



A FAMILY GUIDE:

Community Participation Pathway

PROVIDED BY THE TCDSB SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND

SURREY  **PLACE**



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IN GOD'S IMAGE: *Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope*

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About this Resource

This guide has been developed to address the importance of transition planning for those who will be participating in community programs and supports after high school graduation. Although students can stay in school until June of the year they turn 21, you should start thinking about what your child will do after graduation and explore opportunities during the first couple years of high school. Services for your child will not be easily attainable after graduation, so the earlier you begin to plan the better. It is never too early to start!

Pathway to Community Participation

To help with goal setting, developing skills and overall long-term transition planning, think about your child's interests, strengths, needs and where you see your child in the future. With this in mind, devise a shared vision for your child and start to create opportunities to get them there. For direction and clarity as you plan for the pathway to community participation, think about the questions below.

What is the shared vision for your child after high school?

- Involvement in the community
- Develop more pre-employment skills
- Support at home with family members
- Build and keep friendships and supportive relationships
- Live semi-independently
- Learning skills in an educational setting

Ministry of Ontario Supports and Programs

When an individual turns 18 there is a switch to adult services. Ministry funded adult services are not automatic. Follow the information below to ensure the switch to adult services occurs for your child.



1. Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)

Ministry funded Adult Services, [Developmental Services Ontario](#) (DSO) are available only to those who are eligible. There is a process to register, and it is long. To determine eligibility, call to register at age 16.

Phone: 1-855-372-3858.

Calls are answered by 211, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week in multiple languages.

Email: dsotr@surreyplace.ca

DSO can help with:

- Supportive Housing
- Community Participation Supports (e.g., daytime, recreational and social programs)
- Passport Funding
- Respite (caregiver relief)
- Person-Directed Planning (individualized goal setting and planning)
- Family Support Worker (FSW)

Important Information Regarding Adult Services

- Adult services are accessed and available through DSO.
- To confirm eligibility, DSO will request psychoeducational or developmental assessments, Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and proof of identity.
- For those who meet the criteria, DSO will provide a letter of eligibility. Keep this letter. This letter can be used to apply for ODSP.
- Wait time is prioritized by need.
- Contact DSO to update them about your current situation, including:
 - Change of address or phone number.
 - Changes to the caregiver's ability to support the individual.
 - Significant changes to the individual's support needs for example a change in medical status or behaviour.
 - To update or discuss services and supports.
 - If the individual or family are approaching a crisis, for example homelessness, or hospitalization of the individual or caregiver.



For more information about DSO, watch this video:

[Preparing students with developmental disabilities for life after high school](#)

2. Passport Funding Program

Ministry funding such as [Special Services at Home \(SSAH\)](#), [Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities \(ACSD\)](#) and services through [Ontario Autism Program \(OAP\)](#) end at 18 years old. After 18 years, this type of funding shifts to Passport Funding.

Adults registered and eligible for DSO can apply for funding through Passport at 18 years (contact DSO). [Passport Funding](#) is a reimbursement program, you are not provided with the funds up front. Criteria for things that are eligible for Passport Funding do change. If you are unsure, then please contact Passport to inquire before making a purchase. If you are not sure how to use the funding, please contact DSO or Passport for ideas. Access to funding is subject to available resources.

Use your Passport Funding amount within the fiscal year, which is from April 1st to March 31 every year. Funds do not get carried over from one fiscal year to another.

Examples of what Passport Funding can be used for:

- Community Participation Supports (e.g., daytime, recreational, social programs)
- Activities of daily living, recreation and leisure
- Respite (caregiver relief)
- Person-Directed Planning
- Personal Support Workers



For more information on Passport Funding, watch this video:

[Introduction to the Passport Program](#)

3. Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)



ODSP

Ontario Disability Support Program

[Ontario Disability Support Program](#) provides income support and employment support for adults with disabilities.

