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the man who

removes a mountain

begins by carrying

away small stones.

Chinese Proverb

About the transition planning process

THOUGHTFUL PLANNING can help you deal effectively with any challenges you might have with the transition to post-secondary education as a result of your disability. Thoughtful, effective transition planning is:

- student-centred and focuses on your hopes, dreams and goals
- time-conscious and organized, starting early and following a series of steps
- a collaboration, involving both you and your parents, teachers, service providers and others, working as a team
- comprehensive, focusing not only on academic skills but also on other skills you need to succeed.

Student-centred

An effective transition plan reflects and takes seriously your hopes, dreams and goals and your family's vision for your future. It recognizes your learning successes and challenges, as well as the strategies and accommodations you use to reach your goals.

You are the key player on a student-centred transition planning team. Self-awareness, self-advocacy and problem solving are important parts of your role.

Time-conscious and organized

Transition planning is a process that takes time. Your transition to post-secondary studies may start as early as junior high school. It is never too late to begin the process. But if you start later than the first or second year of high school, you may have fewer options and more challenges. The sooner you start, the more time you have to put your plans into action and to become familiar with post-secondary institutions and their requirements and services.

If you have an IPP (Individualized Program Plan) at school, it should include transition planning. You will probably have worked with your IPP team on transitions from junior to senior high school and from grade to grade. You may want to include IPP team members on your transition planning team. However, it is important to recognize that the transition from high school to post-secondary takes you beyond the school system. For this reason, it can be a good strategy to think of your transition planning team as distinct from your IPP team.

continued next page



Research has consistently shown that student involvement in the planning process helps students develop a better understanding of their own learning needs and provides opportunities for them to develop much-needed self-advocacy and problem solving skills.

Alberta Education, Looking to the Future, 2006.

An overview of the transition planning process

- Near the end of junior high school, you and your parents identify a goal for after high school—post-secondary studies. This goal gives direction and focus to the next three years of your schooling (high school).
- With this long-term goal in mind, you, your parents and the people on your transition team put together a three- or four-year plan for high school that will help you reach your goal.
- This is the formalized, student-centred plan developed by your transition planning team to reflect your skills, interests, challenges and career explorations.
- This plan includes short- and long-term goals but it is also flexible, because your interests may change rapidly as you continue to explore your options and develop new interests.
- The plan should be reviewed regularly by the entire team and should be open for changes to everything from individual courses to goals to the time frame.

An overview

Adapted with permission from **A Family Affair: Preparing Parents and Students with Learning Disabilities for Post-secondary Education**. Jane Drover, Lynne Owen & Alexander Wilson. The Meighen Centre at Mount Allison University in partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 1998.



About the transition planning process

continued

Your transition planning team will have additional members, an expanded focus and different goals.

Transition planning must deal with constant change and with deadlines. For this reason, the process needs to be formalized, with scheduled meetings, assigned roles, regular reporting and record-keeping.

A collaboration

Successful transitions are based on the shared responsibility of a team of people, including you and your parents, teachers, service providers, post-secondary disabilities services staff, mentors, extended family and community members. Your transition team should offer you a strong circle of support and a wide range of knowledge and experience to draw on.

Comprehensive

Part one of the guide encourages you to develop a variety of skills to help you meet the challenges of transition. Your transition plan should address these skills, as well as your academic skills. To succeed in a post-secondary setting, you will need to:

- monitor your own performance
- problem solve in new situations
- interact appropriately with peers and adults
- understand and explain your learning strengths and challenges as well as the strategies and accommodations you use.

While the role of professionals is important, the transition planning process will be far more effective if a student and his or her parents are actively involved in setting goals and objectives and making decisions about how to achieve them...

Remember that over the long term, family ties and personal friendships will outlive professional duty. Professionals, even those who are truly committed to your child, will come and go.

New Brunswick Association for Community Living, **Building Bridges: A Parent guide on Transition from School to Work, Adult Life and Community Participation for Youth with Disabilities.** 2002.

The five steps of the transition planning process

Step one: Get ready

Start the transition planning process early!

- Take advantage of opportunities to explore accommodations, strategies and assistive technology while you still have access to the support available within the high school system.
- Ensure that you are choosing the high school courses required by post-secondary programs you are interested in, even if it takes you longer to complete the requirements.
- Think now about the steps you will take after high school. This gives you time to develop the skills you need to succeed.

The first step in the transition planning process involves gathering the information you need before your first meeting with the transition planning team. **Most of this information is about you.**

The activity on the next page will help you create a profile of yourself to present to your transition planning team. If you have not completed the activities in part one, try them now. They will help you with this activity. You may want to complete a new profile every six months or so, as your plans and interests change.

My profile**My thoughts**

My strengths	
My challenges	
How I like to learn	
Accommodations and strategies I use	
My skills	
My interests	
My accomplishments	
Community activities I am involved in	
What I see myself doing after high school	
My concerns about my future	
Why I am excited about my future	
Career areas/occupations I am interested in	
What interests me about them/ Why I think they "fit"	
My current learning goals	
My long-term goal(s)	
My short-term goals	
Other...	

continued next page

Step one: Get ready

continued

Parents, the following table will help you share your thoughts about your teen's transition from high school with the transition planning team.

Parent profile	My thoughts
My teen's strengths	
My teen's challenges	
How my teen likes to learn	
Accommodations and strategies my teen uses	
My teen's skills	
My teen's interests	
My teen's accomplishments	
Community activities my teen is involved in	
What I see my teen doing after high school	
My concerns about my teen's future	
Why I am excited about my teen's future	
Career areas/occupations my teen is interested in	
Support I can offer my teen through transition	
Steps I am taking to help my teen prepare for adult life	
Other...	

Step two: Choose a transition planning team

This is *your* transition but inviting others to be on your planning team makes sense for a number of reasons:

- The team brings together people from all aspects of your life: school, community, service providers, post-secondary institutions, friends and family. All of your needs and interests are represented.
- Communication is easier—each agency and individual stays current with what the others are doing. This cuts down on paperwork and avoids duplication.
- Your team members connect you, through their networks, to a greater range of resources.
- Teams can be great at problem solving!

If you already have an Individualized Program Planning (IPP) team at school, those team members could become the core of your transition planning team. Remember, however, that most of them are probably working within the school system. You will need to invite additional members from other agencies and services.

If you do not have an Individualized Program Planning team and you have not disclosed your disability within the high school setting, you and your parents will need to decide if disclosure would be to your benefit. (See the discussion about disclosure in part one of this guide.) If you do not have an IPP team or if you want to keep your transition planning separate from your IPP, you and your parents may need to organize a transition planning team.

