Looking Ahead... Together

A Transition Planning Tool for Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Toronto Catholic District School Board

SURREY PLACE

July 2021 / Version 4.0

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION · WORKPLACE · POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

About "Looking Ahead...Together"

After students leave school, supports and services will change. Transition planning is an ongoing process and, due to the many complexities, takes a lot of time and thought. The available services and experiences for young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are dependent on many factors. There is no comprehensive service to support the needs of all adults with ASD. It is important to make informed choices early as these decisions can impact the future.

Using "Looking Ahead... Together"

This is a tool to support transition planning out of high school for individuals with ASD and other exceptionalities. It was created jointly by Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) and the School Support Program (SSP), Surrey Place. Families, schools and community agencies are encouraged to use this tool along with additional TCDSB/SSP transition planning resources that are listed at the back. These tools support the development of a Transition Plan, as per Policy and Program Memorandum 156 (PPM 156). This information is intended to support planning for the appropriate pathway and the tracking of transition activities. This document highlights transition related activities from grade eight to the fourth year of high school. Each school year focuses on considerations and strategies for home, school and community. These sections are followed by specific information relevant to the three postsecondary pathways; College/University, The Workplace and Community Participation. While planning, keep in mind that each individual has their own timeline, needs, strengths and interests.

Research has shown, "youth with Autism are at high risk for no postsecondary education or employment, especially in the first 2 years after high school. Findings highlight the need for improved transition planning ."
(Shattuck. P, et.al, 2012)

"When students with disabilities are well prepared for transition from high school to adulthood, the odds for them to have positive adult outcomes are likely to be increased"
(Roberts 2010)

My Postsecondary Plan

High School Course Selection Options:
- Academic
- Applied
- Locally Developed
- Non-credit earning (k-coded courses)

Name: _____   Date Initiated: _____

We are working towards the following diploma/certificate: _____

The expected exit date is: _____

The high school diploma/certificate that an individual is working towards will influence the postsecondary pathway. The following are the 3 pathways and the requirements needed to help fulfill them:

Pathway	Description	Requirements
College/ University	This pathway refers to typical college/university programs any student would apply to. The student with ASD that takes this pathway is a credit earning student.	OSSD
Employment	This pathway refers to a variety of competitive employment options, such as supported employment, customized employment and self-employment. Students that take this pathway can be credit earning or not, and would have varying abilities.	OSSD OSSC COA
Community Based Services	This pathway refers to those who access community based services/programs, such as Developmental Services Ontario (DSO), day programs, and/or leisure/recreational based activities. The student with ASD that takes this pathway usually takes non-credit earning courses (k-coded) or a combination of non-credit and credit earning courses not exceeding 14 credits.	COA

OSSD - Ontario Secondary School Diploma, 30 credits at the academic/applied/locally developed level

OSSC - Ontario Secondary School Certificate, 14 credits at the academic/applied/locally developed level

COA - Certificate of Accomplishment, non-credit earning courses

Setting the Goals for Postsecondary Planning

Setting goals is essential for any given pathway. Ensure goals are addressed on the Transition Plan. Consider using the TCDSB/SSP "Planning for Pathways" series of checklists to set goals in several domains/skills such as social skills, academics, daily living, and recreation.

Key Elements For Successful Transition Planning:

Teamwork — Using a team effort, decide on the pathway. The young adult should be encouraged to take a leadership role.

Address Goals — Establish goals for the short and long term that support the Pathway. Home, school, and community should identify strategies and create the experiences to achieve these goals. To generalize skills, link these goals into different environments.

Plan – Develop and review the Transition Plan regularly. This plan should be a work in progress and requires ongoing revisions. Outline how, where, and when the goals will be achieved and who will be responsible.

Set "S.M.A.R.T." Goals
The following criteria should be used to help define the goals on your transition plan to reduce ambiguity and increase the likelihood that all team players understand how to achieve the goals.
Specific – detailed, sequential and tailored to the individual.
Measurable – establish concrete criteria for progress and check for mastery before moving on.
Achievable – small and realistic to show progress is being made.
Relevant – ensure they coincide with the individual's strengths, needs, interests and pathway.
Timeline – time frames facilitate the progress of goals.
Adapted from: http://www.topachievement.com/smart.html

To support this planning process:
☐ use TCDSB/SSP transition resources, see back page
☐ if involved with a community agency discuss how they can take part in the process
☐ involve the Autism Support Teacher and other school team members working with the young adult
☐ Refer to Ministry of Education documents that support transition planning including Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 140 & PPM 156

Grade 8	Preparing for High School

The Toronto Catholic District School Board, in partnership with Surrey Place, School Support Program, has created a transition process with accompanying resources for students with ASD. This is a referral based service with key components consisting of gathering student information, establishing goals and strategies, transition visits, and follow-up in September.

High school can be challenging especially for students with ASD. The focus in grade 8 is to prepare students for the transition to high school. A successful transition to high school requires parents and school staff to work together in the best interest of the student.

