <https://www.mass.gov/resources-for-transition-age-youth-and-young-adults-ages-16-22>

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)

Students with disabilities are eligible for pre-employment services from MRC beginning at age fourteen (14) and up to age twenty-two (22). The MRC is required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to promote the coordination of educational services provided by school personnel and pre-employment transition services provided by MRC.

Pre-employment transition services (PETS) required by WIOA include: (1) job exploration counseling; (2) work-based learning experiences to include internship opportunities; (3) counseling on post-secondary educational opportunities; (4) workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and (5) instruction in self-advocacy (peer mentoring).

Every high school in Massachusetts is assigned a counselor by MRC. Students can be referred to MRC for pre-employment services either by their high school

Health Insurance (continued)

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Children under the age of 21 who have been diagnosed with autism and are covered by MassHealth Standard, CommonHealth and Family Assistance are entitled to medically necessary ABA services. Coverage is also available to members who have MassHealth as secondary insurance. <http://massairc.org/masshealth-autism-insurance-faqs/information-about-masshealth-aba-coverage-frequently-asked-questions/>

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC) Devices

In addition to insurance coverage for ABA services, coverage includes Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. MassHealth expanded coverage for electronic tablets for individuals with ASD for communication.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/guidelines/mng-aac.pdf>

Personal Care Attendant (PCA) from MassHealth

The PCA Program helps people with permanent or chronic disabilities keep their independence, stay in the community, and manage their own personal care by providing funds to hire personal care attendants (PCAs). The PCA consumer (the person receiving PCA services or their surrogate—typically the parent) is the employer of the PCA, and is fully responsible for recruiting, hiring, scheduling, training, and, if necessary, firing PCAs.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/insurance/masshealth-member-info/pca/>

Adult Foster Care (AFC)

Is a program that provides daily assistance with personal care and case management oversight by the provider in caregivers home. This program is funded through MassHealth and provides a tax-free stipend to a family member/caregiver living with an individual with a disability to help with their care.

<http://www.mass.gov/elders/healthcare/ltc-in-home/adult-foster-care-programs.html>

Health Insurance

The Massachusetts Autism Insurance Law (ARICA):

ARICA requires some health insurance companies in Massachusetts to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Not all private insurance plans are required to cover autism treatment. Ask your insurance company what coverage exists in your policy for autism treatment, including coverage for ABA services and AAC devices.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/eohhs/autism/arica-factsheet.pdf>

The Autism Insurance Resource Center, part of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center at UMass Medical School

The Autism Insurance Resource Center provides free information, assistance, trainings, webinars, and other resources on issues related to medical insurance for autism treatment. <http://massairc.org/>

Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI)

CBHI ensures that children with MassHealth, 21 years or younger, who have significant behavioral, emotional and mental health needs and their families get the services they need for success in home, school, community, and throughout life.

www.mass.gov/masshealth/cbhi

MassHealth Services: MassHealth or Mass CommonHealth

MassHealth (as a primary insurance) or Mass CommonHealth (as a supplemental insurance) provides comprehensive health insurance - or help in paying for private health insurance - to more than one million Massachusetts children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities.

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/masshealth/>

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/cbhi/cbhi-ha.pdf>

MassHealth Customer Service: 1-800-841-2900

If your child has been diagnosed with ASD, they may be eligible for Applied Behavior Analysis Services (ABA), alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices, personal care attendant (PCA) services, the children's behavioral health initiative (CBHI), or adult foster care (AFC) if they have MassHealth coverage.

State Agencies (continued)

Team or their MRC counselor, or by directly applying to MRC for pre-employment services. These services are in addition to transition services under the student's IEP.

<https://www.mass.gov/mrc-transition-services-for-students-and-youth>

BenePLAN and Project IMPACT

Provides personal benefit counseling to people that get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and are employed or looking for a job. This can help individuals with disabilities understand what may happen when they go to work or increase earnings.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/statewide-employment-services>

Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Seven Autism Support Centers

The mission of the Autism support centers, which are funded by DDS, is to provide support for children, and adults with ASD, and their families throughout Massachusetts. The Autism support centers offer trainings, workshops, and activities to help connect families and help them to enable their children and adults with ASD to be integrated members of their communities. The link and the list below will guide you to the support center closest to your community.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/autism-support-centers-list>

Autism Support Centers

Advocates, Inc./Autism Alliance of Metrowest (508) 652-9900
www.autismalliance.org

Autism Resource Center: Central MA (508) 835-4278
www.autismresourcecentral.org

Northeast ARC (978) 777-9135 x2301 or 2302
www.ne-arcautismsupportcenter.org

TILL: Autism Support Center (781) 302-4600
www.tillinc.org/autism_training.html

Autism Connections: Western MA (413) 529-2428
<https://pathlightgroup.org/programs-and-services/autism-connections>

The Family Autism Center: Norfolk Co. & Surrounding Areas (781) 762-4001 x310
www.arcsouthnorfolk.org/family-autism-center.html

Community Autism Resources: Southeastern, MA 508-379-0371
www.community-autism-resources.com

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE)

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is committed to preparing all students for success in the world that awaits them after high school.

Special Education and Secondary Transition

This link provides information on the transition visual model, as well as numerous secondary transition resources.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/secondary-transition/>

Secondary Transition Family and Student Brochures

These brochures, created through a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education/Federation for Children with Special Needs collaboration, offer information and tips on transition planning, assessment, and services, as well as the Age of Majority, Self-Determination, and other topics.

<https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/transition-resources/brochures/>

Chapter 688 Referral Process

Massachusetts Chapter 688 (also known as the “Turning 22 Law”) stipulates that a student receiving special education, who because of the severity of his or her needs may require continued disability-related services upon exiting school (by graduating or turning twenty-two years of age, whichever occurs first), shall be offered specific, coordinated transition planning. The Bureau of Transitional Planning (BTP) is for all students referred under Chapter 688 process.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/688/>

Special Education Planning and Policy Office

Individualized special education services are designed for students with disabilities who—because of their disabilities—need specially designed instruction or related services in order to make progress in the general curriculum and access the life of the school. The Special Education Planning and Policy Office has many resources available for families:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/>

These resources include Technical Assistance Advisories and Guidance. Some of these resources provide information specific to individuals diagnosed with ASD.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/default.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) (continued)

Public School Monitoring (PSM)

PSM implements the Department’s compliance monitoring and provides technical assistance to school personnel and the public regarding the implementation of laws and regulations.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/> 781-338-3000

Problem Resolution System (PRS)

PRS receives and resolves complaints from the public on special education issues.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs/>

A Parent’s Guide to Special Education

Written by the Federation for Children with Special Needs in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Guide is a resource for parents, and the organizations that serve them. The Guide contains the most current information available regarding special education in Massachusetts. <http://fcsn.org/parents-guide>

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Resources

This document assists Schools and IEP Teams to prevent bullying of students with disabilities.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/considerations-bully.html>