Lambton Kent Teen Transition Committee

Getting Started
Navigating the Teen to Adult Transition Years

A Resource Guide for Families

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What is Transition Planning?
Transition planning involves looking ahead and helping to plan for the future of your teen. While your teen is still in school you can help them prepare for the opportunities and experiences of being an adult. Transition planning involves the entire family, your local service providers, school personnel and government staff who support youth transitioning to adulthood. In these times of reduced resources and funding, it is essential that transition planning for youth begins early and engages youth and their support networks in coordinated, creative and comprehensive planning beginning at age 14 and continuing into young adulthood.

Our JumpStart Teen Transition Committee is comprised of local service agencies, representatives from both school boards and the Ministry of Children & Youth Services, as well as dedicated parent advocates determined to give you relevant information that you can act upon.

Why is Transition Planning Important?
Most youth who graduate from high school look forward with excitement to the many opportunities that are available to them in the world of employment, travel and/or post-secondary experiences: falling in love, getting their own place to live, hanging out with friends and gaining independence. Youth with disabilities have the same dreams. To achieve this, a team of people who will support the young person both during and beyond the high school years is beneficial.

Youth with disabilities who require additional supports and funding to access training, education, transportation or employment may feel that their life beyond high school is filled with uncertainty. The best way to deal with this is to make a transition plan.

How We Can Help
You are already getting started by reading this brochure; keep it handy for reference.

Visit our website:
www.teentransition-lk.org
Getting Started

Young people and their families will go through many changes as they grow up, such as learning to use different resources. Young people may also need to develop new skills and take on new responsibilities.

Note to parents:
Families have told us that their child’s cognitive abilities affect how they plan for the future and how their child is involved with these plans. The skills your child will require for adult life will depend on their goals for the future. Even if your child is not able to be independent, they will eventually move to adult programs and services. There are some items in this checklist that apply to everyone regardless of ability.

However, there may be some items in this checklist that you feel do not apply to your child. Challenge yourself to think creatively about each item. Think about how you can encourage your child to make choices and actively participate in their life. Some items may be a reminder to you, as a parent, to take responsibility for these tasks. If you have any questions, talk to your child’s transition team to find out how you can use this checklist to meet your child’s needs.

Parent Tip

The central struggle of parenthood is to let our hopes for our children outweigh our fears.

~ Ellen Goodman
Setting Goals

Read through and answer these questions to start setting your goals.

1. What would I like to be doing right after I graduate from high school?

2. Where do I see myself in 5 years?

3. List the names of people and organizations that can help me set and reach those goals. (i.e. parents, teachers, employment specialists)

Now that you have set some goals and identified people who can help you achieve them, it may help to create a timeline of things you need to do to get where you want to go. This can be in any format you wish – you may want to draw it, make a list or just write it out.

Parent Tip

Join a parent support group or connect with a parent already on the journey. Check our website for a list of local and internet support groups:
www.teentransition-lk.org

Agencies Aligned with JumpStart

- Autism Ontario - Sarnia Lambton
- Children’s Treatment Centre of Chatham Kent
- Community Living Jobstart
- Community Living Sarnia-Lambton
- Lambton County Developmental Services
- Lambton Kent District School Board
- Learning Disabilities Association of Lambton County
- Ministry of Children & Youth Services
- Pathways Health Centre for Children
- Real People Campaign
- St. Clair Catholic District School Board
- St. Clair Child & Youth Services
- St. Francis Advocates / Stepping Stones
- Walpole Island Social Services

Parents Aligned with JumpStart

- Wilma Arthurs
- Lisa Finch
- Karen Holland
- Kathleen Hutchinson
- Colleen Kennedy
4 things your teen can do now to get ready!

1. **Health First!** If you’re not feeling good, you can’t do the fun stuff! Make sure you have a family doctor. Make a list of the services you use now. Talk to your healthcare team to help you decide where you will go to get these services after age 18. Know how to tell someone about your diagnosis and how it affects you. Practice doing this! Write down your health history. Know what meds you’re taking and who to call if there’s an emergency.

