

can help make the experience more positive and will likely result in having your child perceived more positively as well.

FROM A PARENT

“When my daughter was a very young child we were focussed on her problems and looking for the right “fixes”. We tried to get her into a specialized school and she was not accepted. In retrospect, this was the best thing that ever happened since it started us down a path of inclusion.”

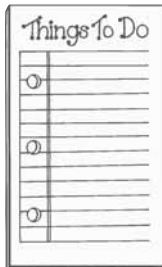
This early experience and others that followed really helped shape a change in this family’s philosophy. Instead of continuing to see problems and looking for fixes, they began to see gifts, what their daughter could bring to others and looked for ways to include her in all activities. This is not to say that your child’s challenges should be ignored – they should just not be the focus of the plan nor the basis of its development. Rather, they can be incorporated into expectations or identified as the needs to be supported throughout the transition period.

tip #6

More information on MAPS and PATH can be accessed at www.inclusion.com

The vision information can be accessed at www.pdd.org/docs/cent/PCP_811_Jan19.pdf. Further details on this and other tools available from the Central Alberta Community Board can be found in Part 2: Tools & Resources under Person-Centred Planning.

In establishing a vision for your child, there are other tools that can be helpful as well. Both the MAPS and PATH activities are useful to identify the unique preferences, experiences, skills and support needs of your child. The Central Alberta Community Board tools may also be helpful in identifying a vision and building a profile of your child.



Next, you will develop your child’s profile which builds on the information identified in the vision. The list below identifies the type of information you should be gathering about your child as you develop their profile.

Gathering Information about Your Child

- Identify people in your child's life, such as family members, friends, cultural associations, school personnel, social workers, current service providers and community members.
- Discuss where your child spends his or her time.
- Identify things that others see as strengths that contribute to his or her positive characteristics.
- Identify things that people see as areas where growth is needed.
- Discuss the kinds of choices your child makes.
- Identify preferences, including things that motivate your child and create happiness, and non-preferences, including things that do not work for them, that create frustration and unhappiness.
- Discuss personal goals and dreams.
- Identify the most vital priorities to work on now (2-12 months) and in the future (1-5 years).
- Discuss opportunities, including things or people that can help your child achieve his or her personal goals and dreams.
- Discuss obstacles or barriers, including things or people that are getting in the way of your child achieving his or her personal goals and dreams.
- Identify strategies to help your child overcome obstacles or barriers and achieve personal goals and dreams.

Now, you will need to identify information about your family. This information should include services that you currently use, what you anticipate needing when your child reaches the end of school and the ways you can help your child reach their goals for the future. The following questions are things to consider in developing a family vision and completing a family profile

Family Profile

- What supports and services do you use now and will they continue when your child reaches the age of 18 or 21?
- What additional or different supports and services do you anticipate needing in the future?
- Will your child continue to live at home and for how long? Will you require other living arrangements for your child?
- Do you have the means – financial and otherwise – to support your child in adulthood?
- What financial planning do you need to consider?

These are things you will need to include in your transition plan and are as important as making arrangements for your child.

tip #7

Your child, with appropriate assistance, can complete his or her profile by using the format provided in Tool 7 found in Part 2: Tools & Resources.

You can complete your family profile by using use the format provided in Tool 8 in Part 2: Tools & Resources.

Step 2: Build the Team

While you will be expected to be very involved in the development of your child's transition plan, you do not need to do it alone. Build a team for your transition plan by seeking the support of people who can help you to set your child's goals for the future and then help in making those goals a reality. Choose from people who are part of your network of supports or circle of friends – people you are comfortable with. It is suggested that your team have at least two members and no more than eight – any more may be overwhelming.

Some individuals you may want to consider in addition to yourself and your child can include the following:

- Other family members;
- Parents who have recently gone through a transition plan themselves;
- Teachers;
- Community workers;
- Friends;
- Peers;
- Employers; or
- Other members from the community.

Some members of the team may be involved with the planning process from the beginning. Others may be involved on a limited basis.

It may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions to identify the most appropriate members of your network or team:

- Who knows your child best?
- Who does your child trust and feel comfortable around?
- Who does your child look to for advice and support?
- Who would your child like to help him or her with their transition from school to adulthood?
- How can these people best help?

It will be important for you to involve people that know your child well and that may also have a vested interest in your child. You will want to include people that have a positive outlook and can see the gifts and strengths your child has to offer. Think about including those that will network and advocate on your child's behalf in much the same way as you will yourself. Remember, creativity is going to be a key to the success of

your transition plan. The education system and the service system may not be able to support you in the way that you expect. So it is important to involve people on your team who can help develop innovative ways to support your child as they make their way to adulthood.

Once you have established your team, you will need to think about who could take on the role of coordinator. This person will be a key contact for the team throughout the process and will take the lead in organizing the activities of the team.

tip # 8

Tool 2 in Part 2: Tools & Resources provides a suggested list of roles and responsibilities for members of the transition team.

You will likely be responsible for most of the work involved in the planning process so surround yourself with the right people. Use your network of supports most effectively and gain from the experience of others. Seek out parents that have been through this process before and involve them in your planning efforts. Find a mentor for your child – a peer that has recently made the transition to adulthood who can support your child as they go through the steps in developing their plan.

tip # 9

Tool 6 in Part 2: Tools & Resources section provides a template for keeping track of your team members contact information.

Step 3: Set Goals

Once the profiles are completed for your child and your family, you will need to consider developing goals. Goals are an important step in the process since they will help identify the kinds of experiences your child should pursue through their high school years and the skills they will develop as a result.