For parents, consider attending the following activities:
• high school open house
• Parent Information Fair held at the Catholic Education Centre (CEC)
• summer school at the high school before starting in September

Questions to ask your Grade 8 Teacher:
• what level of study should my child be enrolled in for secondary school?
• is my child on a modified program or **are** they working at grade level?
• what types of accommodations **are being used**?

HOME
Access TCDSB/SP transition related materials, presentations and attend school meetings. Provide receiving school with information about your teen. Support your teen in independence and organizational skills.

SCHOOL
Access TCDSB/SP transition related resources, in-services and school meetings. Support transition visits, share information about the student. Work on goals to support the transition to the high school environment.

COMMUNITY
Service providers may provide useful information about the student and help access resources in the community to support the transition to high school.

This is a transition year for the student, family and school. The focus should be on easing the student into the new environment. For students needing further support in September, consider contacting the Autism Support Teacher.

❗ **PPM 156: Supporting Transitions for Students With Special Education Needs**: A transition plan must be developed for all students who have an IEP, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness. The transition plan is developed as part of the IEP.

HOME

Involvement from home is important for the high school transition process. Co-operation among home, school and community will help lessen anxieties and provide a foundation for success.

To ease the transition process, families can establish daily routines. Support for these routines and daily living skills can increase the teen's participation in the home, school and community.

↻ Review with your teen:
- ☐ TCDSB/SSP "Transition to High School: Preparing your Child for High School"
- ☐ documents related to your teen's profile including psychological reports and school records etc. and ensure they are up to date for eligibility for Special Services at Home (SSAH)

- ☐ TCDSB/SSP High School Profile Book

☑ Establish:
- ☐ morning and afterschool routine
- ☐ route to and from school
- ☐ safe person and home base at school and in the community
- ☐ method for ongoing communication between home and school
- ☐ times for community outings
- ☐ home responsibilities

⍰ Consider:
- ☐ parent support groups
- ☐ contacting community agencies
- ☐ respite care options
- ☐ associations related to your teen's needs (e.g. Autism Ontario)
- ☐ participating in your teen's school by attending school related activities
- ☐ attending the TCDSB Parent Fair
- ☐ TTC training (where appropriate)
- ☐ teaching safety skills
- ☐ extra-curricular activities within the school
- ☐ community involvement for your teen
- ☐ apply for access2entertainment card https://access2card.ca/get-your-card

SCHOOL

All students transitioning to grade 9 will feel some anxiety. There are many changes, such as using a locker, eating in the cafeteria and adjusting to different teachers and social situations. Some strategies which may be helpful include the use of visual supports and preparing for changes ahead of time.

↻ Review:
- ☐ relevant transition materials
- ☐ previous successful strategies and programming goals (work into the classroom setting and IEP)
- ☐ Community Resource Directory to access community support

☑ Establish:
- ☐ a transition plan in the IEP
- ☐ safe person and safe place at school and when and how to access them
- ☐ preferences that motivate the student and incorporate into programming
- ☐ new goals in areas of strengths and interests and work them into the classroom setting and IEP
- ☐ opportunities for community service hours

⍰ Consider:
- ☐ follow up visits from the Autism Team
- ☐ dates for completing TCDSB/SSP Inventory of Functional Skills (fall/spring)
- ☐ opportunities to expand experiences (e.g. community excursions)
- ☐ preparing the student for photo ID (TTC card)
- ☐ assigning a peer buddy to assist with supporting social integration and organization skills
- ☐ prioritizing learning strategies courses (GLE/GLS) at the beginning or end of the day
- ☐ adjusting and balancing time table
- ☐ requesting TCDSB/SSP "Planning for Pathways" series of checklists
- ☐ accessing structured work bins

COMMUNITY

Home, school and service providers should work together to provide necessary supports to help the teen with a successful grade 9 transition. With consent, families and community agencies may share relevant information with the high school (e.g. strategies, strengths, needs, and interests).

NOTES:

Community agencies may assist in accessing:
- ☐ transition planning resources
- ☐ funding (SSAH and Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities) which may support participation in community activities
- ☐ a suitable SSAH worker and a plan for how worker will support the teen
- ☐ information on how to use approved funding (e.g. respite, skill development, recreational, resources)
- ☐ respite services www.respiteservices.com
- ☐ camps/clubs/recreational programs that support self-care and social skills
- ☐ referral information for services (e.g. behaviour management, social skills groups, counselling, recreation, etc.)

- ☐ a plan to assist the teen to generalize skills in multiple environments
- ☐ information on exploring job possibilities

Self - Advocacy can be defined as the ability to understand one's rights, wants and needs with the ability to communicate those to others. Self advocacy is an essential skill in all aspects of life, especially after high school since supports change considerably. To be an effective self-advocate, an individual needs the following skills: • *self-confidence* • *decision making* • *self-evaluation and* • *problem solving*. Opportunities to practice self-advocacy should be created to support the teen. When appropriate, IEP/IPRC meetings are ideal environments for the student to discuss their strengths, needs, interests, nature of their disability and accommodations.