Income Support - Helps pay for living expenses and health benefits (drug and dental). It may include funding for special diets, incontinence supplies, transportation to medical appointments and medical supplies.

Employment Support - Helps people with a disability, who are ready to work, find a job and keep a job. [ODSP Employment Support](#) connects people with community-based service providers who deliver the support.

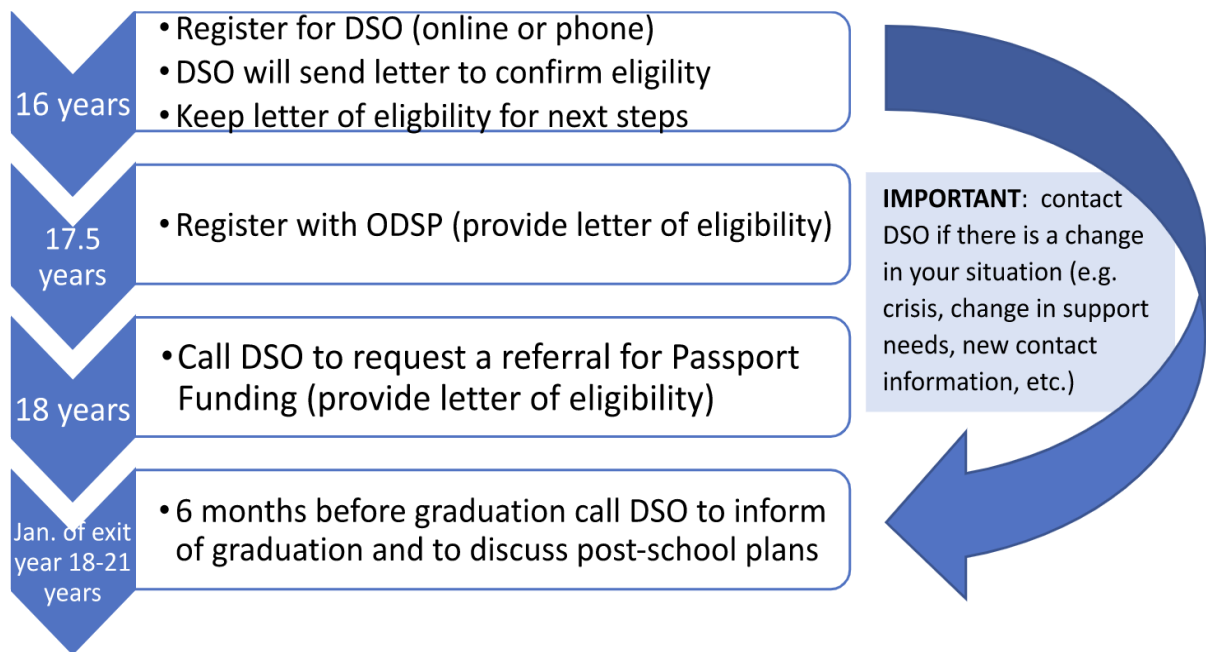
To Apply to ODSP income support:

- Apply at 17.5 years
- Proof of disability is needed. You can use the letter of eligibility from DSO.
- Apply to ODSP, [online](#) or in-person using the [ODSP Office Locator](#)

Once school is over, it is very likely that there will be a long wait period for adult services. Consider saving a portion of ODSP funds to pay for future community programs.

Shifting from Children Services to Adult Services

When your teenager turns 18, children services will end, and new adult services may begin. Transitioning to adult services is a process that requires planning. There are important timeframes that require actions in order to access services.