2. **What do you want to do after high school?** What do you enjoy doing? Talk to family, friends, guidance counselors about your interests and dreams. You may not always agree with their advice but talking helps you figure out what you do and don’t want.
   
   See if you can try a co-op program in high school.
   
   Become a volunteer. Experience is the best way to learn.
   
   Get involved with extra-curricular stuff at school, your local rec centre or other groups to meet people, have fun and learn about your interests.

3. **Take charge of your life! Look out for new experiences!**
   
   Take on responsibilities at home, like doing laundry or feeding your pet.
   
   Start to direct your own personal care.
   
   If possible, start to go out without your parents.
   
   Take steps to be responsible for your own health care and make your own appointments.
   
   Find out about life skills programs in your community.

4. **Money, Money, Money**
   
   Find out if you are eligible for the Ontario Disability Support Program. Look up ODSP on the web at: [www.mcss.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca).
   
   Apply around age 17.5, so your benefits can start when you are 18.
   
   Check out other funding programs to see if you are eligible. The Passport Program is described on the web at: [www.cfcs.gov.on.ca](http://www.cfcs.gov.on.ca).
   
   If you are thinking about college or university, look into the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). There are two funding programs for students with disabilities. Visit: [www.osap.gov.on.ca](http://www.osap.gov.on.ca).

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~ Adapted from Holland Bloorview

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**Parent Tip**

Avoid unnecessary wait times at appointments by calling ahead to see if they are on schedule.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. When should “transition to high school” begin?
Although much work at school goes into transitioning to high school in grade 8, many families feel better prepared if they begin transition planning when their child is 11 or 12 years old. Schedule a time to meet with your child’s resource teacher to discuss what your child’s interests and ambitions are and what courses/activities are available and relevant. At home your child may be taking on more responsibilities. This will help prepare for the “unwritten expectations” when they transition from elementary to high school.

2. What can I do to relieve my child’s anxiety about starting high school?
There are a number of things you can do to help reduce the stress related to starting high school such as getting a map of the school; scheduling one or more tours and, if possible, at different hours of the day (different noise levels, distractions, etc.). Review a schedule template, where the rooms are; have your child attend the welcoming activities if they are offered in the summer before classes begin. Learning relaxation techniques can help teach people to “self-calm”.

Parent Tip
Start by being patient with yourself; it’s a journey.
3. When does “transition from high school to adult life” planning begin?
As high school begins, so has the beginning of transition planning for adulthood. Ensure, if at all possible, you attend school meetings each year. Your school team is available to assist you with your questions and/or concerns academically. Use the checklist provided in this guide to help you organize your plans.

4. Who is involved in the “transition from high school to adult life” planning process?
The youth will be at the centre of planning this important stage of life. Parents/caregivers play a very important role giving insight to the needs of their child and offering their support. Your child may become aligned with a Transition Team through a service provider or health team. Determine who you feel is part of your team since this will be somewhat different for everyone.

Parent Tip
When you are feeling overwhelmed, take a moment to reflect on all your child’s accomplishments to date.
5. Will funding to support my child change when they leave high school?

By now you have probably accessed some or all of these funding supports through children’s services: Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD), Special Services at Home (SSAH), Disability Tax Credit, Enhanced Respite, Easter Seals, Trillium Drug plan, Autism Respite Funding to name a few. As your teen gets closer to adulthood you will be looking at other potential funding supports such as Passport and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). There is other funding available for specific needs such as the Mandatory Special Necessities program which is specifically to provide transportation to medical appointments for people on the Ontario Disability Support Program or Ontario Works. Your Transition Team Coordinator can help ensure you are aware of all funding available to you.