By the end of this school year, the student, family and school should be discussing the appropriate pathway that the student will be following. This will ensure that a specific and well-developed transition plan can be created. *See TCSDB/SSP Planning for Pathways Checklist: Alternative Curriculum Goals.*

🏠 HOME

To be a good self-advocate your teen needs to understand their disability, which allows them to better prepare for their future. Practice self-advocacy skills at home by using everyday events to help prepare teens to communicate their needs and preferences. Some examples include, opening a bank account, getting a summer job and planning and preparing a meal. Encourage your teen to participate in the IEP. You may want to help **them** practice introducing themselves and communicating desires for the future.

❗ REGISTER WITH DSO AT AGE 16

↺ **Review with your teen:**
- ☐ TCDSB postsecondary transition meeting documents (e.g. Parent checklist, Exit Plan)
- ☐ the nature of their disability
- ☐ safe people and places
- ☐ self-advocacy by role playing
- ☐ ways to communicate their needs
- ☐ the transition plan and adjust it based on their feedback
- ☐ the purpose of the IEP

☑ **Establish:**
- ☐ who will be the teen's advocate, if needed
- ☐ teen's involvement in the IEP
- ☐ how to disclose their disability and to whom

❓ **Consider:**
- ☐ creating a card for your teen to carry with them (this may include name, nature of disability and emergency contact information)
- ☐ the support system needed for getting to places
- ☐ preparing a job placement file with references and skills that have been acquired
- ☐ extra-curricular activities
- ☐ attending York University Project Advance Transition Day if student is planning to attend University

🍎 SCHOOL

Self-advocacy should be a priority for any pathway a student will take. Students should receive training and opportunities to:

- ☐ increase awareness of their disability and learning profile (strengths, needs, interests)
- ☐ understand the accommodations needed for successful learning and for future work placements
- ☐ better communicate their needs and preferences
- ☐ take on leadership roles for as much as the student is able
- ☐ decide when and how to disclose information about their disability

↺ **Review:**
- ☐ updated IEP
- ☐ that course selection and timetable support the identified pathway

☑ **Establish:**
- ☐ contact with Autism Team for postsecondary planning
- ☐ opportunities to comfortably communicate information about the student's disability and strengths
- ☐ roles of responsibility **for students**
- ☐ strategies for learning that support the pathway (e.g. accommodations & modifications)
- ☐ opportunities to practice asking for help
- ☐ in school work experience

❓ **Consider:**
- ☐ developing a portfolio with the student, including current IEP, accommodations, assessments, recommendations, assistive technology, volunteer certificates, etc.
- ☐ writing a resume with the student
- ☐ supporting the student in mock interview settings
- ☐ facilitating peer interactions via mainstream integration
- ☐ accessing TCDSB/SSP Planning for Pathways Checklists
- ☐ accessing structured work bins

👥 COMMUNITY

Self-advocacy is a key component for success within the community. Teens require encouragement and individualized strategies to communicate their strengths, needs and interests. The community, in collaboration with home and school, can assist in the acquisition of independent living skills and self-advocacy. In addition, all teens would benefit from general strategies to help reduce anxiety as they enter the community.

Community agencies may assist in accessing:
- ☐ resources that assist with future planning (e.g. Person Directed Planning)
- ☐ services/agencies that may assist the teen in the acquisition of self-advocacy skills such as;
  - » employment centres
  - » resume writing supports that summarize the education, skills, accomplishments, interests and experiences of the teen
- ☐ volunteer work
- ☐ summer employment
- ☐ job training and shadowing
- ☐ job placement
- ☐ safety skills training to promote sense of security and confidence

A teen can also engage in community activities that promote self-advocacy skills such as; transportation, shopping, eating out, enrollment in community recreational activities that promote peer interaction and friendship.

NOTES:

By now, the pathway for the teen should be established. This decision is the result of collaboration among the teen, family and school. When establishing pathways, the teen's strengths, needs and interests need to be considered. This can be done informally (observations, communication with teen) or formally (vocational evaluation, career assessment tools). There are secondary courses that can help explore vocational planning. In addition, there are vocational planning tools that can help to explore and gather information specific to the student's job/career interests and aptitudes, and assist in determining necessary daily life skills. The Guidance Department may have access to a variety of these resources. It may be helpful to book an appointment with the Guidance Department to review options. Other areas that may need to be evaluated include learning style as well as technology that will support the teen in the home, school and the community.

HOME

To prepare for future education, vocation and/or life skills, be creative with how you can shape your teen's interests and skills into meaningful work. To promote independence and decision making, parents can encourage and give greater responsibility (e.g. promoting independence in daily living skills). If appropriate, start an allowance and provide your teen with an understanding of how to manage earnings.

