

# The Journey to an Inclusive College Program for students with ID/DD: One Family's Experience



# Transition Planning-

Though IEPs officially begin addressing this at age 14, it's never too early to start planning.

- Person-centered planning:

Nurture strengths and interests, especially with respect to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

Be creative-

- Build in IEP supports (e.g., extracurricular activities)
- Utilize family / community connections for volunteering and other experiences

- Learn what resources are available:

- [PaTTAN Secondary Transition](#)
- [Transition Discoveries](#)
- School District Transition Coordinator

- High expectations paired with appropriate supports

# Planning for the Future Checklist



Use this checklist as a discussion guide in preparing for life after high school. Bring it to your meetings with your school and/or agency supporters to talk about your progress and how best to plan for your future. The checklist is meant to be individualized and not all of the items listed may pertain to you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Every Year**
1. Meet with your agency and school supporters.
  2. Take time to talk about information learned from any assessments about your abilities and interests.
  3. Ask about accommodations and technology you can use to meet your school, work, and other life goals.
  4. Use your individualized education program (IEP) to create the right goals to help you get ready for life after high school (transition).
  5. Build on what you started the year before.

|                                      | 14-15 Year Olds   | 15-16 Year Olds   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Education/Training After High School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your school and/or agency supporters about your interests and what you want to study after high school.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Study websites to learn about training, technical school, college programs and classes where you can explore an interest or hobby. Visit at least one of these educational programs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your school's transition coordinator to make sure you are taking the right classes for your goals.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Understand your disability. Ask for your own accommodations and/or assistive technology.</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Learn how accommodations may be different at the educational program you've chosen for after high school, so you can start to prepare.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you've chosen college, sign-up for the PSAT test (given in fall of sophomore and junior years) and make an appointment with your guidance counselor to talk about colleges and your plan for applying.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visit technical schools or certificate programs you may be interested in.</li> </ul>    |
| Employment                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sign up to volunteer and job shadow during school and/or summer months.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Start keeping a list of the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of people who can be references for jobs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Learn about programs at your local career and technical education (CTE) centers. If you are interested, ask to visit. If you like it, learn how to apply.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To get ready for a job, practice filling out job applications and answering questions an employer might ask you.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask your school and/or agency supporters for help with on-the-job training, job exploration, and/or part-time employment in your areas of interest. Your school can help you get this experience during school and during the summer.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask your parents/guardians to sign forms that will allow Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and/or other adult agencies to come to your transition meetings.</li> </ul>    |
| Community Living                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Join an activity at your school, community, or place of worship.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice asking for what you need during your IEP and other meetings.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask about certified transportation training at your IEP meeting.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Know the medications you take (names, dosage, why you're taking them). Talk with your doctor about sexuality and boundaries, and about how behaviors like smoking and drinking affect our bodies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you have an intellectual disability and no one has contacted the County's Office of Intellectual Disabilities (OID), ask your parents/guardians to call the county to complete an intake to register for services.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If needed, create an Individual Health Plan with your doctor and school nurse.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your school and/or agency supporters about the possibility of funding through Medicaid Waivers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep a list of your medical conditions and physicians. Be able to describe your health needs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you have questions about your emotional or mental health, talk to your parents/guardians, school or agency supporters, and your medical team. You can also call the county crisis line for help.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Find out about adult agencies (like OVR) that can help you prepare for work, training, and independent living. The back of this checklist has a list of these agencies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep copies of your medical, education, and government papers in a file to have ready when you need them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Learn the differences between wants and needs, and the differences between earned and unearned income.</li> </ul>  |

# Skills we targeted for development in the IEP via classes and extracurricular activities

- Communication
- Social Skills
- Self-Advocacy
- Safety awareness
- Organization
- Listening comprehension/ processing
- Following multi-step directions
- Following a schedule/ telling time
- Using money
- Reading comprehension
- Written expression



# High School Senior Year: What's next?

- \* Students who have mastered their IEP goals may be ready to accept their diploma after grade 12.
- \* Students who have not mastered their IEP goals: It may be appropriate to have the student “bank” their diploma and continue to receive special education programming until age 21.

Programs where students ages 18-21 can continue working on skills needed for their adult life

## School district-run programs

- Pittsburgh Public Schools' CITY Connections- With six classrooms across the city, including two at CCAC's Allegheny campus, students get community-based experience to address educational, employment, and independent living goals.
- Ben took two classes at CCAC while there.

## Inclusive College programs for Students with ID/DD

Ensure that Agencies are involved in IEP meetings for a smoother transition to Adult Systems

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
- Office of Developmental Programs (ID/ Autism)



Ben had the opportunity to do two Paid Work Experiences through OVR while attending CITY Connections.

# Turning 21, exiting special education programs (aka Falling off the Cliff... to a soft landing)

Because we knew Ben was interested in attending college, we visited several programs in Fall 2018:

University of Kansas' TAP program; Slippery Rock University's Rock Life; Duquesne University's Compass Program.

Communication with his OVR counselor and Supports Coordinator ensured that the documents needed for those services were (and still are) aligned with Ben's goals.

- OVR funding for tuition and Assistive Technology
- Medicaid ID Waiver funding for tuition and habilitation services
- Scholarships: Pittsburgh Promise (for PPS students), DREAM Partnership, Ruby's Rainbow

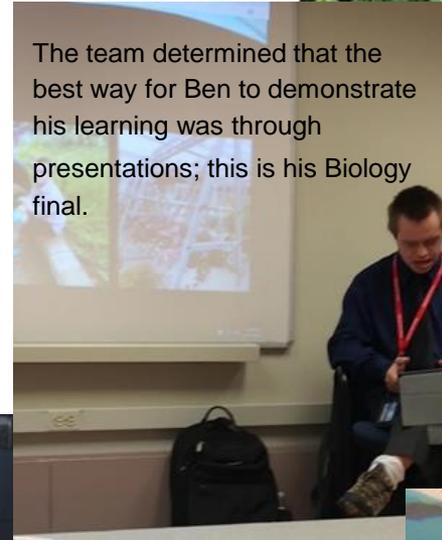
## Applied/ Accepted to Duquesne Compass Program, Fall, 2019:

- Six credits per semester for two or four years
- Content-area courses with modifications (e.g., with Ben's interest in plants, he has taken several biology courses.)
- Peer tutors and mentors (many from the Occupational Therapy department)
- Internships
- Option to live on campus or commute
- Person-centered plan to develop schedule aligned to his interests and strengths

Ben loves working at Phipps Conservatory



The team determined that the best way for Ben to demonstrate his learning was through presentations; this is his Biology final.



Duquesne Swim Club welcomes Compass students.