CONTACT INFORMATION

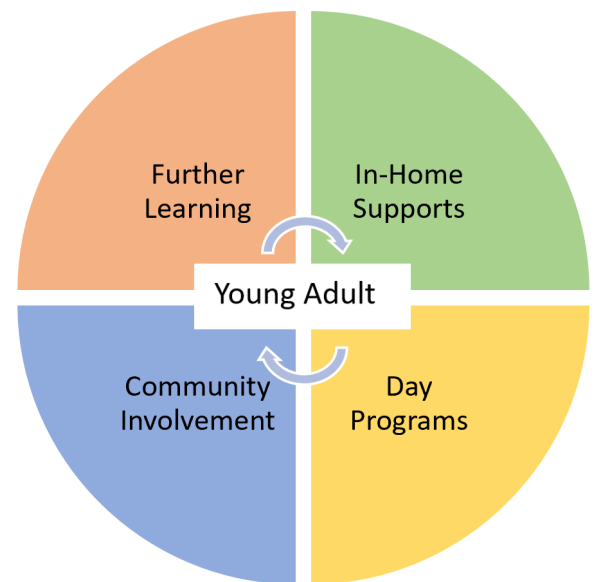
DSO - [DSO Toronto Region - Surrey Place](#) In Toronto call, 1-855-372-3858 or email dsotr@surreyplace.ca

PASSPORT FUNDING - [Family Service Toronto](#) In Toronto call, 416-780-1106 or email passport@familyserVICESToronto.org

ODSP - [Ontario Disability Support Program](#) Use the ODSP Office Locator to find the contact information for your particular office.

Options After High School

During high school, students are engaged in a full-time structured learning program. This will shift once your child graduates. What community participation looks like for your child after high school, is influenced by the shared vision as well as the available options and supports that exist. The following diagram and chart may be useful as you consider your options and set goals for your child's transition. Remember you are not limited to one option.



If your goal is...	you can...
In-Home Supports refers to services that the family or residential placement arranges that occur in the home. May include personal care, skill development or leisure at home.	Establish your support network for example personal support workers (PSW), family, and friends. Plan for respite (paid, family, and friends), this will give caregivers a necessary break. Connect with community agencies and professional supports.
Day Programs refers to structured programs in a group setting that focus on recreation and leisure, developing life skills, or pre-employment skill building. Ratios vary from 1:5 to 1:16. 1:1 ratio is reserved for those with complex needs. This is an extra fee. Hiring a support worker can cost an extra \$210/day.	*Ministry funded spots from DSO exist, but the wait is extremely long. Most students will not have a spot after high school and will have to pay for services. Investigate and visit day programs suited to your child's needs and interests. Pay for a fee-for-service spot using Passport Funding, ODSP money or your own money.
Community Involvement refers to creating your own schedule using resources within the community. It can include a variety of activities such as recreation and leisure, library visits, social groups, volunteering, shopping, cooking.	Look for programs and volunteer opportunities within your community. Look for recreation and leisure activities related to your child's interests. Connect with familiar peers and family members Hire a respite worker or PSW.
Further Learning Opportunities refers to programs with a vocational focus offered within a school board or a postsecondary environment.	Investigate, visit and apply to: CICE program at Humber College Msgr. Fraser Transition to Work Program Project Search Toronto.

Growing in the Community

Community is much more than just the place where we live. Community refers to a sense of belonging. This looks different to everyone. Consider your child's personality and strengths and how they can contribute to their community in an active and meaningful way.

1. Building Skills and Independence

To determine the skills that will be essential to develop, think, *"if my child doesn't learn the skill, will someone else have to do it for them?"* Practice skills regularly in the authentic environment for best success. For example, if the goal is to make a purchase at the grocery store, then practice this skill daily at a grocery store. The following skills are essential to foster to continue growing in the community.

- **Group Skills** - Many adult day programs require participants to be in a group setting. Being out in the community, traveling on the TTC, and going to events also requires group skills. To help develop group skills, you can:
 - Invite different people to the house.
 - Practice taking the TTC so your child is as comfortable and as independent as possible.
 - Go to events where you know there will be groups of people.
- **Independence** - The greater the independence an individual has, the more options there are upon graduation. To help develop independence you can:
 - Offer choice.
 - Encourage decision making (choose their own clothes, food).
 - Increase responsibility and household chores (cook, clean, sort clothes, laundry).
 - Practice life skills (open a bank account, make purchases in the community).
- **Flexibility** - The more practice an individual has with managing changes to their routines, the more they will accept new environments, people and experiences. To practice flexibility you can:
 - Make changes to their schedule.
 - Prepare them for known changes to their routine.
 - Have them work with different respite workers.
 - Increase exposure to different environments.