6. What is the DSO?

Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) is a single point of contact for adult developmental services in Ontario. D.S.O. provides information, confirms eligibility for services and supports, helps complete applications, determines service and support needs and links people to service and supports. The SW Region office is located at Community Services Coordination Network @ 1-855-437-6797. For more information contact the SW Region office or visit the Developmental Services Ontario website at www.DSOntario.ca.

Parent Tip

We may not be able to prepare the future for our children, but we can at least prepare our children for the future.

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt
Parent Tip

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What Questions Do I Have?
### Transition Planning Checklist

The concept of transition is simple; first help youth and their families think about their life after high school and identify desired outcomes. Design their school and community experiences to ensure that the young person gains the skills and connections necessary to achieve those outcomes. The concept may be simple yet starting this journey can feel overwhelming. With the assistance of having a checklist each family can start the transition process relatively easily in a step by step manner.

This checklist will:
- help teens and families think about the future and consider what they want to do after high school
- plan how to make the high school experience most relevant to the youth’s desired outcomes
- help youth and families make connections to supports and services they may need after high school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 13  | - Start documenting your child’s likes, supports  
- Gather all your child’s assessments, doctors, therapists, educational reports and put into a file  
- Consider joining a parent support group  
- If your child requires a medic alert, you may be eligible for a free membership before your child turns 14 through the “no child without” program. There is a “student first” program up to age 18 which offers a reduced rate membership; go to www.nochildwithout.ca for details | | |
| 14  | - Identify as future DSO client based on psychological assessment  
- Check assessment to see if it meets criteria  
- Arrange for updated assessment if necessary | Community Support for Families | DSO criteria  
Private  
Parent Community Partner Agency  
Other  
School / Parent Community Partner Agency |
| | - Identify members of current service team | Parent, Community Partner Agency, Children’s Aid Society, Community Care Access Centre, other | |
| | - Review government documents held by client/student  
- S.I.N.  
- Health Card (update)  
- Passport | Student  
Parent / Guardian | Service Ontario Provincial and Federal government websites  
Local MP/MPP |
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### Community Support for Families

- Check assessment to see if it meets criteria DSO criteria
- Arrange for updated assessment if necessary

### Service Providers

- Identify as future DSO client based on psychological assessment
- Community Support for Families
- Check assessment to see if it meets criteria DSO criteria
- Arrange for updated assessment if necessary

### School & Community

- Identify members of current service team
- School / Parent, Community Partner Agency, Other
- Review government documents held by client/student
- S.I.N.
- Health Card (update)
- Passport
- Review school and community experience to ensure that the young person gains the skills and connections necessary to achieve those outcomes

### Transition Planning Checklist

- Develop student profile (strengths, interests, needs)
- Complete goal setting that includes life, education, employment, recreation and community goals
- Develop specific tasks to achieve goals
- Start getting informed about the agencies and services in the community

### Next Steps

- Review tasks planned at age 14
- Develop new specific tasks regarding your transition
- Apply for child’s Social Insurance Number (needed to receive ODSP) if you haven’t already

### Additional Resources

- Student IEP
- Student Profile templates
- www.teentransition-lk.org
- www.teentransition-lk.org
- www.teentransition-lk.org

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Resource</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Review age 15 plan and tasks</td>
<td>Parent/Guardian Student School Community Partner Agencies</td>
<td>Student IEP <a href="http://www.teentransition-lk.org">www.teentransition-lk.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review student profile and update</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop specific tasks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply for Ontario Photo Card if you will not get a driver’s license</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Review age 16 task, profile and IEP tasks</td>
<td>Parent/Guardian Student School Community Partner Agencies</td>
<td><a href="">DSO office</a> (Support Intensity Scale and Application)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refer student to Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) to complete application form</td>
<td>Parent/Guardian Community Partner Agencies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete release of information form to DSO office (psychological assessment)</td>
<td>Parent/Guardian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refer to Adult Services and apply for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) at age 17.5</td>
<td>Parent/Guardian Community Partner Agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>Review profile, goals and specific strategies on a yearly basis</td>
<td>School Student Parent/Guardian Adult Service Worker Community Partner Agencies</td>
<td>See list of adult service providers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Tip

Engage in things that make you laugh. A sense of humour is essential.
The Importance of Active Living

Leisure contributes significantly to a person’s physical, social, emotional, spiritual and psychological health and wellbeing. The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability have developed five guiding principals to use as a foundation from which to develop goals and activities that promote active living for Canadians with disabilities.

