NEW YORK STATE | Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

WILLOW BAER
Commissioner

Dear Parent/Guardian:

High school is an exciting time for students as they begin to plan for the future. As the parent of a high school age student, you play a very important role in helping your child prepare for the future.

Transition planning is the process schools use to help students with disabilities and their families plan for their future after high school. School services are available to your child until they graduate with a Regents or local diploma or their access to a free appropriate public education ends the year they turn 22. We encourage you and your child to make full use of these services.

You and your child have the chance to discuss transition planning at all Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings. This discussion may include plans for education and training after high school to prepare for a job or career; adult continuing education or other education programs; being active in the community; getting and keeping a job; independent living; and/or other adult services. Your child's transition plan should be in effect by age 15, but it can also begin earlier. The planning process is most successful when it includes both you and your child.

If your child has a developmental disability, such as Down's Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Autism Spectrum Disorder or another Intellectual or Developmental Disability, you may want to learn about the services offered by the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). OPWDD provides many services, including supports at home, services in the community, and employment training to help a student with a developmental disability transition successfully from school to adult life. Students and their families must apply to receive these supports and may also need to apply for Medicaid if it is required by the services they want.

To learn more about OPWDD eligibility and services, you and your child can view the OPWDD Front Door Videos at https://opwdd.ny.gov/get-started. For more information and to get a copy of the *Access to Services* guide for individuals and families, go to http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/get-started. Students who already have OPWDD eligibility and are connected to a Care Coordination Organization (CCO) should contact their Care Manager to help them request adult services.

If you think your child's future might include supports and services provided by OPWDD, it is very important for you to contact us as early as possible. If you would like the school district to invite an OPWDD representative to participate in transition planning for your child, our staff are happy join and assist with planning. Just ask your school to invite an OPWDD representative. You will also need to sign a consent to share educational and health records with us so that we are able to assist. This consent is required by federal law and New York State regulations.

We look forward to working with you and your family on transition planning for appropriate services and a successful future for your child. If you have any questions about OPWDD, please contact your local Regional Field Office. You can find your regional contact information by calling our Information Line at **866-946-9733** or by emailing us at info@opwdd.ny.gov.

Sincerely,

Willow Baer
Commissioner

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