

Transition – Employment

Taking Charge of Your Health Care:

A handout for adolescents and young adults with special health care needs and disabilities

You CAN work!

- Think about your future. What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Identify what you are good at doing and what you like to do.
- Learn about the responsibilities involved in having a job.
- Think about how your special health care need or disability might affect the kind of job you can do.
- Will you need accommodations? Accommodations are supports or assistance to make it possible for you to work.

Be your own advocate...Speak up for yourself!

- Be a part of the transition planning process at school.
- Attend all of the team meetings related to planning for your future and your Individualized Education Program (IEP). Start the meeting by telling people about your dreams and goals; share examples of your work. Help them get to know you.
- Ask a friend, parent or relative to come to planning meetings with you to help take notes, listen to what is said, or contribute ideas.
- Make sure your teachers and guidance counselors know what your interests are.
- Ask questions and speak up! Let people know what you want to do and what you need.

Preparing for a job

- Look for job opportunities. It's important to start thinking about work early.
- Ask your parents, guidance counselors, doctor or nurse about agencies that might help you plan for a job.
- Consider getting an after school or a weekend job to earn money and get experience.
- Talk to your doctor about how your disability may influence the type of job you choose.
- Learn about supported employment. Supported employment means work in a community setting with ongoing support by an agency that knows how to help people with disabilities find jobs.
- Find out about having a vocational assessment, which will help you understand your work preferences, strengths and abilities.
- Try a volunteer job in your community that matches your interest.
- Think about shadowing someone to learn about jobs. Job shadowing means observing someone "on the job."
- Look for an opportunity to have an adult with a disability who works in the area you are interested in as a mentor.
- Make a plan for transportation to your job. Will you drive yourself, use public transportation or a taxi service?

Reproduced with permission. From "Transition Planning for Adolescents with Special Health Care Needs and Disabilities: A Guide for Health Care Providers," edited by Stephanie Porter, Linda Freeman, and Lynne Reeves Griffin (2000). Produced by the Institute for Community Inclusion at Children's Hospital, Boston, as part of the Massachusetts Initiative for Youth with Disabilities, a project of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Supported in part by a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, HRSA, DHHS.