Principle 1: Quality of Life is a Fundamental Right
Active living, which includes recreation and leisure activities, is an important and essential component for all people. Quality of life is among the fundamental rights of Canadians. Active living allows us to carry out activities of daily living with less fatigue and frustration, greater safety and more self-confidence.

Principle 2: Empowerment is the Key
As society’s awareness of people with disabilities has increased, so has the realization of the importance of self-determination and the opportunity to take charge of one’s life. People with disabilities have a right to be involved in planning programs, choosing activities of interest and initiating change when required. Self-empowerment does not mean individuals are left to act on their own; we should support interdependence where people collaborate with others and receive support for acts of self-determination.

Principle 3: Every Community Should Be Involved
Programs and services are best delivered at the community level. Individuals are at the core of any successful program and these programs should be implemented at the local level. Leisure education specialists are available to help you find what you enjoy and give assistance to enhance local programs in place.

Principle 4: Equal Access Must Be Granted
All individuals should have equal opportunity to participate in physical activities regardless of age, gender, language, ethnic background, economic status or ability. This principle stresses that opportunities to participate in active living should focus on inclusion rather than exclusion; the individual rather than the statistical norm; current needs and interests rather than historical precedence. Enhance organizational planning and policy development to be inclusive and continue efforts to eliminate discrimination within the system.

Principle 5: Respect and Dignity are the Foundation
Participation options should be available which are personally challenging and demanding, they should be geared to the participants’ age group and they should be varied enough that individuals can choose from a wide range of activities.

Parent Tip
Disability is a matter of perception. If you can do just one thing well, you are needed by someone.

~ Martina Navratilova
Matthew’s Story

Matthew Finch is a wonderful 16 year-old boy who has autism and an intellectual delay. During his last year of elementary school, his parents worried about his transition after graduation. He had only ever known one school his entire life. How would he cope with a new school environment? Would he understand what was happening? Would he be happy? Would he succeed?

Matthew would be leaving one school board to go to another. The two boards (St. Clair Catholic District School Board and Lambton Kent District School Board) came together, worked with Matthew’s parents, teachers and EA’s and created a seamless transition plan.

Happily, Matthew quickly adapted to high school life in the Developmental Disabilities Classroom at North Lambton Secondary School. The program is amazing. It meets the needs of all the students in the class, who have varying skill levels, strengths and weaknesses. The program teaches life skills, but so much more. It builds work ethic, teaches accountability, and strengthens team work. The teacher understands that these individuals need training in school to be prepared for the community and the work world after graduation.

Matthew is now in grade ten and loves working and learning with his peers, teachers and EA’s. He has come so far in a relatively short time. Every night he goes to bed, talking about high school and asking about the next day; every day he learns a little more that will hopefully help prepare him for his next transition.

~ Matthew & Lisa Finch

Parent Tip

Every child is gifted. They just unwrap their packages at different times.
JumpStart Lambton Kent Teen Transition Agency Information

Autism Ontario

The Potential Programme is a unique service from Autism Ontario designed to directly support all Ontario families, parents and children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This program provides support through greater access to ASD experts in their communities and supportive community-based learning opportunities for children with ASD.

For further information please contact Kathleen@autismontario.com

Children’s Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent

For more than 60 years, the dedicated and caring therapists of the Children’s Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent have assisted children from birth through to age 18 who have physical, developmental or communication needs. This support includes physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, audiology, augmentative communication, paediatric clinics, music therapy, respite, social work and a range of adapted sports and recreation programs.