❗ **REGISTER WITH DSO AT AGE 16**

↻ **Review with your teen:**
- ☐ TCDSB postsecondary transition meeting documents (e.g. Parent checklist, Exit Plan)
- ☐ updated IEP, including transition plan
- ☐ career interests and assessments (co-ordinate with school and community)
- ☐ community employment training
- ☐ college/university course requirements
- ☐ college/university support services

☑ **Establish:**
- ☐ contact with Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) at age 16
- ☐ interests for co-op and work experience
- ☐ contacts and relationships with local business owners to solicit/secure work experience

❓ **Consider:**
- ☐ the type of future support needed for your teen
- ☐ opening a bank account
- ☐ obtaining a social insurance number
- ☐ how to promote, develop and retain friendships
- ☐ contacting community agencies
- ☐ connecting with parents and support groups
- ☐ practicing job interviewing skills
- ☐ time management skills
- ☐ routes to community centers, shopping centres, grocery stores, church, parks, library, etc.
- ☐ investigating supports/programs related to their pathway

SCHOOL

Ensure students are given opportunities to experience college, work and/or community supports in a variety of settings in order to determine the most suitable pathway. Explore options within each pathway to become knowledgeable about opportunities.

If the student is receiving a lot of support to be successful in high school, plan to systematically fade that support to the appropriate amount. This will allow them to experience independence and success.

See Pathway sections for more information.

↻ **Review:**
- ☐ updated IEP
- ☐ student's course selection
- ☐ pathway options and requirements
- ☐ career options

☑ **Establish:**
- ☐ Exit Plans for those graduating with OSSD/OSSC (Community Participation Exit Plan for those graduating with COA)
- ☐ supports to complete assignments independently
- ☐ pre-requisite skills for work experience, co-op or college/university
- ☐ opportunities for decision making
- ☐ programming to address functional and independence skills
- ☐ updated psycho-educational assessment for students heading to University

❓ **Consider:**
- ☐ how to engage student in extracurricular activities, clubs, etc.
- ☐ contacting guidance/student support services re: aptitude tests, career interest checklists and inventories for students graduating with OSSD/OSSC
- ☐ evaluating, determining, and developing skills for job readiness
- ☐ precursors to work experience such as job shadowing, in school co-op, mentoring, career fairs, etc.
- ☐ TCDSB/SSP Planning for Pathways Checklists
- ☐ accessing structured work bins

COMMUNITY

Community and employment agencies can support individuals and their families with a variety of needs including vocational assessments. Vocational assessments can assist in identifying a teen's strengths and interests for potential jobs.

Community programs can teach daily living skills which will support the identified pathway.

Community agencies may assist in accessing:
- ☐ agencies that conduct vocational assessments
- ☐ recreational activities
- ☐ summer camps
- ☐ social skills groups
- ☐ special interest clubs
- ☐ volunteer programs
- ☐ counselling supports
- ☐ support groups
- ☐ information for Special Services at Home (SSAH) including reviewing and updating applications. Note: SSAH becomes "Passport" funding once the student turns 18 years old
- ☐ information on Developmental Services Ontario (DSO), (e.g. eligibility, types of service *see Pathway to Community Participation)

*phone when individual is 16 years old

NOTES:

At this time, a pathway should be established. "**Look Ahead**" and ensure that all prerequisites are being met.

Some students may be graduating this year. Depending on the needs of the student, there is the option of remaining in the school system until June of the year that they turn age 21.

Whether the student is graduating or remaining, it is important to ensure that the Transition Plan of the IEP is being implemented and that there is a clear action plan for all areas identified. "**Look Ahead**" to the pathway and identify a variety of experiences that may help prepare for the transition. Attention to skills that are needed and the opportunity to practice them in different environments will help prepare for future possibilities. Incorporate this information into the Transition Plan.

HOME

If your young adult is graduating, review previously identified goals in areas such as navigating the new environment, self-advocacy, social communication, work readiness and independence skills. Develop a plan for the skills that need to be strengthened.

If your young adult is remaining in high school, continue investigating pathway options, volunteer work, apprenticeships, co-op/work experience, and community activities.

Families can encourage their young adults to develop social skills that are important for postsecondary school success by building on interpersonal relationships and involvement in recreational and community activities.

❗ **Ensure DSO intake meeting is completed for those eligible.**

↻ **Review with your young adult:**
☐ IEP and transition plan
☐ necessity for self disclosure of diagnosis to qualify for modified admissions and ongoing support through postsecondary education
☐ open houses for college/university and summer transition program/workshop
☐ community integration, apprenticeship programs, career fairs
☐ application forms for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

☑ **Establish:**
☐ a portfolio that can include; work examples, certificates, awards, letters of recommendation, co-op/work experience, job interests

❓**Consider:**
☐ updating medical services (e.g. pediatrician to family doctor)
☐ goals in different settings
☐ bus routes to new places
☐ how the young adult will use support services at college/university
☐ readiness skills for employment directly upon graduation
☐ if the young adult will remain in school until 21 years of age
☐ applying for Passport Funding through DSO
☐ participation in graduation ceremony activities (e.g. photographs, prom, ceremony)

SCHOOL

It is important to ensure that the transition plan is being implemented and that there is a clear action plan.

Students who are planning on attending college/university should consult with their Guidance Department about the admission process and their need for support services.

Secondary Resource Teachers and Autism Team members may provide information about specialized programs for students who would not qualify for a traditional college or university program but would benefit from a postsecondary experience that offers courses in life and employment preparation.