Who should be on the team?

Your transition team will likely include the following key members:

- **You**—As the person in transition, you are at the centre of the process.
- **Your parents**—They know a lot about you and can support you through this transition and beyond.
- **School personnel**—These could be classroom teachers, resource persons, guidance counsellors or administrators. They are your link to the school system and the supports it offers. They can give

you useful feedback on your school performance.

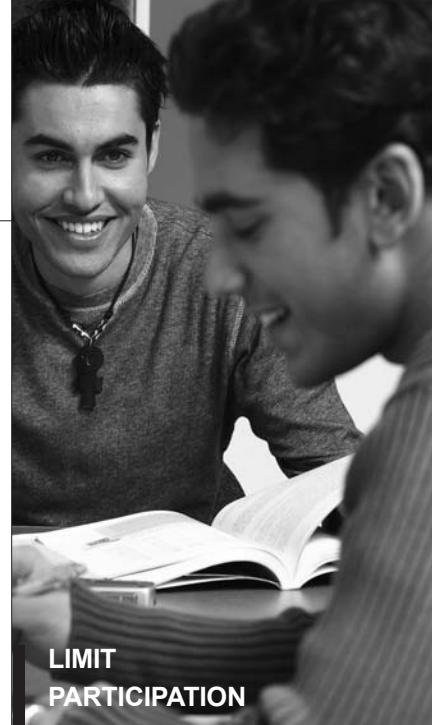
- **Current and future service or health care providers**—They are your link to resources beyond the school system.
- **Staff from the Disability Services Office (DSO), also known as the Office for Students with Disabilities**, of the post-secondary institution(s) you are interested in—They are your link to admission and accommodations requirements and on-campus services. You can invite them to join your team in your last year of high school.
- **Community members**—Employers, volunteer coordinators, mentors, friends—They provide perspective and support.
- **Other family members**—Like your parents, they know you well and can support you through this transition and beyond.

Choose a core team of about five to ten members. More members may create scheduling problems and may feel overwhelming to you and your family. You can add new members or invite guests as you need their input. As you get closer to finishing high school, the involvement of school personnel will become less significant.

Team member roles

Your role includes:

- participating fully in the transition planning process
- maintaining good relationships with the people on your transition team
- sharing your dreams and goals with the team and updating them about any changes
- taking an active part in planning, decision-making, setting goals and so on
- providing and regularly updating information about your learning experiences, skills, interests, challenges and activities



LIMIT PARTICIPATION

Limit the participation of professionals who do not really know your child or you. Professionals—teachers, social workers, psychologists, nurses, doctors, etc.—may tend to dominate the process if too many are involved. You and your child may be intimidated and your involvement may be limited.

New Brunswick Association for Community Living, *Building Bridges: A Parent guide on Transition from School to Work, Adult Life and Community Participation for Youth with Disabilities*. 2002.

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GROUND RULES

- You are the focus of the meetings.
- You have the first opportunity to address each topic.
- The team talks with, not about, you.

Adapted from the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, *School to Life Transition Handbook: Five Steps to Successful Planning*, 1999.

Step two: Choose a transition planning team

continued

- relying on team members as a resource for information, advice, contacts, strategies and so on and providing them with feedback on their suggestions
- monitoring the effectiveness of the plan
- questioning any decisions that you do not think will serve your dreams and goals and using your self-advocacy skills to work with the team towards a better solution.

Parents, your role includes:

- participating fully in the transition planning process
- maintaining good relationships with the people on the transition team
- sharing your hopes for your teen
- taking an active part in planning, decision-making, setting goals and so on
- providing information about your teen's interests, strengths and challenges
- giving your informed consent to any assessments or services required
- being fully informed of the school's programs
- following up regularly with transition team members to ensure plans are being implemented and taking specific action as necessary
- monitoring the effectiveness of the plan
- questioning any decisions that you do not

think will serve your teen's best interests and using your advocacy skills to work with the team towards a better solution.

The transition coordinator

If your transition planning is part of your IPP, this role will probably be taken by school personnel. If you are developing your transition plan outside of the school, your parent or another team member will take this role.

The transition coordinator:

- serves as the contact person
- organizes and runs meetings
- keeps track of decisions and tasks
- coordinates communication and paperwork—assessments, progress reports and so on
- monitors the completion of tasks
- monitors the effectiveness of the plan.

Other team members

- attend meetings
- contribute ideas, information, support and resources
- carry out tasks and report on outcomes
- monitor the effectiveness of the plan.

As you prepare to choose your team members, ask the following questions:

Who do I know well and trust? _____

Who do I go to for support and advice? _____

Who knows me best? _____

Who supports my dreams and goals? _____

In what ways can these people help me? _____

Step three: Develop a plan

Your transition plan should be based on two key elements:

- your career explorations (which are based on your dreams, interests and skills)
- your goal of attending a post-secondary program.

Over a period of months or years, you and your team will identify an on-going series of short-term goals that will help you achieve your long-term goal of a post-secondary education. These short-term goals will depend on your interests, the program(s) you are considering, your disability and how much time is left before you finish high school.

Your transition plan is the actions you and your team take to achieve these short-term goals (including how to overcome any obstacles along the way) leading to your long-term goal.

Your transition plan will look at short-term goals and related issues or problems in the following areas:

- accommodations, including assistive technology, that you need now and later
- assessment and coding within the school system, if necessary
- academic prerequisites for programs you are interested in
- assessment required for accommodations in the post-secondary program(s) you are interested in
- funding for tuition costs and accommodations
- living arrangements while you attend a post-secondary program, if applicable
- your support network both on- and off-campus
- guardianship and trusteeship provisions at age 18, if necessary

Before the meeting

Before the first meeting of your transition team, check with the transition coordinator that the following items are included on the agenda:

- _____ introductions, beginning with you and your parents
- _____ discussion of ground rules
- _____ discussion and agreement on how decisions will be made (by you and your parents, by consensus or by vote)
- _____ the opportunity for you to present your dreams and goals
- _____ the opportunity for your parents to present their hopes for you.

During the meeting

The team will work through issues and towards goals together by:

- _____ identifying the issue to be dealt with, problem to be solved or goal to be achieved
- _____ clarifying the situation, if necessary
- _____ identifying problems that could get in the way
- _____ brainstorming and problem solving to suggest options for action
- _____ asking you and your parents for your response to options
- _____ choosing the best option(s)
- _____ writing down a summary of the decision, the chosen option(s), what actions will be taken, who will take them and a timeline.

continued next page



Step three: Develop a plan

continued

Use the following chart to keep track of developments in your transition plan:

Keeping track

Date/place of meeting: _____

Team members present: _____

Goals/ problems identified			
Option(s) chosen			
Action to be taken			
Who will take action			
When it will be done			
How we will know that the goal is achieved/ problem is solved			

Next meeting time and place: _____



You can boost the effectiveness of your transition plan! Find out how in “What Can You Do to Make Sure Your Transition Plan Works?” in part one.

