

TEN POINTERS FOR PARENTS

1. LISTEN TO YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER.

Ask your teen what s/he would like to do with his or her life. What are your son or daughter's dreams, goals, etc.? If s/he is nonverbal or has difficulty communicating these thoughts, use your knowledge of your teen to ensure transition plans consider his or her likes, dislikes, etc.

2. START EARLY.

Building a path to your son's or daughter's dreams will take a lot of planning and discussion. Start transition planning by age 14.

3. KNOW YOUR TEEN'S NEEDS, ABILITIES and SKILLS. Be familiar with how much assistance s/he needs or does not need to accomplish his or her goals.

4. ENCOURAGE YOUR TEEN TO ATTEND TRANSITION IEP PLANNING MEETINGS.

This is a plan for his or her future. Your son or daughter should be present. Together, prepare for the meeting. Encourage self-advocacy skills in your teen. Ask the staff to direct questions to your teen.

5. ACADEMIC, PRACTICAL, OR BOTH?

Decide whether or not educational and transition programs should emphasize practical or academic goals, or a combination of both. Make sure course selection will adequately prepare your child for long-term goals.

6. BECOME AWARE OF ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY: extra-curricular activities at school, as well as social, recreational, volunteer, and job opportunities. Encourage as much participation as possible. Then, decide with your teen how much s/he wants to participate.

7. ENCOURAGE YOUR TEEN TO LEARN AND PRACTICE appropriate interpersonal, communication, and social skills for different settings (i.e., employment, school, recreation, peer relationships, etc.).

8. LEARN ABOUT PROGRAMS, SERVICES, ACCOMMODATIONS OR MODIFICATIONS you and your teen need. Be sure you both know how to contact and access programs and services. Ask your school team how to get this information.

9. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH ADULT SERVICE SYSTEMS AND AGENCIES NOW. This will help your teen to make decisions that will influence his or her future. Be sure that Transition IEP Planning meetings include representatives from adult service agencies likely to serve your son or daughter.

10. DREAM! Focus on the supports your son or daughter will need to reach his or her personal goals. Working together with your teen, and your transition team of educators and service providers, you can build these supports.

Adapted by RI Transition Resource Parents (RIPIN) from "Tips and Tools for Transition," Pacer Center, Inc., MN 1996