- **Social Supports and Building Networks** - Exposure to a variety of experiences outside of school and home will help to increase comfort, independence, and a sense of belonging. To build social supports and networks you can:
 - Build a network outside of school and immediate family well before high school ends.
 - Connect with other families that have children the same age as yours.
 - Join family support groups and attend workshops.
 - Register for programs within the local community or library.

2. Resources and Supports

Accessing resources in the community that align with your child's interests can help them build the skills and independence that they may need to achieve your shared vision. To further independence and to increase your child's level of comfort and ease as they transition to community participation, consider the following resources and supports.

Transportation Supports

- [TTC Support Person Assistance Card](#) allows one support person to ride the TTC for free when they are accompanying a person with a disability. You can apply in person or by mail (a passport photo is required).
- [Wheel-Trans](#) provides a safe and reliable transportation option for persons with disabilities.
- [Fair Pass Transit Discount Program - Toronto](#) provides a discount for eligible users for one year. This is income dependent. Those who receive ODSP are eligible for this program.

Social, Recreation and Leisure

- [Access 2 Card](#) is for people with disabilities who require the assistance of a support person at entertainment, cultural and recreational venues across Canada. The Access 2 card holder pays a regular admission price and receives one free or discounted admission for their support person.
- [Special Olympics](#) Register as an athlete to participate in a variety of sports for people with intellectual disabilities throughout the year.
- [Accessible Recreation – City of Toronto](#) Specialized programs for individuals with special needs available through Toronto Parks and Recreation. There are a limited number of staff who can provide support. Participants may bring their own 1:1 support person.

- [Welcome Policy – Recreation Fee Subsidy – City of Toronto](#) for families who need financial assistance to enroll in City of Toronto Parks and Recreation programs. If eligible, you will receive a credit that can be spent on any of the recreation programs for a 12-month period. Eligibility depends on family income.
- [Accessible Recreation Facilities & Equipment – City of Toronto](#) for people with disabilities.
- [Summer Camps in Ontario For Individuals With Special Needs](#) lists various camp options.
- [Student Links Mentoring | Community Living Ontario](#) program that matches students ages 14-21, who have an intellectual disability, with mentors who share a common passion or interest.

Safety in the Community

- [My Hospital Form](#) or [About My Health](#) - tools to help prepare for health care appointments and communicate with doctors.
- [One-Page Profile](#) can be used to create a single page handout that outlines things that are important to your child and how best to support them. This information is helpful to new people who may be working with your child.
- [Ontario Photo Card](#) is a government issued ID for people without a driver's license. You can apply at 16 years of age at a Service Canada office.

3. Adult Programs and Services

Start exploring adult programs and services that may be a good fit for your child once they graduate from high school. Think about options that align with your child's strengths, interests and goals. For suggestions on programs and services for adults, investigate places in your community, and see below.

Further Learning Opportunities

If your shared vision is vocational experiences, there are alternative high school programs that can be explored for students who are in their fifth, sixth or seventh year.

- [Transition to Work Program | Monsignor Fraser College](#) provides students who are 18-20 years old the opportunity to learn workplace skills in a supportive environment within the TCDSB.
- [Project SEARCH Toronto](#) is a school to work transition program for students in their final year of high school that occurs entirely at a workplace. It involves classroom instruction, and hands-on training through work placements.

If your shared vision is further learning after your child leaves high school, consider the following.