Step four: Monitor the plan

Your team should continue to meet regularly (every six months or after every reporting period, for example) throughout Grades 9 and 10. Beginning sometime in Grade 11 and throughout Grade 12, the team will need to meet more frequently to make sure all goals and deadlines are met.

Transition planning is an on-going process. All team members, but especially you and your parents, will want to keep re-visiting your goals and plans. You need to make sure they continue to reflect your needs and wishes effectively.

Monitoring the plan

Ask the following questions to decide if your plan is working:

Yes	No	Questions to ask	Yes	No	Questions to ask
_____	_____	Is my plan based on my goals, strengths and challenges?	_____	_____	Does the plan help me balance my course load so I can succeed?
_____	_____	Does the plan address my parents' hopes and concerns?	_____	_____	Does the plan help me explore post-secondary programs?
_____	_____	Does my team meet regularly and often enough?	_____	_____	Does the plan consider the documentation I need to apply to the post-secondary programs I am interested in (Grade 11 or 12)?
_____	_____	Do I feel like I am part of the team?	_____	_____	Does the plan schedule a learning assessment (if I need one) within six months of the start of my post-secondary studies?
_____	_____	Is my team documenting all goals, decisions and tasks?	_____	_____	Does the plan look at funding for my post-secondary program, especially to support my accommodation/assistive technology needs?
_____	_____	Are team members completing the tasks they take on?	_____	_____	Does the plan help me build or maintain a support network at school?
_____	_____	Has my assessment been updated as necessary?	_____	_____	Does the plan help me build or maintain a support network in the community?
_____	_____	Does the plan look at my accommodations and strategies?	_____	_____	Does the plan help me connect with service providers in the community?
_____	_____	Are these being updated as necessary?	_____	_____	Does the plan look at guardianship and trusteeship arrangements, if these are needed?
_____	_____	Does the plan help me explore current assistive technology?	_____	_____	
_____	_____	Does the plan look at my academic goals and are they helping me achieve them?	_____	_____	
_____	_____	Does the plan help me achieve a good match between high school courses and post-secondary courses I am interested in?	_____	_____	
_____	_____	Am I achieving my academic goals?			

If these questions raise any concerns, and particularly if you answered “no” to any of them, talk to your transition coordinator. Ask for a special meeting to deal with your concerns.

**a pessimist is
one who makes
difficulties of
opportunities;
an optimist is
one who makes
opportunities of
difficulties.**

Reginald B. Mansell

Step five: Hold an exit meeting

At an exit meeting in the months before you finish high school, your transition team can ensure that all the goals of your plan have been achieved. Holding the meeting well in advance of graduation will allow time for follow-up, if necessary.

Transition checklist

Use the following checklist to make sure you are ready for transition:

I have

- _____ an updated copy of my most recent assessment(s)
- _____ a copy of my most recent Individualized Program Plan, including records of accommodations and assistive technology
- _____ arranged for further assessments, if necessary
- _____ copies of transcripts
- _____ updated medical information, if applicable
- _____ visited, in person or via the Internet, campuses of the post-secondary institutions I am interested in
- _____ contacted/visited the Disability Service Offices at the post-secondary institutions I am interested in
- _____ checked the accommodation policies and requirements at the post-secondary institutions I am interested in
- _____ applied to the programs I am interested in
- _____ researched funding sources
- _____ applied for funding
- _____ updated my portfolio
- _____ successfully completed, or I am currently succeeding in, prerequisite high school courses

If this checklist raises any concerns, talk with your transition coordinator about a plan of action to complete any unfinished tasks or replace any missing documentation.

“Listen to your advisors.”

“Balance what they tell you against what you know about yourself.”

- James Stainton

Funding post-secondary education

NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE on your journey towards your goals, now is a good time to start thinking about how you and your family will finance your post-secondary education. As with all aspects of transition planning, the earlier you start, the more flexibility you will have.

What will post-secondary education cost?

Your post-secondary education costs will involve:

- tuition—\$3,000 to \$6,000 plus depending on the institution, the program and whether you attend full- or part-time.
- books—in the range of \$100 per course and higher
- regular supplies—notebooks, paper, computer and so on
- special supplies and equipment, depending on the course
- transportation costs—getting to campus (unless you enroll in a distance or online program)
- living expenses, if you are living away from home.

You may also have additional costs, depending on your disability:

- You may have to pay for part or all of the accommodations or assistive technology you require.
- You may require extended time to successfully complete a program; for example, a two-year college program in three years or a four-year university program in six years.
- Depending on the effects of your disability (for example, the need to study aloud or a different sleeping pattern) you may require more expensive living arrangements, such as a single room or your own apartment.

The Government of Canada’s CanLearn interactive website at canlearn.ca includes a budget calculator that lets you estimate future education costs and a budget estimator to help you with a spending plan.

My cost estimate

Use the following activity to begin estimating the amount of funding you will need.

Cost per year	
Tuition:	\$ _____
Books:	\$ _____
Regular supplies:	\$ _____
Special supplies:	\$ _____
Accommodations and/or assistive technology: (Funding may be available for these costs.)	\$ _____
Transportation:	\$ _____
Living expenses:	\$ _____
Other:	\$ _____
Total cost per year:	\$ _____

Total cost per year \$ _____ X _____ years of study = \$ _____

* See Page 26 for a Student *Spending Plan Worksheet*.

aerodynamically

the bumble bee

shouldn't be able to

fly but the bumble

bee doesn't know

it, and so it goes on

flying anyway.

Mary Kay Ash



Funding sources for students with disabilities

As a student with a disability, you can apply for and be considered for the same types of post-secondary funding available to all students. In addition, you may be eligible to receive the funding described in this section.

Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities

You may be eligible for this grant if you:

- are a full- or part-time student
- cannot meet education and living costs.

This grant of up to \$2,000 per loan year is intended to help with the cost of tuition, books and other education-related expenses.

Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities

You may be eligible for this grant if you:

- are a full- or part-time student
- have exceptional education-related costs due to your disability.

