

I. Introduction to Transition Planning

You cannot launch a successful new way of doing things without letting go of the old. ...you need to end in order to begin...with individuals, there can be a strong sense of loss in this process...That isn't a sign that something is wrong. It's a sign that a transition is taking place
William Bridges

What is Transition Planning?

Any time a person experiences a change in his or her life, three things occur. Something ends. Something begins. And, there is a process of transition between them

In this Guide, Transition Planning refers to the systematic approach to thinking about, and planning for, the important changes that occur when an individual with a developmental disability turns 18 years of age.

Why is Transition planning important?

It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power
Alan Cohen

Everyone goes through changes in their lives. Many people go through these with little planning. Others try to anticipate changes, and prepare for them with a great deal of attention. Either way can work. There is really no rulebook on how to live a life.

However, many families of children with development disabilities have expressed that it is beneficial to take some time to think about and address the range of legal, residential, educational, work, financial, social, and health aspects of a person's life at key points, one of which is when the person turns 18.

When a person with a developmental disability turns 18:

- He or she is considered to be a legal adult and may no longer be eligible for services intended for children.
- He or she may need a Guardian to help in making decisions. The process of appointing a Guardian requires application to court which should be started well in advance of the person's 18th birthday.
- He or she may need a range of supports to assist in their daily lives. Obtaining these adult supports requires time for application and planning to ensure continuity for the individual.
- School graduation may approach and the individual may want to think about future plans such as further training or work.
- Families may wish to think further about longer range planning for themselves and their son or daughter.

For a child with a developmental disability, transition planning can also provide an opportunity to explore the child's life dreams, desires, and needs, and to plan for and secure resources and supports to help that child achieve what they want to achieve in their adult life.

When should Transition Planning Start?

The generally accepted suggestion is that Transition Planning should start about **2 years** prior to a child's 18th birthday. In some cases even earlier is better.

It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question

What are some of the key practical things parents need to do?

- **Get Started**

Probably the most important part of Transition Planning is to get it started.

- **Contact a Community Supports Coordinator**

The primary way to start Transition Planning is to contact a PDD Community Supports Coordinator. Community Supports Coordinators are located in these communities in Central Alberta:

Camrose	780 679-5058
Drumheller	403 823-1653
Olds	403 507-8073
Lloydminster	306 820-4257
Red Deer	403 340-5003
Rocky Mountain House	403 845-8393
Vermilion	780 853-8209
Wainwright	780 842-7501
Wetaskiwin	780 361-4532

Community Support Coordinators

Community Support Coordinators are employed through the PDD Central Region Community Board to assist individuals and families in Transition Planning, Person Centered Planning, and Service Planning and Monitoring.

Community Support Coordinators can:

- Assist in Transition Planning
- Assist in applying for PDD services and in determining eligibility
- Explain different resource and support options that may be available for individuals

and families regarding residential, vocational and other day activity, respite care, or other services to further support the individual in their community

- Identify funding options and assist with any funding application processes that may be required
- Provide information on potential service providers
- Provide initial information related to Guardianship and Trusteeship
- Work with you to identify needs and to adjust those needs and services as your child's situation changes
- Provide other information and referral
- Assist in monitoring services being provided
- Assist with the resolution of disputes that may arise regarding services and/or a person's needs

If you're not sure which Community Supports Coordinator to contact call the PDD Central Region office (403) 340-5003

See the [Community Supports Coordinator Fact Sheet](#) for more info

- **Get Photo ID for your child.**
If travel may occur, this can include obtaining a passport.
- **Get a Social Insurance Number for your child**
- **Get a Bank Account for your child.**
- **Assemble all documents related to your child's history.**
(This can include school records and

medical and other assessments and documentation)

- **Learn about the PDD program.**
- **Learn about Person Centered Planning.** A Person Centered Plan can help ensure that the individual's needs and interests serve as the primary basis for any subsequent services
- **Begin or continue thinking about:**
 - How your child will maintain or further develop his or her relationships with family, friends, and significant others
 - How your child will have choices and make decisions about what's important in their life
 - Where your child will live – both short term and longer term
 - What type of job or further learning your child might seek
 - How your child will be included, participate in, and contribute to community activities and events
 - How your child can enjoy his or her leisure time
 - How your child can be safe and healthy
- **Talk to other parents or guardians** Look for successes. Learn about what contributed to that success.
- **Visit and learn about service providers** and the support options that might be available.
- **Develop an Individual Service Plan.** This can ensure that the person gets the right services for their needs in day to day living and in pursuing their life interest or goals (as described in their Person Centered Plan)

- **Apply for the various services, supports and funding your child may require or be eligible for.** (e.g. AISH, Student Finance, PDD)
- **Think about the PDD Funding option that may be best for your family** (Family Managed or Service Provider)
- **Apply for/establish Guardianship and/or Trusteeship**, if required.
- **Get Services or Supports actually started.** (for PDD supports, a person must be 18)
- **Monitor** services and supports and adjust as needed.
- **Get on with Life!**

We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims
Buckminster Fuller

Who else can help in Transition Planning?

You can obtain help from a number of different people and groups beyond Community Support Coordinators.

You are encouraged to talk to and involve:

Other Parents and Support Groups

Many parents welcome contact from other families to share experiences and learning as well as to provide mutual support. Many of these families participate in groups such as the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL), the Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) or other local groups.

Friends and Relatives

Different people may be able to provide information about each individual that may not be known by the individual's parents. This can be helpful in creating further or better understanding about each individual.

Independent Person centered Planning Facilitators

Independent Person Centered Planning Facilitators can be parents or other people interested in supporting adults with developmental disabilities. The facilitators have participated in specialized training to help them in helping families think about some of the important areas of life for an adult with a developmental disability. An independent facilitator can assist a family in developing a person centered plan that can then serve as the basis for any further services and supports.

Service Providers

Service providers are certified community based organizations who provide supports to individuals with developmental disabilities. They can be for profit or not for profit. Many agencies started through the efforts of parents who wanted to ensure supports for their children. Service providers have a range of program administrative and direct care staff who work directly with individuals in supporting them in their homes, employment or community activities.

What else should I think about?

Begin with the end in mind. The goal of Transition Planning is not to go through a process but to actually realize the results from that process, and so contribute to the adult life of an individual who has a developmental disability.

Transition Planning often takes some time, as parents learn about and act on the various options that may emerge. The initial Transition Planning effort will end, but further transitions are likely and related planning may be needed throughout the individual's life.

Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide
Napoleon Bonaparte