☐ See TCDSB/SSP resources: Transition to Postsecondary Pathways for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); Translating Research Into Practice. January 2015.

↻ **Review with your student:**
☐ IEP and transition plan
☐ entrance requirements for college/ university programs
☐ options for modified admissions (student must self-disclose their diagnosis for any support services)
☐ information on student support services, if applying to college/ university
☐ community training programs, apprenticeship programs

☑ **Establish:**
☐ a meeting to finalize Transition Plan with Autism Team Member
☐ portfolio items (e.g. work samples, assistive daily living inventories, etc.)
☐ updates to Exit Plan for OSSD/OSSC
☐ updates to Community Participation Exit Plan (those graduating with COA)

❓**Consider:**
☐ programming for job readiness, life skills and/or skills required for postsecondary education
☐ suitability for TCDSB Msgr. Fraser College special needs co-op program
☐ how to encourage the student to join extra-curricular activities
☐ reduced course load for college/ university
☐ accessing TCDSB/SSP Planning for Pathways Checklists
☐ accessing structured work bins

COMMUNITY

Extra support may be needed prior to the transition in areas such as:
☐ interpersonal skills
☐ communication skills
☐ job related skills (e.g. money management)
☐ transportation training
☐ exploration of work experiences

Community agencies, and/or government programs may provide resources, training opportunities and information to access services to help families and their teens with job readiness and/or postsecondary education (see Community Resource Directory for assistance in finding programs).

Professionals in the community can help set goals for the future. Families and young adults are encouraged to share these goals with all team members.

Community agencies may assist in accessing:
☐ Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) There are 2 aspects of ODSP Income Supports – the lifetime pension. Apply 6 months prior to their 18th birthday.
Employment Supports – additional funds for preparing the recipient for the workplace. Apply 2 months prior to graduation if teen is leaving school and requires assistance to enter the workplace. Student must be "work ready."
☐ relevant leisure and interest activities for the young adult
☐ information for Special Services at Home (SSAH) including reviewing and updating applications. Note: SSAH becomes "Passport" funding once the student turns 18 years old
☐ vocational program
☐ job search agencies
☐ college/university transition programs, disability services, Learning Strategists, etc.

NOTES:

Turning 18: A parent is a "legal guardian" for their son/daughter until their child reaches 18 years of age. Turning 18 means that a parent no longer has the legal right to make decisions for their child as they are now considered an independent adult. Parents, school and community professionals need to look at various activities, supports and services that help the young adult transition to adult life. In some cases, an 18 year old may require a "guardian" or a "trustee" to handle financial matters or for overall care.

For students graduating with an OSSC or COA and entering a vocational college program see Pathway to the Workplace. For students entering a Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) college program see Pathway to Community Participation.

According to a 2010 survey, (Alcorn MacKay, S. *Identifying Trends and Supports for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder Transitioning into Post Secondary*) the number of Ontario high school students with ASD expected to go to college or university is on the rise.

To qualify for a college/university program, where students will graduate with a diploma or degree, students must have achieved their OSSD. All students, including those with a diagnosis and/or IEP, are expected to fulfill the same requirements therefore modifications are not available. Previous IEP accommodations do not automatically transfer however accommodations can be made to support the needs of the student through a letter of accommodation. Letters of accommodation do not label any diagnosis; it only states the appropriate accommodations. There are occasions when an accommodation does not meet the integrity of the course (**e.g.** cannot allow calculators for nursing students must be able to calculate dosage in their head). Students must self-advocate by making an appointment with accessibility/disability services to obtain a letter of accommodation that they are responsible for presenting to their professor.

In Ontario, colleges/universities have services to assist students with an identified disability. Depending on the institution, it may be referred to as Disability or Accessibility Services. Check with the college/university for information as early as the fall of the year that the student is graduating from high school.

Accessibility/Disability Service's Role: this service verifies the disability on behalf of the student and decides on accommodations. It ensures Human Rights obligations are met and will collaborate in the accommodations process. As well, it organizes services and supports, and problem solves with students faculty and staff.

"It has been shown that retention rates are higher for those students who utilize accessibility/disability services."
York University, Project Advance, 2011

Transitioning to College/University:

☐ attend open houses, check available support services, types of programs and requirements

☐ once accepted, apply for Accessibility/Disability Services as soon as possible

☐ connect with this service early even if you decide that you want to use it at a later date, schedule an appointment in the summer before it gets busy (before late August)

☐ the student must self-disclose their disability to qualify for Accessibility/Disability Services and may need recent medical and/or psychological reports to support their application

☐ determine if the institution has a Modified Admissions process—this is a separate application

☐ determine if reduced course load is needed and/or possible (not all programs allow for reduced course load)

☐ apply for a student loan through OSAP

☐ students with OSAP and registered with Accessibility/Disability Services can apply for a reduced course load without effecting OSAP funds

☐ student may be eligible for additional funding, including a grant that does not have to be repaid, if student has a permanent disability— http://osap.gov.on.ca/

☐ attend a Transition Program at the college/university, if applicable

☐ inquire about and attend general campus orientation program at the college/university

☐ explore campus and locate classes, Accessibility/Disability service office, computer labs and quiet study areas

Differences between High School and College/University:

☐ college/university expectation -"student will do it themselves"

☐ no specialized support personnel (e.g. resource teacher, EA) in postsecondary

☐ IEP is not considered a legal document. Students must present a letter of accommodation to professors

☐ students are responsible for accessing supports independently

☐ legally, if the student is 18 or older, written permission from the student is required before staff can communicate with a parent

☐ supports are de-centralized (**e.g.** students may have to go to many different offices/locations to get the help they need)

☐ peer group changes, social groups are not consistent and more unstructured time

☐ anonymity: large class sizes, shifting seating arrangements, different students in each class

☐ students have to take initiative (e.g. by joining clubs/groups etc.)