This grant of up to \$8,000 per loan year is intended to help you pay for education-related equipment such as brailers, voice recognition software, laptop computers and services such as disability assessments, oral or sign interpreters and tutors. If your total exceptional permanent disability related costs are over \$8,000, you may be eligible to receive funding from the Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) program to cover the balance.

Alberta Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities

You may be eligible for this grant if you:

- are a full-time student
- are not eligible for the federal grants described above
- have costs not covered by the federal grants.

The maximum amount covered by this grant is \$3,000 per loan year.

Grant funding may also be available for a skills training program through Alberta Works. Check with your local Employment and Immigration office to find out more about skills training opportunities in your area.

Visit alis.alberta.ca/studentsfinance for more information.



How to apply for post-secondary funding

There are five key components to applying for funding:

- **Start early!**
- **Meet with disability services staff at the post-secondary institution you are interested in.**
- **Apply for student funding.**
- **Complete Schedule 4 of the student funding application.**
- **Submit a complete student funding application, including documentation.**

Start early

As with all phases of transition planning, the earlier you begin the funding application process, the better. You should meet with the Disability Services Office (DSO) at the post-secondary institution early in your Grade 12 term. (Grade 11 is not too soon.)

- Assessments you may need for your funding application and accommodation request can take four months (or more) to arrange and complete.
- To allow enough processing time, you must submit your funding application by May 31 for a program that begins in September.

Meet with the Disability Service Office (DSO)

Meeting with the DSO is a vital step in applying both for your program and for your accommodation funding. They can guide you through both processes. When you meet with them, bring with you:

- documentation about your disability
- documentation for any accommodation, supports or strategies you are using in high school
- your most recent assessment.

The DSO can help you arrange for any assessment you might need (for example, if yours is out of date). The assessment will probably be completed by a third party. When the DSO has

reviewed your assessment, they work with you to develop a **service plan**, also known as an accommodation plan or education plan.

Apply for student funding

In order to receive grant funding you **must apply for and be found eligible for a student loan.**

You can apply on paper. Application packages are available at:

- the Disability Service Office (Your best option, as they are very familiar with the process.)
- your high school
- Alberta Service Centres or Canada-Alberta Service Centres.

You can apply online at alis.alberta.ca/apply. (You cannot apply online using a Macintosh computer.)

The **Study Your Options series of booklets** is available to help you complete the application form. You will find copies where you pick up a paper application and online at alis.alberta.ca.

Complete Schedule 4

Schedule 4 is a form that must be submitted along with your student funding application if you have a permanent disability and want to receive a grant for assistive services, assistive technology or a reduced course load, or if you want to receive the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities. The Schedule 4 form is part of the student funding application package. Details about how to complete Schedule 4 are included in the student funding application package.

PLAN IN ADVANCE!

To complete a student loan application, you will need:

- a Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- an Alberta Student Number (ASN) from your Alberta High School transcript or go to education.alberta.ca to obtain one
- name, address and phone number of a next of kin or contact person
- exact start and end dates of your school term at the post-secondary institution, including program and specialization/major
- employment earnings for four months immediately before you start this post-secondary term (estimates allowed)
- monthly living costs and resources while you are attending a post-secondary program, including vehicle information (estimates allowed—use the budget activity above)
- costs of tuition (use actual, if possible), books and supplies.

You will also need to complete and attach a Schedule 4 with your application.

Helpful hint...

Visit a career consultant or a disability service office at the post-secondary institution you are interested in early in the process. Bring with you as much of the necessary documentation as you have. Tell the consultant/disability service office about your plans and the steps you have taken so far.

The relationship that you establish with the consultants through this visit will lay the groundwork for the review of your student funding application and the signing of Schedule 4. To locate an Alberta Service Centre or Canada-Alberta Service Centre, turn to Resources or visit alis.alberta.ca.

continued next page

LEARNING ASSESSMENT FEE REIMBURSEMENT

If you require a learning disability assessment, the Canada Student Grant program may cover 75 per cent of this cost up to a maximum of \$1,200 per loan year. **You must pay for the assessment yourself** and then, if you qualify, you will be reimbursed through the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities. The assessment must be dated no earlier than six months prior to the commencement of your post-secondary studies.

How to apply for post-secondary funding

continued

If your permanent disability limits you from taking a full course load, you may enroll in 40 to 59 per cent of a full course load and be deemed a full-time student for financial assistance purposes. In order to confirm that you are taking a reduced course load, you must have your Schedule 4 signed by the authorized official at your post-secondary school (for example, the coordinator for students with permanent disabilities).

You must have your Schedule 4 signed by an Employment and Immigration consultant. To find the service centre nearest you, and to obtain the most current information regarding Schedule 4, visit alis.alberta.ca/studentsfinance

Other funding sources

In addition to funding available to you to help with disability-related costs, you and your parents can also consider the funding sources discussed in this section.

Scholarships and bursaries for students with disabilities

There are several scholarships available specifically for students with disabilities. You can find out more about these opportunities at:

- the Disability Service Office at the post-secondary institution you are applying to

- visit alis.alberta.ca/scholarships
- the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) website, www.neads.ca, in their guide *National Directory of Financial Assistance Programs for Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities* available at their Online Resource Centre.

Other scholarships and bursaries

Many scholarships and bursaries are available, if you know where to look and start looking early. Governments, school boards, schools, post-secondary institutions,

Funding

RESPs and CESG

Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP)

An RESP is a tax-sheltered savings plan that becomes taxable once the beneficiary is ready to go to a post-secondary educational institution. Since students usually have little other income, they pay little or no tax on RESP income. There is no yearly contribution limit and for each child named in an RESP, you can put up to \$50,000 into this RESP. A variety of financial institutions offer family, non-family and group plans for investors wishing to start an RESP. It is a good idea to talk about this investment with several financial institutions to determine your best choice. Be aware that there are a number of rules associated with an RESP. Make sure you understand the details of the plan before you make a commitment to invest.

Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG)

The CESG is a grant from the Government of Canada that contributes to a child's RESP. The CESG adds 20 to 40 per cent (dependent on family income) to the first \$2,000 in contributions made to an RESP each year, to a maximum of \$400 per year. Visit the Human Resources and Social Development Canada website at hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca for more information about this grant.

industry, businesses, community and service organizations all offer scholarships. Most are awarded based on academic achievement, sometimes in combination with other factors such as community service.

For example, Alberta students can earn up to \$2500 through Alexander Rutherford Scholarships. These scholarships are awarded to students when they enroll in post-secondary institutions and have earned an 80 per cent average in selected and designated high school courses in at least one grade in high school. Students typically apply for this scholarship in the spring of their Grade 12 year and it is paid during the first semester of post-secondary studies.

