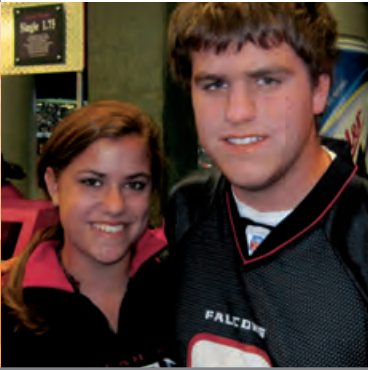




Autism Speaks™ 
FAMILY SERVICES
Transition Tool Kit



AUTISM SPEAKS™

Transition Tool Kit

*A guide to assist families on the journey
from adolescence to adulthood*

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Autism Speaks Transition Tool Kit

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INTRODUCTION

A Little about this Kit

■ We recognize that all adolescents living with autism have their own unique strengths, as well as their own unique challenges. In addition, as with all people, adolescents with autism have their own specific likes and dislikes. So what may be an appropriate or desired employment, housing, or community involvement option for one individual may not be the right fit for someone else. As parents and caregivers, we all want our children (those living with or without autism) to be happy and healthy, and to live fulfilling lives. It is important to remember that what constitutes happiness or fulfillment for a person is specific to that individual.

We hope that this kit will serve as a guide that can provide you with options to think about and explore as you and your adolescent with autism begin to plan for adulthood. The guiding principle that we used in developing this kit is that all individuals with autism, regardless of the level of support needed, should be able to live lives filled with purpose, dignity, choices, and happiness. With this in mind, the development of self-help and self-advocacy skills is highlighted throughout this kit.

We have broken the kit down into different sections. You may want to read the kit in its entirety or work on a section at a time. At the end of each section, we have provided resources specific to that section, as well as forms to help you keep track of the many pieces that constitute a transition plan. Since the transition process is different in each state, we have also developed timelines for each state, with state agency information that may be helpful to you throughout this process.

Please visit the Autism Speaks Resource Guide to find resources in your area, as well as information specific to your state at www.autismspeaks.org/community/resources.

Introduction

■ Transition is the movement from one stage or place to another. As your child reaches adolescence, you will begin to work with him or her, your school district, and others to develop a plan for the transition to adulthood. This kit will provide you with suggestions and options for you to consider as you set out on this journey. Remember that all roads do not lead to the same place. The path will be different for each family, but the goal remains the same: for your adolescent with autism to lead a fulfilling, healthy, and happy adult life.

We know that the future can seem uncertain for an adolescent with autism. After years of intervention, you are not alone in hoping that the autism diagnosis may have been altered by now. As a parent or guardian, it may be hard for you to imagine your child out in the world, or what he or she will do once the school bus is no longer arriving each morning. Some parents find the thought of the transition process overwhelming. Like many parents or caregivers, you have worked hard to obtain services and supports for your child with autism. Many families have spent years researching, negotiating, and advocating for these services and supports in order to maximize their child's potential. The thought of doing this again with a whole new system can seem daunting. It is at times such as this that you may want to take stock, look back, and calculate all of the strides that your child has made. It is also important to take the time to reflect on how



much you have learned and how vital it is to be proactive. It is with this energy that you will move forward in the transition to adulthood.

Before you begin the journey into the transition process, it may be helpful to recognize that others have traveled this road. A significant amount of information has been collected, and while the process may have been trial and error for some families, valuable information has been gleaned. Additionally, experts in the field have researched and investigated the process. We have compiled a great deal of this information and many of these resources into this kit. The best news is that autism awareness is continuing to generate more opportunities for growth in the transition process, which can lead to more opportunities for young adults with autism to live independent and fulfilling lives.



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The Karma Foundation



We'll help you get there.®

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