Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) Transitioning to Adult Services Toolkit

Listed here are some of the resources available to students who are getting ready to move from school life to adult life and their families. Reach out to your school and to the local school transition coordinators at the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) for more information.

***OPWDD website*:** https://opwdd.ny.gov

Go to https://opwdd.ny.gov/access-supports/school-transition ***to get:***

- ***Letter to Parent/Guardian*** from Willow Baer, OPWDD Acting Commissioner
- ***Student/Parent/Guardian Consent*** (form)
- ***Transition Planning: from school to adult life*** (brochure)

***Also on OPWDD's website*:**

- ***Getting a Job and Participating in Your Community*** (brochure)
  Getting a Job and Participating In Your Community Brochure | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
- ***Employment Training Program*** (flyer)
  Employment Training Program Flyer | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (ny.gov)
- ***Employment Training Program for Students*** (flyer)
  Employment Training Program for Students Flyer | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (ny.gov)
- ***Right @ Home Supports at Home and Help with Housing*** (brochure)
  https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/03/032_right-at-home-housing-brochures_342020.pdf
- ***Eligibility For OPWDD Services Important Facts*** (fact sheet)
  https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2026/02/nys_opwdd_eligibility_important_facts_final_02-12-26_acc.pdf
- ***How Can I Get Services? The Front Door*** (brochure)
  How Can I Get Services: Front Door Brochure | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (ny.gov)
- ***My Life, My Choice Self-Directed Services*** (brochure)
  Self-Direction Brochure | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (ny.gov)
- ***Family Support Services (FSS) Overview*** (brochure)
  https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/05/017_family_support_services_4202022.pdf
- ***Comprehensive Assessments*** (brochure)
  https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/05/031_comp-assesments-cans_5_3_21-.pdf
- ***Care Management CCO Coverage Areas*** (flyer)
  https://opwdd.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2026/01/043_cco-coverage-chart-1_5_26.pdf

More resources you can find on the internet:

The resources listed in the sections below are for general information purposes only. Listed organizations may not be under the control nor in any way affiliated with OPWDD.

New York State (NYS) Education Department (NYSED) – Office of Special Education (OSE):

- **NYS Special Education** http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/ - *Information geared to parents/guardians.*
- **NYS Special Education Task Force** www.nyspecialedtaskforce.org - *Forum for parents, advocates, attorneys, school personnel, service providers, and individuals with disabilities – discuss issues, policies, proposed changes to law and regulations affecting students with disabilities. Includes the "Special Education in Plain Language Guide."*
- **Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)** http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/student-and-youth-transition-services - *ACCES-VR provides services to help youth with disabilities prepare for employment, post-secondary education and community living when they leave school and to help eligible individuals reach employment goals.*
- **Joint SED-OMH School Letter (10-23-24) & "Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resources for NYS Schools, Families, and Students Fall 2024"** State Education Department and NYS Office of Mental Health Letter to the Field About Mental Health In Schools - Mental Health Association in NYS, Inc. – *The "Joint SED-OMH School Letter (10-23-24)" provides information about two key initiatives available to schools to promote shared goal of ensuring students and adults supporting them have tools and resources to thrive: establishing school based mental health clinics, and providing Mental Health First Aid to teachers and students.*

  "Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resources for NYS Schools, Families, and Students Fall 2024" is an extensive list of resources for school professionals, parents/families, youth/students, and materials for at risk populations and encouraging student involvement. Some of these resources and links are not owned by OMH or SED but are provided by external entities. By providing these links, OMH and SED are not endorsing these sites or endorsing any of the opinions expressed.

United States Government

- ***U.S. Department of Education (DOE):***
  - **Transition Guide -** https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/postsecondary-transition-guide-august-2020.pdf - *Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities.*
- ***U.S. Department of Labor (DOL):***
  - **Youth Transition Services** - Youth Transition Services | U.S. Department of Labor – *contains information that can help youth acquire knowledge and learn skills during the transition years from ages 14 or 16 to ages 25 or 30 that they will need to maximize their independence and self-sufficiency in their communities.*
  - **Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success** - Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success – *a curriculum developed by ODEP focused on teaching "soft" or workforce readiness skills to youth, including youth with disabilities.*

Additional Transition Resources:

Autism Speaks https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit - *Tool kit that provides suggestions and options for families as they set out to find their child's own unique path to adulthood.*

Autism Speaks https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/new-york-ttk.pdf - *A short transition guide that provides general information about transitioning from school to the adult world in NYS.*

NY Connects https://www.nyconnects.ny.gov/ – *NYS government resource that provides free information about long term services and supports in New York for people of all ages or with any type of disability.*

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)
https://transitionta.org/topics/secondary-education/transition-planning/ - *NTACT's website – provides resources and tools to guide the process of transition planning for success beyond school - includes assessment and skill development tools.*

Parent to Parent Support for Special Needs Caregivers in NY | Parent to Parent (ptopnys.org) – *Parent to Parent is a statewide not-for-profit organization that supports and connects families of individuals with special needs.*

Transition Planning for Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/transition-planning-for-students-with-ieps/ – *Article addressing the importance for students with IEPs of planning for life after school is over.*

Youth Power https://www.ftnys.org/youthpower/ – *Youth Power is a NYS network (hosted by Families Together in NYS, Inc.) run for and by youth and young adults to ensure young people have meaningful involvement in all levels of the services they receive.*

Parent Network of Western New York https://parentnetworkwny.org – *provides education and resources for families of individuals with special needs (birth through adulthood) and for professionals, including 1-on-1 support and education through resources, workshops and support groups to assist families of individuals with disabilities to understand their disability and navigate the support service system.*

Videos about Transition

- **Federally Mandated Elements /IEP: Transition Services**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGozmLY16g4 – *Short video to help individuals/families understand their special education rights.*
- **NYS Commission on Quality of Care (CQC) Disability and Law: Transitioning from School to Work Series** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAR9KOy04Ik – *Video exploring the importance of preparing young adults with disabilities for the world of work. Uses informative interviews with students with disabilities, employers, parents, transition coordinators, teachers, attorneys and school administrators.*
- **Ten Sigma** – http://tensigma.org/transition-tuesday-replay/ & https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PxHcnKZjkY *An assortment of videos on transition produced by Ten Sigma, a non-profit agency in Minnesota whose mission is to provide parents, schools and school districts with practical tools to teach, assess, and better ensure student success.*