Alberta students interested in an apprenticeship program may be eligible for the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board Registered Apprenticeship Program Scholarship, known as the RAP Scholarship. It provides \$1,000 for high school students who have participated in RAP and wish to continue in a regular apprenticeship program after finishing high school.

Financial support for post-secondary studies is available to Inuit and Status Indian

students living on or off reserve through the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). To qualify for this support, students must be identified as Status Indians under the federal *Indian Act*. Most individual First Nations bands establish their own criteria for selection. Students who are status and on a band list can contact their own band administrative office for more information. Policies and programs vary across the country and across the province. Additional information on specific benefits is also available from regional and district offices of INAC, Health Canada, First Nations band offices and tribal councils.

The Métis Nation of Alberta provides funding for Métis students entering or returning to post-secondary studies. For more information, contact the Métis Nation of Alberta at (780) 423 2237.



Other funding sources

continued

Family contributions

Your parents may be able to contribute to your post-secondary education funding. For example, you may be able to live at home while you are attending a program. Your family may be planning to contribute financially, too. Talk about funding in detail with your parents to find out if, and with how much, they will be able to help you out.

Your contributions

You may be able to contribute to funding your education by making and saving money from a summer or part-time job. Look for jobs that expose you to different types of work. Remember, though, that your job during the school term is to succeed in your school work to the best of your ability. Working part-time while you are going to school can be a good way to gain skills and experience. However, be sure that this commitment does not jeopardize your academic goals or your health.

You may also want to save some of your allowance, birthday money, investment or other money you make.

Student loans

You may be eligible to receive student loans sponsored by the federal and provincial governments. As discussed earlier, you will be applying for a student loan in order to access government grants for students with disabilities. These loans are available to full-time students and to students with disabilities who are enrolled in a reduced course load and who are attending a certified post-secondary institution. Government loans are interest- and payment-free until you leave school, at which point they must be repaid with interest, like any other loan.

Loans issued directly by a bank or other financial institution may be another alternative if you do not qualify for a government sponsored student loan.

The Registered Apprenticeship Program, RAP, means getting a head start in building a portfolio.

Beginning in Grade 10, students can start learning a trade...gaining real work experience and getting paid!

In addition to a wage, RAP apprentices may earn credits toward their high school diploma and begin acquiring the hours of on-the-job training required to become a certified journeyperson.

For more information visit www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca

Tips from families who save

- Open an RESP for your teen. The Government of Canada will help with savings incentives that are only available if you have an RESP; these incentives include the Canada Education Savings Grant and the Canada Learning Bond.
- Teach teens to manage money by providing an allowance they can use for personal expenses.
- Encourage teens to split their allowances into three envelopes: a. one for spending; b. one for short-term savings; c. and one for long-term savings for post-secondary education.
- Open a savings account with your teen and advise your teen to put some money in it every month. Or open an informal trust account for your teen to save and invest money for when your teen reaches the age of majority. This money then can be used for post-secondary education or training.
- Explain the meaning of interest and review your teen's bank statements with him or her.
- Set a good example when making purchases. Discuss major household purchases with your teen, explain the importance of comparison shopping and avoid impulse buying.
- Support your teen's efforts to make money by taking on a part-time job like babysitting, lawn-mowing or other activity, if possible, to save for post-secondary education.
- Find games that your teen can take part in that teach money skills.
- Set financial goals of your own. Visit a financial advisor to help set up a savings plan. Start saving today for tomorrow.

Visit www.canlearn.ca for more information about ways to save and to use the education savings calculator.

Information sources for funding my post-secondary

Use the following activity to make sure you cover all the bases in your search for information about funding your post-secondary education.

Source	Date and contact for follow-up
The Disability Service Office (DSO) at the post-secondary institution(s) you are interested in	
High school counsellor	
Organizations listed online at the NEADS website www.neads.ca	
Other Internet sources	
Foundations, religious organizations, community organizations, local businesses, cultural groups, sports organizations and civic groups	
Organizations, including professional associations, in my field of interest	
My parents' employers	
Other	

Information sources for funding my post-secondary

Use the following activity to make sure you cover all the bases in your search for information about funding your post-secondary education.

Post-secondary institutions offer scholarships for apprentices attending technical training at their institution. Trade related associations might also have scholarships or financial assistance available to their members. For more information, contact the institution or association directly.

To learn more about RAP and Apprenticeship and Industry Training Scholarships, visit

www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca

- _____ I have estimated the cost of my post-secondary education.
- _____ I know the amount I can contribute toward my post-secondary education.
- _____ I know the amount my parents can contribute to my post-secondary education.
- _____ I have a Social Insurance Number.
- _____ I have met with Disability Service Office (DSO) staff at the institution(s) I am interested in, provided them with documentation about my disability and accommodation needs and discussed my program application and my student funding application or
- _____ I have met with an Employment and Immigration consultant to discuss my student funding application. For current information regarding student funding application and Schedule 4 please check the ALIS website at alis.alberta.ca
- _____ I have completed my student funding application.
- _____ I have completed a Schedule 4 and checked on the ALIS website at alis.alberta.ca for updates and changes to the application process.
- _____ An Employment and Immigration consultant has signed my Schedule 4.
- _____ I have attached a Schedule 4 to my student funding application.
- _____ I have attached a medical certificate or learning assessment (to document my disability) to my student funding application.
- _____ I have obtained two separate estimates of the cost of any assistive equipment I need and attached them to my student funding application.
- _____ I have arranged for a learning assessment, if necessary, timed so that it is completed no more than six months prior to the start of my post-secondary studies.
- _____ My parents and I have arranged to pay for my learning assessment, if necessary, until we receive reimbursement through the Canada Student Grant program.
- _____ I have submitted my student funding application before May 31 for my September program.
- _____ I have researched and applied for other funding, such as scholarships and bursaries, as appropriate.

Success stories

How did Kim, Roman, Renée and James choose their post-secondary programs?

You don't want special treatment. It's understanding you're looking for.

Kim chose the University of Alberta because of its four-year education degree program and its support program for students with learning disabilities.

Distance learning worked well for **Roman** in high school so he chose Athabasca University. He says the distance learning format is his accommodation. "I'm not pushed into groups, I can work on social development on my own terms and I'm not constantly being forced into anxiety-producing situations," he explains. Roman also appreciates the standardized approach to courses that the University of Athabasca offers.

Renée chose Mount Royal College because of the support it offers. Because it is a smaller school with

WE DON'T SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE

Choosing a post-secondary program

THERE ARE MANY, MANY OPTIONS TO EXPLORE and lots of details to think about as you make your decision about which post-secondary program you want to attend. It is a good idea to narrow down your choices by the end of Grade 11.