Community Living Sarnia-Lambton

Offers a continuum of services for individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities and their families. Support services are individually directed and vary from person to person. Services may include, but are not limited to: case management and planning; employment; recreation and leisure; group or supported independent living; work training and alternate day options; volunteer services; and family relief or respite services.

Community Living jobStart

jobStart is a free workshop designed to help people with disabilities prepare for employment. Delivered in a series of workshops and employment related field trips, the jobStart workshop provides the opportunity for participants to learn about themselves and interact in a group setting.

www.jobstartsarnia.com • 519-332-4004

Employment Transitions

Assist persons who have disabilities to obtain and maintain employment through individual counseling, job development, and job coaching when required. 519-332-0560

Summer Employment Transitions

Assist students who have a disability, aged 16 – 29, to obtain and maintain summer jobs through job development and job coaching, when required. 519-332-0560

St. Clair Catholic District School Board

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board offers a full range of academic and extra-curricular programs for students from JK to Grade 12, in a caring, faith-centred Catholic learning environment. Special education services are provided for students with exceptional learning needs. Services include: the development of individual education plans, modification to regular classroom program and the provision of adaptive equipment as required. The Board’s student services department provides Psycho-educational assessments and support from Social Workers and Child and Youth Workers. Other services provided include: Speech-Language Pathologists, Teacher of the Deaf, Gifted Program, Autism Support Team and an ABA Specialist.

Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones is a Person-Directed planning service dedicated to focusing on the strengths, dreams, hopes, goals and capacities of the community’s young adults. We are committed to creating inclusive fulfilling lives to our participants through opportunities and personal growth.

St. Francis Advocates

St. Francis Advocates is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities. We are committed to empowering people by promoting independence, providing opportunities, encouraging growth through education, developing partnerships and collaborating with communities, within a caring environment.

Walpole Island Social Services

Under the Walpole Island Social Services umbrella there is a variety of services available beginning with the Central Intake Unit where a family can call and be referred to the appropriate community agency for direction, support and advocacy depending on identified need(s).
Learning Disabilities Association of Lambton County

Learning Disabilities Association of Lambton County provides leadership in learning disabilities, systemic advocacy and provides education and services to advance the full participation of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities in today’s society.

Learning Disabilities affect 5-10% of Canadians. LDs are brain-based problems that affect one or more ways that a person takes in, stores or uses information. We offer many resources, services and support to help people with LDs and ADHD, as well as parents, teachers and other professionals. Ongoing programs include Kids Positive, Study Smart, a Parent Advocacy Course and Homework Hub.

For more information please visit www.Sarnia.com/groups/lda-lc or call 519-344-4919.

Lambton County Developmental Services

LCDS is a non-profit organization committed to providing quality supports for people with developmental disabilities across Lambton County and contributing to the communities where we operate. Our supports can include assisting people with everyday activities such as cooking, banking and grocery shopping; as well as helping people pursue their dream job, volunteering or exploring their creative passions. We believe that sustainability, collaboration and innovation are important themes that strengthen our impact. We hope our supports and services, the way we do business and our presence in the community reflect those themes. We believe that all people should have the freedom and support to pursue their goals and dreams, and it is our mission to help make that happen!

