

# **Transition: Help Your Child Prepare for the Future Parent Tips**

## **Take care of yourself! Your child needs you!**

Ask for help when you need it, including from your child.

Develop connections with other parents – especially those who can share success stories about their children.

Sometimes pamper yourself – take a nap, a warm bath, and a walk.

Maintain your friendships.

Do something that makes you smile (spend time with a friend, play cards, exercise, look at your child's baby photos).

## **Help your child know him/herself**

Share your story.

Talk about where you grew up – your house, room, friends, first jobs, and school experiences.

How you handled difficulties – trouble reading? How did you deal with this? If you dropped out of high school, how did you get back on track?

Talk about your current life and work – take your child to your work.

Share your family story.

Where did your grandparents come from? How did they earn a living?

Where did they grow up?

Visit the neighborhood/s where you lived.

Talk with Aunt Ruth about how she took over the family business when her husband died.

Help with disability awareness.

Talk with your child about his/her disability.

Encourage your child to talk with doctors, teachers, and therapists.

Introduce your child to older students with similar disabilities.

Encourage your child to participate in disability-related activities; such as a Wheelchair basketball game, a Learning Disabilities Association training, Special Olympics, or an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration.

## **Help your child dream big**

Share what you wanted to do when you were your child's age and ask your child what he/she wants to be.

“I would leap around the living room floor pretending to win the Figure Skating Championships.”

## **Help your child develop interests and set expectations**

Your child likes writing – attend a book review by an author at the library.

Your child likes sports – visiting a training camp for an area team.

Your child likes to ride a bike/visit the bike shop/ride in an organized event.

Watch the nightly news together and then talk about it.

Attend summer camp.

Have interaction with adults.

### **Help your child develop social skills**

- Answering the phone and taking messages.
- Greeting people at a family party.
- Address wait staff and sales people when placing orders or asking questions.
- Using good manners –please and thank-you.
- Write thank-you notes for presents or a special teacher.
- Speak for him/herself in situations where you have spoken in the past.

### **Help your child value education**

- Create a space for doing homework.
- Talk about school activities and subjects – “What are you studying in social studies?”
- Talk about job opportunities and educational/skill requirements.
- Attend high school or college events, such as plays, concerts, or sports events.

### **Help your child make friends and contribute to the family & community**

- Contribute to extra-curricular activities by providing transportation, snacks, and supervision.
- Have friends or cousins sleepover.
- Help with meal planning and/or preparation.
- Serve meals for a “Soup Kitchen” with church youth group.
- Feed the cat.

### **Learn from your child**

Although Jim would not be eligible for a driver’s license, he wanted to take driver’s education. When his mother asked why, Jim responded, “Because the kids taking driver’s education get to leave school early!” She asked, “If you could leave school early, would you still want to take driver’s ed.?” Jim explained that the class drove to McDonald’s drive-through window and he wanted to go along. Arrangements were made for him to take the academic portions of the class and go along for the training rides as a passenger. His IEP objective is to become a responsible passenger.

“Several people felt Darlene would be a good candidate for camp. She had never been away from us for an overnight. I knew she would want me to be there! Finally I brought up the subject. Immediately, she asked, “Well, would you be there?” Reluctantly, I said, “No”. Darlene beamed, “Then I’ll go!”

**Talk, talk, and talk with your child. Listen to what he/she has to say. Respect what you hear and encourage your child to express their wishes with others.**

### **Work with the school.**

- Attend parent-training programs
- Ask the teacher to explain
  - What will your child be working on this year in each subject area?
  - What kind of support could you give at home?
  - Where is the curriculum heading?
  - What skills and knowledge will this lead to in the next 3 to 5 years?

What kinds of accommodations or support will the school be providing?  
How you might work as a 'team' to help your child improve academic and social skills

Let the teacher know as early as possible your suggestions for creating a positive learning environment for your child, such as

- if your child needs to stand at times while working
- if your child cannot handle the amount of homework given and needs a reduced work load or extra time to complete assignments
- if your child will have upcoming medical treatments that may affect him/her

**Encourage the teacher to contact you with concerns, questions, and successes!**