Step one: Research your options

This step begins with knowing your dreams, interests, strengths and challenges and exploring your career options. If you have not completed the activities in part one, why not do them now? They will help you through this part of your transition planning.

Consider differences

You can enroll in post-secondary studies at colleges, universities and technical institutes.

Colleges:

- offer certificate, apprenticeship, diploma and applied degree programs ranging from a few months to four years
- tend to offer programs related to specific occupations; for example, Diploma in Graphic Design

- may offer transfer programs that allow you to begin a degree program at the college, then transfer to a university to complete it
- tend to have smaller classes and a more close-knit community.

Universities:

- offer degrees and a variety of other certificate and diploma programs ranging from one to eight or more years
- tend to offer programs that are broad in scope or specific to a profession; for example, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Engineering
- usually require higher entrance marks, research skills and more written work.

continued next page

One way to find out about the differences among post-secondary institutions is to read their calendars (guides to policies, programs and courses at the institutions). Ask your high school counsellor if you can borrow some calendars or contact the institutions directly.

smaller class sizes, all her professors know her name, which is a big advantage if you have a disability. "You don't want special treatment," she explains. "It's understanding you're looking for. All of my professor have understood and supported my needs."

James has always known that without a post-secondary education, his chances of getting a job would be minimal. Originally intending to be a teacher, he reconsidered after meeting with advisors. "They asked me if I thought I could control a class of 25 students and suggested counselling as an alternative direction. After a night of feeling down, I knew I had to shake off my disappointment and go on," James remembers. "Listen to your advisors," he suggests. "Balance what they tell you against what you know about yourself."

Step one: Research your options

continued

Technical institutes:

- offer certificate, apprenticeship, diploma and applied degree programs ranging from a few months to four years
- tend to offer programs that are “hands-on”
- often develop programs in response to industry and labour market needs.

Private vocational schools:

- offer vocational training for a specific occupation. Programs are usually shorter in length and focus on basic training.

Visit websites

The Internet makes researching your options much easier. Websites for post-secondary institutions and programs will give you a feel for their focus, atmosphere and resources.

Visit alis.alberta.ca/myeducation.

Talk to others about the program

Talking to current students and recent graduates of a program can give you a good idea of what it is like. You can also find out about a program’s reputation by talking with people who work in the field. How can you find these people?

Ask:

- your network—your parents, your transition planning team, your teachers, your friends, your friends’ parents and so on
- the Disability Service Office staff at the post-secondary institution
- program advisors at the post-secondary institution
- professional organizations and companies that work in areas related to the program.

Registered Apprenticeship Program, RAP, opens the door for high school students to gain work experience, and develop skills and abilities in a career they are interested in pursuing after high school. In return, RAP employers pay the apprentices’ wage, and provide on-the-job training in one of Alberta’s more than 50 trades.

Website visit log

Name of post-secondary institution or program	Web address	Date of first visit



Visit

Take advantage of opportunities to visit the post-secondary institutions and programs you are interested in:

- Attend open houses.
- Take a campus tour, if one is available.
- Make an appointment to visit the Disability Service Office (DSO). (For more information about what to discuss, see Step 3.)
- Make an appointment to talk with the program advisor.
- Ask the program advisor and the DSO about opportunities to shadow students in the program and students with disabilities who are attending the institution.
- Visit the campus with a friend or parent and explore.

**Always be a
first-rate version of
yourself, rather than
a second-rate version
of somebody else.**

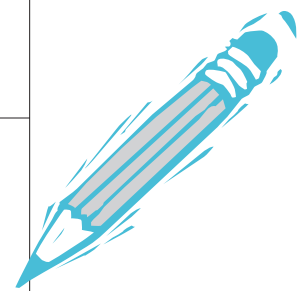
Judy Garland

Special features/
things to note

Questions
to ask

My rating Other

Special features/ things to note	Questions to ask	My rating	Other





We don't see
things as they
are, we see them
as we are.

Anais Nin

Step two: Think about your needs and preferences

Post-secondary studies are anything but “one size fits all.” After you have researched and explored the options, take some time to seriously consider what kind of post-secondary experience will best reflect your needs and preferences.

Full- or part-time studies

As mentioned earlier in part two, students with disabilities can enroll in 40 to 59 per cent of a full course load and still be considered for full-time funding. Will taking less than a full course load allow you to get better marks and stay healthy? Could you begin with a part-time course load and then gradually add more courses in the following semesters, if you are maintaining the marks you want, without too much stress?

Classroom or distance learning

Some institutions offer entire programs online. You need to decide if you prefer to learn in a classroom atmosphere or online or in a combination of the two. Distance learning could be a good choice for the following reasons:

- You would not have to live away from home.
- You can “attend class” whenever you want to and work at the time of day that is best for you.
- You do not have to deal with accessibility issues or crowds.

With distance learning you will have access to instructors and there is often a requirement that you take part in online forums or tutorials with others in your course.

Be aware, however, that distance learning requires high levels of motivation and discipline. It works best for those who are comfortable in a self-directed environment.

Living at home or moving away

You may be thinking about moving away if:

- the program you want is only available in another location
- you want the independence or the perspective of living on your own.

If you are planning on moving away, think about whether you will live:

- in a student residence or dormitory
- in a shared apartment or other space
- on your own.

Even if you are anxious to leave home, you may want to think about postponing this move until later. The step from high school to post-secondary studies is a big one. While you are adjusting to the change, you may benefit from the kind of support that is available to you at home.

Large institution or small

A large institution can be overwhelming— bigger class sizes, more anonymity. Some students thrive in this kind of environment, while others prefer smaller institutions. Some students start their post-secondary studies at a smaller institution like a college and eventually transfer to a larger setting to complete their programs.

Step three: Assess the disability services

Many post-secondary institutions provide services to students with disabilities through a disability services office (DSO), which may also be known as Accessibility Services or the Office for Students with Disabilities or by a similar name. Other institutions offer services to students with disabilities through their health, student and financial services.

It is very important to contact the DSO (or the staff assigned to assist students with disabilities) at the institutions on your short list, about a year in advance of the start of your program. Meet with them in person, if possible.

The DSO will help you:

- understand admission requirements
- apply to the program
- identify scholarships, bursaries and grants to apply for
- apply for funding
- identify documentation and learning assessments you may require for accommodations or assistive technology
- arrange for a learning assessment, if necessary
- arrange accommodations, assistive technology or other supports
- advocate, as necessary
- deal with disclosure issues

- connect with groups and other kinds of support on-campus
- determine an appropriate course load.