Possible Support Services in College/University:

☐ help for communicating disability and accommodations with professors

☐ academic accommodations in class—note taking, extending deadline

☐ test and exam accommodations—quiet room

☐ referrals to academic support service (e.g. tutoring)

☐ assistive technology

Consider Previous Experiences to Help Prepare:

How was the transition to grade 9?
Were volunteer hours/co-op successful?
Consider what supports were needed. They may still be necessary for college/university.

Considerations for On–Campus Residence:

☐ single vs. shared occupancy

☐ location of room, consider sensory and personal safety needs

☐ gender specific vs. co-ed

☐ assign an on campus emergency contact person

☐ early move in date vs. "frosh" week

Financial Support

☐ financial loan and application information— OSAP http://osap.gov.on.ca/

To qualify for grants described below, an application to OSAP is required. Also, students must be registered as full time (**e.g.** at least 40% course load). Grants are non-repayable. Proof of permanent disability is required.

1. **Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities.** Up to $2000/academic year for educational costs.

2. **Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities.** Up to $8000/academic year for disability related educational costs such as tutors, note takers, technical aids.

For Application Criteria see:

☐ Ontario Colleges (OCAS) www.ontariocolleges.ca

☐ Ontario Universities Application Centre http://www.ouac.on.ca/

Important Skills needed for Academic Work:

Sustained attention during class
Maintain satisfactory notes
Organizational skills
Understand and complete assignments
Successfully complete tests and exams
Gain information from written material
Produce quality written work

Supports for the pathway to the workplace must be established early and geared to each individual's special needs, strengths and interests. It is important to have realistic expectations about each individual's vocational potential. Individuals with ASD can make progress in all aspects of life with appropriate supports. Often, attitudinal shifts and innovative approaches are necessary. Future trends are taking more of a business-minded approach and looking at how anyone with a disability can be an asset to the workplace.

With this information, consider how you can support the individual by being creative and finding solutions to help them reach their potential.

Vocational Programs: For some, it will be important to look at options prior to starting work. Vocational Programs promote independence and provide job skills training with a combination of classroom instruction and on the job learning experiences. It focuses on assisting individuals to make the transition from school to work, for example George Brown College Vocational Program.

Individuals with ASD can bring unique qualities to the workplace. What many may find redundant and repetitive may actually be a good fit for the individual with ASD *and* the employer.

A Person with ASD May Have Unique Competencies for Businesses:

- □ a passion and attention for detail
- □ high levels of concentration
- □ tolerance for repetitive activities
- □ spot deviances in data information and systems
- □ an aptitude for tasks that require order and structure
- □ pattern recognition

Transitioning to the Workplace:

- □ know personal information (emergency numbers, address, phone number)
- □ ensure some volunteer or work experience has occurred before high school ends
- □ enhance functional literacy and numeracy skills
- □ enhance life skills (TTC training, banking, personal hygiene etc.)
- □ apply for a social insurance card
- □ practice skills in more than one environment
- □ promote independence by gradually diminishing support, where feasible
- □ attend job fairs (e.g. Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN)—www.joininfo.ca)
- □ research employment support agencies
- □ investigate vocational support through family, community, industry, business and government
- □ look at companies with Inclusion/Diversity Policies http://www.canadastop100.com/diversity/
- □ create a small home business around individual strengths and interests (e.g. baking, jewelry making etc.)
- □ investigate employment supports through ODSP (Ministry of **Child,** Community and Social Services Offices)
- □ ensure the job is a good fit for both the employer and individual
- □ investigate and assess if a College Vocational Program is appropriate
- □ review WHMIS (health and safety); if necessary, ask if a modified version is available

Create Job Portfolio

Individuals with ASD may have difficulty demonstrating their knowledge, skills and talents based on an interview alone. They may need to "sell" their skills by showing a portfolio of work samples, certificates, volunteer experiences, reference letters etc.

There are many myths and misconceptions around the "employability" of individuals with ASD.
The chart below outlines the myths and facts.