- [Community Integration through Co-operative Education \(CICE\) - Humber College](#) is a two-year certificate program designed to give adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to experience college life.
- [Adult Literacy: Toronto Public Library](#) offers free one-on-one tutoring in basic reading, writing and math for adults 19 or older (exceptions may apply).

Community Participation Support Programs

- [While You Wait - DSO](#) is a list of community programs and services for adults with disabilities and their families to explore while you are waiting for a ministry-funded placement. Wait times for ministry-funded placements are long. Families are encouraged to seek outside resources while waiting.
- [Community Participation Supports for Adults with Developmental Disabilities - DSO](#) is a list of agencies that provide government-funded programs to adults living in Toronto. Many of the agencies also offer service for a fee. Details about each program, including staffing support ratios, and contact information are listed.

Some questions to ask as you investigate programs:

- Are you offering in-person or virtual services?
- Can you describe the program or service?
- What is the ratio of participants to staff?
- If 1:1 is needed, ask about extra support.
- Is there a waitlist?
- What are the outcomes/success rates for skills-based programs?
- What is the cost?
- Is there a part-time option?

Create a Portfolio

Collect and save important documents to create a portfolio. These can include formal documents to help with planning for future services. Also, samples of work to create a profile of different achievements can assist with future opportunities.

Important Documents to Assist with the Transition to Adult Services can include:

- Psychological reports
- Diagnosis
- Medical information/assessments
- Most recent IEP
- Most recent report cards
- Most recent IPRC form
- Behaviour Support Plan or Behaviour Safety Plan
- Documents to help display strengths, interests and accomplishments
- Completed [One-Page Profile](#)

For additional ideas on how to create a portfolio that is best suited to your child, consider using the Journey to Adulthood Portfolio, a downloadable resource to help you create a system to have quick access to important documents. Go to [Transition to Adulthood Resources | Autism Ontario](#) and select Journey to Adulthood Portfolio.

Long Term Planning

For advice regarding power of attorney, RDSP, Henson Trusts, ODSP, or tax credits speak to professionals specializing in planning for people with a disability. If any organizations offer products or services for sale, make sure you are fully aware of what you are purchasing and that all your questions are answered.

Planning Organizations and Tools

- [Inspiring Possibilities Estate Planning Guide](#) is an online toolkit from Community Living Ontario with advice from legal, tax and accounting professionals who specialize in supporting people who have a disability.
- [Special Needs Planning Group](#) is an organization made up of parents of people with disabilities who are planners, lawyers and accountants and who specialize in planning for people with disabilities.
- [Partners for Planning](#) (P4P) is an organization committed to supporting and guiding families in building a meaningful, safe, and secure future for a family member with a disability. Register for their e-newsletter to receive monthly updates on resources. All resources are free.

Things to Consider for Long Term Planning

- Apply for a social insurance number.
- Open a bank account and practice money skills.
- Open and contribute to RDSP (Government contributes through matching grants and bonds).
- Apply for a disability tax credit certificate with CRA (form T2201).
- Seek professional advice.

Transition Tip Sheets

Below you will find a series of Transition Tip Sheets providing information on different areas relating to the transition to postsecondary for students on the Community Participation Pathway.

Each handout includes suggestions to consider for supporting your child's transition both at school and at home.

Please click on the images to access the one-page tip sheets.



Appendix A: Family Guide Checklist

Consider using this checklist to support individual goals and planning.