When you talk with the DSO, you need to make sure that:

- the campus or program area is fully accessible, if necessary
- the institution can arrange the accommodations and supports you require
- you understand the formal or informal appeal process, if you are not admitted and/or if your application for accommodation is not successful.

When your assessments are complete, you will meet again with DSO staff to develop a **service plan**. Also known as an education or accommodations plan, it describes the accommodations or other supports you are eligible for. Your service plan should ensure that the supports you need are in place when you begin your studies.



Success stories

How have Kim, Roman, Renée and James gained their independence?

“In Grade 10, my parents said I needed to make an appointment with each of my teachers and go by myself and explain about my disability — I was terrified! But it forced me to start being independent,”

says **Kim**. Now, she would encourage other parents to do the same thing. Leaving home to go to university was also a big step for Kim but she says that the learning disabilities program helped her feel more independent by helping her develop her skills.

Emotionally and academically independent, **Roman** is currently living with a parent and feeling like it's time for a change. “I'm anxious about getting out on my own,” he says. “But I've had some practice with day-to-day independence when my mother has been on vacation.” Roman has worked hard to develop his employability skills in the last couple of years so he can afford to live independently.

The key to

independence

is owning your

disability — not

letting it make you

feel inferior.

continued next page

there is only one
success—to be able
to spend your life
in your own way.

Christopher Morley

Step four: Make your decision and apply for post-secondary studies

There are many ways to make this decision. You may choose to base it on:

- disability services and access—for example, will you receive the accommodations and supports you need?
- location—for example, are you prepared to move away to study?
- funding—for example, can you afford to pay for a four-year program?
- kind of institution—for example, do you prefer college or university?
- quality and reputation of post-secondary institution or program—for example, is it important to you that your degree comes from a well-recognized program at a prestigious university?

You may also decide to base your decision on the choice that “feels right.”

Whatever your choice, make sure you are familiar with:

- admission requirements and deadlines
- documentation requirements for the program
- documentation and assessment requirements for requesting accommodation or assistive technology.

ApplyAlberta is a new web-based application and transcript transfer system that will let you apply to one or more post-secondary institutions at the same time, and authorize transcript transfers between participating institutions in the province. This initiative is a collaboration between Alberta’s public post-secondary institutions in partnership with the Government of Alberta.

ApplyAlberta will allow you to start your application at a post-secondary institution’s website or at applyalberta.ca.

You will only have to enter your profile information once since ApplyAlberta will automatically transfer this information to subsequent applications to other institutions.

How have Kim, Roman, Renée and James gained their independence?

continued

As an oldest child, **Renée** feels she was raised to live independently. Leaving a small town in Alberta to work in the Netherlands for a year also helped her to mature. Currently, she lives off campus with roommates. But she says the key to independence is “owning your disability — not letting it make you feel inferior.”

James’ parents encouraged him not to let his disability stand in his way. By 14 his mobility and orientation skills were advanced enough for him to have his first guide dog—a significant step toward adult-style independence.

Yes, you! ✈️ →
Post-secondary
Departure

WE DON'T SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE
BUT AS WE ARE

Assessing the choices

Make a copy of this page for each post-secondary program or post-secondary institution you are interested in.

Institution and program: _____

Entrance requirements: _____

Diploma/certificate/degree offered: _____

Program length: _____ Tuition cost per year: _____

Application deadline: _____

Application documentation: _____

Program contact: _____

phone: _____

e-mail: _____

What I like about the program: _____

My concerns about the program: _____

My rating for the program: _____

Disability services office contact: _____

phone: _____

e-mail: _____

What I like about the disability services office: _____

My concerns about the disability services office: _____

My rating for the disability services office: _____

Other comments: _____

Overall rating: _____

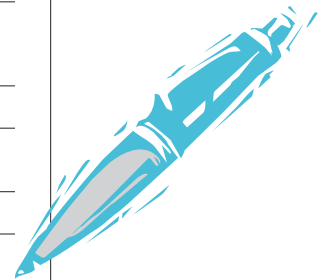
you must be

the change you

wish to see in the

world.

Mahatma Gandhi





Spending Plan for Students



1. Total Income

Source	Amount
Scholarships, grants or bursaries	_____
Family support	_____
Student loans	_____
Savings / Summer job	_____
Part-time job	_____
(Multiply monthly amount by number of months in school)	_____
Tax refund	_____
Other: _____	_____
Total income:	_____



2. Up-Front, One-Time Expenses

Expense	Amount
Tuition and fees	_____
Books and supplies	_____
Damage deposit	_____
Utilities hook-up	_____
Moving expenses	_____
Household items, etc.	_____
Car insurance / registration	_____
Other: _____	_____
Total up-front, one-time expenses:	_____

Total up-front, one-time expenses:

3. Determine Your Monthly Income

Total income (from #1)	_____
Less: up-front, one-time expenses (from #2)	- _____
Balance to live on	= _____
Divide by # of months in school year	÷ _____
Total monthly income	= _____

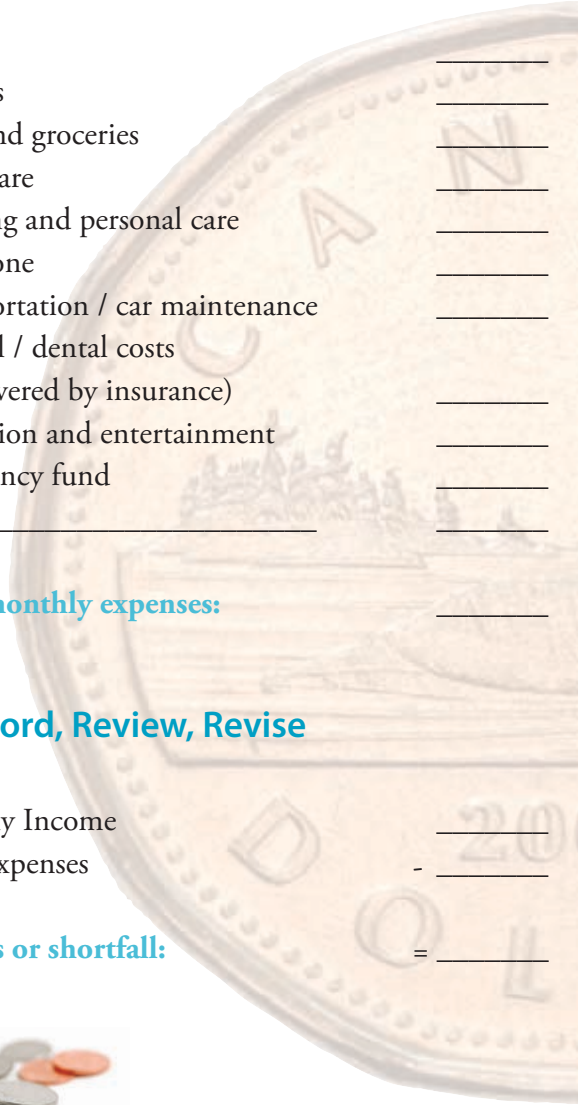
4. Estimate Monthly Expenses

Expense	Amount
Rent	_____
Utilities	_____
Food and groceries	_____
Child care	_____
Clothing and personal care	_____
Telephone	_____
Transportation / car maintenance	_____
Medical / dental costs (not covered by insurance)	_____
Recreation and entertainment	_____
Emergency fund	_____
Other: _____	_____