St. Clair Child & Youth Services

The Family Support Services Division at St. Clair Child & Youth Services offers a variety of programing providing support to families of youth diagnosed with developmental disabilities. The Dual Diagnosis Program, Family Solutions Program and Parent Support group offer practical, solution focused information, strategies and support to families and youth in all facets of living including advocacy and education regarding the transitioning to adult services. For more information about the complete list of services that St. Clair Child & Youth offers, please check out the web-site: www.stclairchild.ca

Pathways Health Centre for Children

Teen Transition Services at Pathways Health Centre for Children offers a variety of innovative programs and support which includes transition planning, life skills workshops, leisure education, counseling and other helpful resources to assist youth and their families during this exciting and sometimes challenging passage from childhood to adulthood. Our focus is on supporting the whole family with practical strategies as teens prepare for their transition to adult services, and life in the community. For a complete list of the services offered by Pathways Health Centre for Children, please visit our website: www.pathwayscentre.org

Lambton Kent District School Board

The Lambton Kent District School Board provides education opportunities that will assist every child in personal and intellectual development. The Board believes in and actively supports inclusionary programs that will meet student needs in the most enabling environment. For most students this will mean the provision of a range of strategies, programs, and resources in the regular classroom in the home school setting as the first option.

If students are placed into a Special Education Program or Class, integration is initiated, in consultation with parents, when it is appropriate to meet the needs of the child.

Services provided include access to and support from: Assistive Technology Team, Behaviour Team, Blind and Low Vision Team, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Team, Enrichment/Gifted Program, High Needs/Autism Team, an ABA Specialist, Psychological Services – providing assessments and counseling, Pre-School In-take Process, and Speech and Language Services and a Mental Health initiative, sponsored by the Province.
Eamon Davey – Our Transition to Adult Services

E's main success criteria are his experience with an inclusive education and his self-advocacy skills/his DIRECTION skills. Without inclusive education, expectations are different for people with disabilities – there is often presumed incompetence on behalf of the individual. Our family's expectations of and for E are the same as for his brother without a disability – high school - post-secondary education - employment. Inclusive education gave E co-op options at the high school level – these allowed him to hone job skills – social skills – pride and independence in the workplace – this often does not exist in the segregated settings. We didn't know what post-secondary could look like until we learned of CICE which was running at Sault College – it is here at Lambton now and E has successfully completed his first year in the Sports and Recreation Management program and begins a part-time job which stemmed from his field placement at On Edge Fitness this month – he will work without the support of a job coach as he insisted on it while in his interview – which shows you his strong self-advocacy skills at work.

As far as government involvement – E receives ODSP – he has transitioned from SSAH (started at age 6) to Passport funding and has already completed the application for Developmental Supports and Services and the Supports Intensity Scale. You have to play the funding game families!! You MUST get in on every possible program/funding out there. We supported E with summer employment opportunities and he garnished valuable work experience… a word of advice to parents… take advantage of every opportunity to build your son's or daughter's employment skills. It's tough out there for young people with disabilities to find employment.

Overall: Eamon Davey was born with innate skills and gifts – he was involved at Pathways and St. Clair Child and Youth Services and took advantage of all programs/therapies available – we have a wonderful network of friends/professionals/family who WE ASK support of – don’t just sit back families!! - We BELIEVE he is capable of anything he sets his mind to – we are afraid of each stage of his life – “what comes next?” – we put it out there (to the universe if you will!) that it will all work – he will go to college – he will get a job – he will move out on his own or with a housemate and live with support in the town he loves/ live a happy giving life as HE DIRECTS it to be – faith (of some form) plays a hand in all of this and trust in human decency and the decency of the citizens of our town and people E meets and knows – there you have it!! E's successful transition to adult services!!

~ Eamon and Michele Davey

Now that we have your interest…
Get more information on our website: teentransition-lk.org

We Have a New Website!

Why would you access our website?

- local information about your service providers
- information from other parts of the province on transitioning
- partnership with Ability Online: a free, monitored, supportive online community for kids, teens and young adults of all abilities
- chat forums on the topics that interest you
- safest social media tool available
Eamon Davey – Our Transition to Adult Services

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~ Eamon and Michele Davey

Parent Tip
The only disability in life is a bad attitude.
~ Scott Hamilton
This guide contains advice from parents and young adults who have moved on to adult services. We hope you find this resource guide helpful.

Thank you!

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Ontario
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