What are the next steps for making the switch to adult services? Here are steps involved in transitioning to adult services. This chart can help you understand what comes next in the process. You can check the steps as they are completed. The green colour represents the year in which the step is most likely to be completed.			
Gr10	Gr12	Yr 6/7	DSO Developmental Services Ontario (pg. 4)
			Register for DSO either online or by phone at 16 years, process takes 2 yrs.
			Gather important documents (assessments, IEP, IPRC) for DSO application. The school can provide copies if needed.
			Registered and waiting for a letter of eligibility.
			Received Letter of Eligibility (keep for ODSP application).
			Completed “intake” meeting with DSO. Note: Consider adding your child to all lists (e.g., residential, community programs). Lists are needs based. Give an accurate picture of needs.
			If there are any changes to individual circumstances, call DSO to update. Consider calling annually.
			Contact DSO, 6 months prior to exit, to inform that your child is ready for adult services. There will be a wait (years) for government funded spots. Wait is based on need.
			Investigate fee-for-service programs (DSO While you Wait).
Gr10	Gr12	Yr 6/7	Passport Funding (Must be registered with DSO. Reimbursement program) (pg.5)
			Call DSO at 18 years old to request Passport application.
			Call DSO/Passport if needs change (amount based on need).
Gr10	Gr12	Yr 6/7	ODSP Ontario Disability Support Program (pg.5)
			Begin ODSP application online, 6 months before 18th birthday.
			Use DSO letter of eligibility (proof of disability) to support ODSP application.
			Applied and waiting to receive ODSP.
			Receiving ODSP monthly income support.
			Consider saving ODSP for future programming post high school.

Focus on a Person-Centred Approach (pg.7)

What would help your child feel happy, relaxed and engaged after they graduate?

Strengths/Interests:	Challenges/Barriers:
Shared Vision:	Options After High School: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Home Supports <input type="checkbox"/> Day Program <input type="checkbox"/> Community Involvement <input type="checkbox"/> Further Learning

Growing in the Community (pg. 8)

Consider how your child can develop skills that will help lead them to your shared vision and a sense of belonging in their community. Continue to build the skills that they will need to be successful after they exit high school.

Choose 1 or 2 areas to focus on developing this year.	Skills to focus on at Home and/or School
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Skills - for example practice TTC, engage in group activities, go to events.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Independence - for example increase responsibility and household chores, practice life skills, offer choice.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility - for example increase exposure to different people & places, make planned changes to routine/schedule.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Supports/Build Networks - for example connect with families, support groups, sign up for workshops, programs.	

Resources and Supports (pg. 9-10) Consider accessing some of the following:

- ☐ Ontario Photo Card (16 years)
- ☐ Access2 Card through Easter Seals
- ☐ TTC Support Person Card/Wheel Trans
- ☐ Special Olympics
- ☐ Toronto Parks and Rec (Adapted Programs and Integrated Services)

- ☐ Student Links Mentoring - Community Living
- ☐ Create a one-page profile
- ☐ Person Directed Planning (PDP). Free service for Children & Youth up to 18 years. Available to Adults, 18+ years, for a fee (can use Passport Funding).
- ☐ Other _____

Adult Programs and Services Think about what your child enjoys and how they would like to spend their time, then investigate programs and opportunities. The resources below can assist in your investigation. (pg 11)

- ☐ Community Resource Directory from Surrey Place
- ☐ DSO Community Participation Supports for Adults with Developmental Disabilities
- ☐ My Community Hub for a list of fee-for-service opportunities
- ☐ Resource Directory on Connectability.ca for fee-for-service opportunities
- ☐ Call DSO for ideas of programs in your area
- ☐ Other _____

Possible programs to investigate: _____

Further Learning (pg. 10)

- ☐ T2W Msgr Fraser @ TCDSB
- ☐ Project Search Toronto
- ☐ CICE Humber College
- ☐ Adult Literacy Toronto Public Library
- ☐ Other _____

Create a Portfolio of important documents (pg.12)

- ☐ Gather important documents. The school can provide copies if needed.

Long Term Planning e.g., RDSP, Tax Credit, Henson Trust, Power of Attorney (pg.13)

- ☐ Consider seeking professional advice with respect to long-term planning.
- ☐ Consider investigating free planning tools.

Notes:

Notes:

**“Build up, build up, prepare the way,
remove every obstruction from my people’s way.”**

Book of Isaiah (57.14)