Total monthly expenses:

5. Record, Review, Revise

Monthly Income	_____
Total Expenses	- _____
Savings or shortfall:	= _____



Appendix: Sample Transition Plan - Troy

STEP 1: GET READY

Troy lives with his mom and stepfather and two younger siblings. He is an active child who loves the outdoors – skateboarding, walking his dog, and playing football. He has a great sense of humour and is learning how to practice magic! Troy is 13 years old and attends Grade 8 at Bickley Junior High School. He was diagnosed with a learning disability three years ago. As a result of this disability, Troy has difficulties with memory, comprehending written material, and expressing his ideas in written format. At times, he demonstrates low self-esteem and challenges with making and keeping friends. Troy currently receives support from an educational aid who teaches him strategies for retaining information, understanding written material and completing written assignments. Troy is unsure about what he wants to be when he grows up. He used to talk about being a private investigator, but has more recently started showing interest in being a police officer.

Troy spoke with his health and wellness teacher at his school and they looked at occupations on alis.alberta.ca/occinfo to explore his interests. Troy also attended an open house at his community police station to see what a typical work day would be like for a police officer.

STEP 3:

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Troy researched the entrance requirements for the two-year community college program and discovered the college had a student-for-a-day program. Working with the guidance counsellor and a representative from the local learning disability organization, Troy and his transition team developed the following plan:

1. Troy will visit the college open house and register for the student-for-a-day program to see what a typical day would be like if he were a college student
2. The educational aid will make an appointment for Troy to meet with a disability service coordinator at the community college to see what learning supports he will need for college
3. Troy's guidance counsellor knows he will need an up-to-date educational assessment with accommodation recommendations and possible assistive technology to help him with his college courses; his mother and the guidance counsellor will arrange for this assessment
4. Troy and his team will make the decision to enroll in the college program after completing some more research
5. He begins now searching for potential scholarships, bursaries, and grants targeted for students with disabilities

continued next page

STEP 2: CHOOSE A TRANSITION PLANNING TEAM

Troy is a 17 year old active youth who loves the outdoors – snowboarding, trail/mountain biking, and playing football. He has a great sense of humor and enjoys practicing magic to amaze others. Troy now attends Grade 11 at Willow High School. Diagnosed with a learning disability when he was younger, he still struggles a bit with low self-esteem but has a few friends. Troy continues to receive support from an educational aid. Troy has decided that he wants to attend a post-secondary institution and is actively exploring his vocational options. In Junior High, he was very keen on becoming a police officer and did some career exploration. Given the demanding nature of police work Troy felt that this was not a suitable choice for himself. Recently, he expressed a more focused interest in working with youth who have been in trouble with the law. Troy's mother thought it was time to put a transition planning team together to help Troy so she recruited Troy's high school guidance counsellor, his educational aid, and sought out a representative from the local learning disability organization to join the team. Through his high school guidance counsellor, Troy has received information about a two-year Correctional Studies diploma program at the local community college.

STEP 1 of the transition planning process includes career exploration and planning. Explore your interests, strengths, and career aspirations.

STEP 2 of the transition planning process involves the development of a transition planning team.

STEP 3 of the transition planning process includes developing and implementing the plan.

Sample transition plan

continued

STEP 4 of the transition planning process involves monitoring and updating the transition plan.

STEP 5 of the transition planning process includes holding an exit meeting. Ensure that all the necessary steps have been taken for ensuring a successful transition between Grade 12 and college.

* They may register him in January or after he is conditionally accepted into the program.

** Funding programs such as government students finance, Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) plus other grants, bursaries, and scholarships are available from government, community agencies and private companies. Student lines of credit are also available from lending institutions. All these funding sources can change on a yearly basis.

STEP 4: MONITORING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

Troy is now in Grade 12. He loves video games and is a mentor through school to a Grade 7 teen who also has a learning disability. This program has helped him learn to build relationships. Troy will apply to the correctional studies diploma program at a local community college, using the transition plan developed with his team.

1. He continues to search and apply for potential scholarships, bursaries, and grants both general and those targeted for students with disabilities.
2. In January, Troy visits the college and obtains information from the disability service office about accessing tutors, a learning strategist, exam accommodations and other supports recommended in his learning (educational) assessment. The staff at the college register him for their services* and will also give him information on how to access funding for his disability supports.
3. In February, with his first semester marks, Troy completes the application for entrance into the post-secondary program with the help of his guidance counsellor.
4. In May or June, Troy completes a Student Funding application online at alis.alberta.ca/apply and a *Schedule 4, Federal/Provincial Grant for Post-Secondary Students with Permanent Disabilities* form together with his *Learning Assessment for the Canada Student Grant* with his team and the disability services office. He has recently heard that he was conditionally accepted into the program, but he needs his final Grade 12 marks submitted by the end of July for full acceptance. Troy has to continue to follow the plan that his team developed, including his proof of permanent disability (in Troy's scenario he would need to submit a recent, within six months, learning assessment from a registered psychologist**) documentation. He also continues being a mentor, which he finds very satisfying, and which helps to confirm his belief that he wants to work with youth.

STEP 5: HOLDING AN EXIT MEETING

Troy is 18 years old and in his last month of Grade 12 at Willow High School. He has been conditionally accepted into the two-year Correctional Studies Program at the local college.

1. Troy, his mother, his educational aid, his school guidance counsellor and the representative from the learning disability organization meet once more to tie up any loose ends so that Troy can begin a new journey at the local community college.
2. He starts school with student funding arriving in September and begins college ready and organized for success.
Troy has built a new support team with his disability service coordinator, his learning strategist, his funding counsellor and his family support.