

# Charting the LifeCourse



## Transition to Adulthood

### LIFE DOMAIN



### LIFE STAGE



Your child is entering a point in time, filled with change, growth, excitement, and sometimes fear and confusion, called **TRANSITION**. Transition is defined as movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, to another. For you and your child, transition means that he/she is moving from childhood to young adulthood, and from school to adult life. There are many things to think about and do to prepare for this change.

This guide is to help you think about some of the questions to ask, options to consider, and things to talk about with your transitioning youth. Choices and decisions you and your son/daughter make during this time can help to positively shape the future and the life they will live as an adult. This guide is based on *Charting the LifeCourse: Experiences & Questions*.

*Charting the LifeCourse: Experiences & Questions* presents questions to ask or consider in different life domains. Life domains are the different aspects and experiences of life that all people consider as they age and grow from childhood into adulthood and, eventually, the senior years of life.

The LifeCourse Framework was created to help individuals and families of all abilities and all ages:

- develop a vision for a good life,
- think about what they need to know and do,
- identify how to find or develop supports,
- and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live

Individuals and families may focus on their current situation and stage of life but may also find it helpful to look ahead to think about life experiences that will help move them toward an inclusive, productive life in the future.



## Daily Life & Employment

What a person does as part of everyday life— school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines, life skills

It may seem like it is a long way off, but sooner than you think, the bus will stop coming— your son or daughter will no longer be going to school during the day. Have you thought about what they will do during the day when school ends? Have you asked them what they want to do? What kind of changes might this mean for your family?

- What do you want to do during daytime (school) hours when school is over for good?
- What does your ideal day look like? What makes a bad day for you (things to avoid)?
- Have you thought about possibly attending college or vocational training for a specific job or career?
- What kind of job do you think you would like (what do you like to do or want to learn more about)?
- What kind of supports do you need during the day? Who will provide needed supports, and how will this impact finances or other family members ability to work?



## Community Living

Where and how someone lives— housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptations and modifications

Have you thought about or talked to your son or daughter about where they might live as an adult? There are many options to consider— some are more traditional (for instance, a group home), but more and more, there are many “non-systems” community options emerging (like owning your own home). Anything is possible if you plan ahead, think creatively and believe!

- Will you keep living with your parents, or would you like to have your own home or apartment? Can you think of someone you might want for a roommate?
- Are you learning about new people and places to widen your understanding of the world and expectations for your life?
- Are you learning how to get around in your community (driving, riding the bus, taking a cab, etc.)?
- Have you thought about technology or home modifications that would help you function better or be more independent in your home?



## Safety & Security

Staying safe and secure— emergencies, well-being, guardianship options, legal rights and issues

Parents and other supporters often worry their loved one with a disability will be taken advantage of or harmed if they don't have a guardian. You may have been told by your school, doctor, or friend to pursue guardianship for your child at 18. However, it is important to understand the impact of guardianship on the individual, as well as the many options and alternatives that exist before making a decision.

- What skills can you learn and practice now to prepare you to “be your own person” and so you will not need a guardian to keep you safe when you turn 18?
- What are some of the alternatives to guardianship that will keep you safe without restricting your basic rights?
- In what areas are your parents and loved ones most concerned about your safety (for example, health and medical care, school, community access, etc.)?
- Are you able to stay at home or be in the community alone or without additional support, and do you know what to do in case of an emergency (fire, home invasion, etc.)?

Healthy living is an often overlooked, yet very important part of transition to adulthood. Steps you can take now will help your youth become more knowledgeable about their health, medical needs and disability, and start to take control of making decisions and choices about their own health. It is also time to think about who will provide health care once they are an adult.

- Do you understand and talk about your disability and special health care needs with others?
- What steps are you taking to begin to take control of your own health care ?
- How do you find adult health providers who will understand your disability and special healthcare needs?
- Are you learning about the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise?
- Do you understand the changes in your body and your reproductive health?
- Can some of my therapies be replaced with regular physical activities such as working out in a gym, using a treadmill or elliptical, or doing aerobics?



## Healthy Living

Managing and accessing health care and staying well – medical, mental health, behavioral health, developmental, wellness and nutrition

Relationships and networks developed and nurtured during the school years can play an important role in your youth's adult life. These connections, sometimes referred to as "social capital," may one day end up being your child's friends, neighbors, roommates, staff or employers. Most importantly, having friends and relationships are key to not only quality of life and happiness.

- Are you doing what other young people do for fun?
- Are you building friendships by participating in extracurricular activities in the community, such as clubs and other social outlets?
- Are you learning to use social media safely and responsibly (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) to connect with and maintain contact with friends?
- Are you dating or starting to think about dating?
- Are you learning about sex and intimacy, including safe sex and sexual boundaries?
- Are you involved with a youth or young adult group in your faith community?



## Social & Spirituality

Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks, and faith community

Children learn responsibility and citizenship by having chores at home and participating in opportunities to give back to their community. During transition, it is important to help your youth find ways to be valued across settings. They also need opportunities for choices, learning, community connections, responsibility, and advocacy as they enter adulthood and communicate their needs and wants.

- Do you ask for accommodations for your learning and/or physical limitations when you need them?
- Are you allowed to risk making mistakes, experience the consequences and learn from it?
- Are you making choices and decisions for yourself with support from family, teachers, and others in your life?
- Does your transition plan include volunteer or work experience that helps you and others around you to focus more on what you CAN do rather than limitations your disability might impose?



## Citizenship & Advocacy

Building valued roles, Making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's own life is lived



## SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Resources and strategies to promote the development, education, interests, and personal well-being of a person and that enhances individual and family functioning

We all use a variety of sources to help us get through our daily lives. We rely on our own assets and capabilities. Most of us have people in our lives that do things for us (and vice versa). We tap into technology as well as businesses, organizations and resources in the community. Even though you might need support or access paid services, remember to consider your personal strengths and other supports that are available.

- Are you learning about the supports and benefits you receive or could receive; how to manage your money, services and supports; and lead your various planning meetings (IEP, IFSP, health, etc)?
- Should your family apply for benefits (Social Security, Medicaid, State DD services)? What are the pros and cons and how might it affect your future ability to earn income?
- What kinds of community (non-eligibility based) supports might help you now and as an adult (for example, public transportation)?
- Will you graduate/leave school at age 18 or continue until you are 21, and will you receive a high school diploma or a certificate of completion?



## FAMILY UNIT

What the family unit needs to support and be a successful part of their family member's life. Supports that are directed to the family will ultimately benefit the individual.

Family members have a key role in the provision of support and guidance to their family member. Families are connected to the individual throughout the life course, and the role of the family changes and evolves as the individual grows and changes. During this time of transition from youth to adulthood, what does your family need to continue to support and guide your son or daughter to achieve their goals and dreams?

- What kind of supports does the family need in order to be able to continue working and maintain your lifestyle when your son/daughter is an adult?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your future as a family? How do you see your role as the parent/family member of an adult?
- Have you completed future planning, such as a will, living trust, durable power of attorney for healthcare, and/or a special needs trust?
- What skills/information do I need to help me learn to make decisions and take control of my own life?

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This quick reference guide is a starting place to the transition point in time, to give you some key points and issues to consider, and to help your youth and family to have a smooth and productive transition from school to adulthood. In addition, there are detailed and in depth guides and information available for each of the life domains. To obtain the full *Charting the LifeCourse* booklet or any of the other LifeCourse materials, contact Missouri Family to Family at 800-444-0821 or online at [mofamilytofamily.org](http://mofamilytofamily.org).

*Charting the LifeCourse: Focus on Transition*

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