Myths/ Misconceptions	Reality for Hiring Someone with a Disability Source: DuPont de Nemours and Company, 1993
Low job retention	Higher job retention.
Expensive job modifications	Average accommodation is less than $500.
Higher absenteeism	Lower absenteeism. Less sick days. 86% attendance rate.
More tardiness	Arrive to work on time.
More accidents on the job	DuPont study showed 97% safer track record on the job.
Higher turnover rate	Lower turnover rate. Average turnover rate at Tim Horton's is 14 months. Owner of 7 Tim Horton's stores who hires individuals with intellectual disabilities says his turnover rate is 7 years. Replacing 1 individual can cost up to $5000.
Lower performance rating	90% of workers with disabilities have average to above average performance rating.
Others may feel uncomfortable	As well as increasing staff morale, having a diverse workforce demonstrates community and corporate responsibility and creates an inclusive and accepting work environment for all people. Employers can become community leaders in diverse hiring practices.
People with a disability do not want to work	Just like everyone else, most people who have a disability want to work, contribute to their communities and demonstrate their capabilities.

Ways to Enhance Employability Skills:

- □ use video modeling and video feedback to review essential work skills; with permission, video tape in the classroom/home and on the job
- □ set up home/classroom to simulate workplace environment (e.g. counter for parceling groceries)
- □ role playing (e.g. social problem solving, interviewing, phone calls, customer relations, table etiquette, accepting constructive feedback, maintaining appropriate boundaries, etc.)
- □ use visual supports - break down task into small parts and label
- □ review what to do in case of an emergency
- □ practice getting ready for work (e.g. hygiene, making lunch etc.)
- □ practice self-improvement by writing journal reflection
- □ build up community networks by participating in social community events
- □ practice using an agenda/calendar for appointments

Pathway to Community Participation

> "The growing diagnosed prevalence of ASDs among children means a correspondingly large number of teenagers will be aging into adulthood in the coming years, which will increase demand for services."
> (Shattuck,P, et.al, 2011)

For young adults who may not be attending a postsecondary institution and not employed full time, Community Participation Supports should be considered. During times when individuals would usually be at work or at school, Community Participation Supports offer alternative activities and/or supports such as community based programs, and/or a supported work environment.

Transitioning into the Community:
☐ establish exit year (the year the student turns 21) for high school
☐ encourage independence- ensure that support decreases as skill increases
☐ encourage chores and goals that are supportive of long term living arrangements (e.g. make bed, meal preparation)
☐ explore areas of strengths and interests (this helps decide which community program would be suitable)
☐ encourage self-advocacy skills (e.g. teach appropriate ways to say "no" and express needs)
☐ ongoing practice and training for transportation and the TTC
☐ continue to teach self-regulation strategies
☐ encourage independence in grooming and hygiene
☐ provide opportunities to demonstrate appropriate social skills
☐ attend community events to familiarize individuals in various settings (e.g. movie, grocery store, etc.)
☐ identify safe places/people in the community
☐ review importance of daily living experiences (e.g. doctor, dentist, bank)

Community Integration through Cooperative Education (CICE program)—Humber College
While this program is non-credit earning, it allows the young adult to have a college and work experience.
An OSSD or OSSC is not required to apply to this program.
Check your Guidance Department for other similar programs or programs within TCDSB such as WETP at Monsignor Fraser.

Accessing Adult Services – Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)
Developmental Services Ontario – Toronto Region (Surrey Place) is the single point of access for information and applying to Ministry funded services for adults with a developmental disability.

Individuals 16 years and older who have ASD and/or an identified developmental disability may begin the process to apply for services from the adult developmental services sector:
☐ contact Developmental Services Ontario to determine eligibility
☐ families need to initiate this contact, adult services do not happen automatically
☐ if an individual is deemed eligible to receive services from the adult developmental services sector, they will be placed on a waitlist to have their application package completed
☐ call as early as possible due to lengthy waitlists

Contact Developmental Services Ontario – Toronto Region, (Surrey Place):
☐ you are applying for adult services for the first time
☐ you are 16 years or older with a developmental disability
☐ you have significant limitation in cognitive functioning
☐ you have significant limitation in adaptive functioning
☐ you have a history of these limitations prior to age 18
☐ you are interested in applying for Passport Funding
☐ you live in Toronto

DSO Toronto staff will:
☐ provide information about available services and supports
☐ confirm eligibility to receive Ministry funded adult developmental services and supports
☐ complete the new Application Package to assess each individual's service and support needs
☐ help you connect to available services and supports

When applying for services you will be asked for :
☐ proof of address
☐ birth certificate
☐ psychological report

Contact information for DSO Toronto Region:
Telephone Number: 1-855-DS-ADULT (1-855-372-3858)
TTY: 416-925-0295
Fax: 416-925-3402
Email: dsotr@surreyplace.ca
Website: www.dsotoronto.ca; www.dsontario.ca
Mailing Address: 2 Surrey Place, Toronto, ON M5S 2C2

Financial and Estate Planning:
It's rarely too early to start planning. Speak to professionals to help you along the way. There are also resources available to give you information such as Partners for Planning http://hub.partnersforplanning.ca/

Adult Services, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, may consist of the following:
**these supports are available to individuals deemed eligible through DSO

Community Participation Supports: include centre based activities, skill building, academics, employment/volunteer preparation, work experience, recreation leisure, and competitive employment

Residential Supports: provides a variety of funded supported living arrangements
☐ **Group Homes:** provide highest support options; 24 hour care usually provided
☐ **Supported Independent Living (SIL):** less support (e.g 1-20 hours per week; individuals within smaller settings receive help with daily living skills such as money management, cooking, and self care)
☐ **Associate Family Homes:** non related care caregivers in a home type of environment
☐ **Transitional Group Home Support:** up to a two-year setting to prepare for more independent living

Respite Services: provides temporary relief to caregivers and allows for participation in the community.

