

## Things to Be Aware When Transitioning from High School to Adult Life

- All entitlements for services come to an end after graduation. There may be a period of several months after graduation when the adult child has No Services. Parent/guardians need to start planning early in order to have a seamless transition.
- The adult child now becomes “eligible” for services that the family registers for on the child’s behalf. Agencies can choose who they accept for services, they are under no obligation.
- The family must register their adult child with Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and apply for Medicaid. Your adult child will not gain eligibility for DDD without also being Medicaid eligible. Once eligible it is in your best interest to place your child on specific waiting lists for services they will need in the future. There is no guarantee that your child will receive the desired services at the desired time.
- The **3 most important things between 18-21 years** old to gain eligibility with DDD, apply or reapply: **Having & Maintaining Medicaid, NJ CAT (Comprehensive Assessment Tool), and Selecting a Support Coordinator**
- Teachers and therapists will no longer be providing services. Therapies (OT, PT, and Speech) are only provided if covered by the adult child’s insurance.
- Client to staff ratios are much different than student to staff ratios in school programs and can be anywhere from 1:6 to 1:20. A 1:1 assistant is not an entitlement, it will cost extra money.
- In most programs, clients are expected to have some independent living skills, such as toileting, feeding self, hygiene, and some form of communication.
- The parents or guardians become the case manager/service coordinator for their own adult child. DDD has an intake worker that represents Middlesex County, but the parents/guardians/families need to be fully involved in choosing a Support Coordination Agency, Support Coordinator, Support Services and obtaining Service Providers.
- Parents and/or Guardians **should be following the Timeline for 2019 Graduates Aging Out of the School System** and gaining assistance from their child’s Transition Specialist in district.
- Transportation to programs is no longer an entitlement.
- Everything costs money, and whatever is not covered by the Medicaid funds you have through DDD eligibility will need to be paid for privately.
- It is the responsibility of the family to choose adult services, not the school or district. The school or district may assist in the process, but families must visit the programs and be in contact with DDD and Support Coordination Agencies prior to graduation.

## **Things to Consider When Choosing an Adult Service Provider**

- How far away is the program from home?
- What are the program hours, and when are they closed for holidays?
- Will transportation be provided? How long is the commute?
- What is the program's staff to client ratio?
- What type of client does the program typically serve? What is the average age of the clients?
- How independent do the clients need to be?
- What activities do the clients participate in?
- Is the program primarily recreational or vocational, or a combination?
- Is there a nurse on-site?
- Does the staff/nurse administer medication?
- What does the facility do if the client has a seizure?
- Are staff members trained in seizure management? First Aid/CPR?
- Are staff members trained to provide behavioral supports? Crisis Intervention?
- What are the grounds for suspension or dismissal from the program?
- How clean/maintained is the facility?
- Do the clients spend time in the community? How often?
- What do the clients do in the community?
- How does the facility communicate with the client's family?
- What agencies are they contracted with in order to have the placement paid for?
- Is there an opening? Is there a waiting list?