

## Parents and Family Members

To navigate the process of planning their transition, young adults need the critical support of their families. Parents and family members know the young adult in ways that no one else can and will be the ones responsible for supporting them when they exit the school system. Your support is very, very important.

### *Steps You Can Take*

- Let them know you are interested and that you care about your child's dreams and goals. Find out what they like, don't like, and are interested in pursuing regarding careers, living arrangements, and other priorities.
- Support your child in making a list of their dreams and goals to share at their IEP meeting.
- Suggest things to consider, adding to the list if you think something may have been missed.
- Encourage your son or daughter to become actively involved in their transition planning meetings.
- Provide support and guidance on how to help lead his or her own transition planning process by practicing before the IEP meeting.
- Learn more about what school and community learning experiences are available for your child.
- Spend time with them to develop their goals and create plans for reaching those goals.
- Provide support to them as they implement their goals and dreams.
- Help your child understand his or her disability and its impact on college, employment, relationships, and independence.
- Believe in your child's gifts and talents!

## 2. Transition and Self-Advocacy

The Transition planning process requires that young adults and their families make many important decisions. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the transition planning process need to reflect youth input, interests, preferences, and needs. However, the process can also be intimidating and overwhelming for young adults.

Learning how to be a good self-advocate can be an important part of the transition planning process for young adults. Not only will this help them to be more active in the process, but it will also serve them in the future when they no longer have a transition team to depend on.

Self-Advocacy in young adults can encourage *self-determination*. *Self-determination* is when students are able to make their own choices about what they would like to do—their goals, what services they need, and how they would like to live their daily life. Developing self-determination, however, begins early in life.

Self-advocacy and self-determination in youth with disabilities can also be influenced by the culture and traditions of the family. It is important for parents, family members, and teachers to be aware that these traditions exist and to discuss the important role family traditions can play in transition planning.