Adult Protective Service Worker (APSW): supports adults who have a developmental disability and who live on their own or are planning to do so. This worker can help them to take care of things they need for everyday living, set and achieve goals and connect with the community.

Passport Funding by the Ontario Government has two programs:
1. Helps adults (18+) with a developmental disability who live in the community or with their family. The funding through this program may be used to purchase supports for Respite and Personal Development and Growth (formerly called Special Services at Home SSAH).
2. Provides adults (18+) with a developmental disability and who have left school with opportunities to find more ways to participate in community activities. Recipients may use the funding to purchase services and supports based on their goals, interests and strengths.

Family Support Worker/Case Manager: addresses the needs of individuals living with their family. Support is provided to the individual and their family members in order to help the family access local services and funding options to meet the individual and the family's needs. These services are goal oriented and short term.

Services Person Directed Planning: helps a person with a developmental disability to find the supports they need to live their dreams and meet their goals. It can help people with developmental disabilities to define a vision of their future life, identify their strengths and gifts, set goals and make choices, find ways to participate in their communities, and locate people who can help them achieve their dreams.

Crisis Support for individuals and families experiencing a crisis situation may contact:
Griffin Community Support Network at **416-222-1153** (during business hours)
Gerstein Centre at 416-929-5200 **(after hours).**

Resources

Surrey Place
- www.surreyplace.ca
- Community Resource Directory for Adults with ASD

Ministry of Education Publications
- www.edu.gov.on.ca
- Choices into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy Identification, Placement Review Committee (IPRC)
- Transition Planning: a Resource Guide
- Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Individualized Education Plans (IEP) Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 140 & PPM 156)

Other Resources
Connectability
Canadian website for people with a developmental disability and their support networks.
www.connectability.ca

Job Opportunity Information Network
Ontario network of agencies. Assists persons living with disabilities find & maintain employment.
www.torontocentralhealthline.ca

Special Needs Planning Group
Organization made up of parents of people with disabilities. Planners, Lawyers & Accountants are specialists in planning for the future for people with disabilities. www.specialneedsplanning.ca

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee
Safeguards the legal, personal & financial interests of private individuals & estates. Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General
www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

Planned Lifetime Network Advocacy Network (Plan) Non-profit organization for families with a relative with a disability. Provides support, seminars, and resources. www.plantoronto.ca

Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities – Transition to Postsecondary Education
Includes: choosing a school, rights, advocacy & disclosure, available support services, financial information, residence & campus accessibility
www.transitionresourceguide.ca

Important Acronyms in this Document:
ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder
COA: Certificate of Accomplishment
DSO: Developmental Services Ontario
GLS: General Learning Strategies
IEP: Individual Education Plan
IPRC: Identification, Placement, and Review Committee
ODSP: Ontario Disability Support Program
OSAP: Ontario Student Assistance Program
OSSC: Ontario Secondary School Certificate
OSSD: Ontario Secondary School Diploma
PPM: Policy & Program Memorandum
SPC: Surrey Place Centre
SSAH: Special Services at Home
SSP: School Support Program
TCDSB: Toronto Catholic District School Board

Toronto Catholic District School Board & Surrey Place (SSP) Transition Resources

In 2004, the Toronto Catholic District School Board created The Transition to Secondary Service for students with Autism to support their transition from elementary to secondary school. TCDSB partnered with Surrey Place, School Support Program to implement and expand this service. In 2012, TCDSB and Surrey Place started to review the literature on transitioning to postsecondary life and possible pathways for students with ASD. For further information, contact Autism Programs and Services at the TCDSB. The following is a list of resources jointly created by TCDSB and SSP to support transitions:

Elementary to Secondary Resources:
- Transition to High School: Preparing Your Child for High School. Revised March 2015.
- Transition to Secondary School for Students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Guide for Transition Teams. 2011.
- DVD: Transition to High School for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. 2010.
- +Inventory/Assessment of Functional Skills in Secondary Schools. Version 2.0. Revised October, 2008.

- ASD Workbooks to Support Transition to High School.
- Asperger Modules to Support Transition to High School.
- High School Profile Books

Postsecondary Planning Resources:
- +Looking Ahead…Together: A Transition Planning Tool for Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Revised July 2015.
- Transition to Postsecondary Pathways for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):

Translating Research into Practice. January 2015.
- Transition out of High School: Preparing Your Child for After High School. March 2015.
- "Planning for Pathways" series of checklists 2015. Individual checklists include:
  - Transition Planning Goals
  - Alternative Curriculum Goals
  - Skills for Postsecondary Pathways
- + Suitable for both elementary and secondary students, families and transition teams.