



HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

Those with Disabilities have Tough Transition

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Transition to adulthood is never easy, but for young folks with developmental disabilities moving to adulthood has special challenges. For many youth, the high school years between 14 and 18 are the times to “test the waters.” At eighteen, most have been licensed drivers for two years, are old enough to legally vote, and are getting ready to leave home for college or a new work opportunity. The reality is quite different for children with developmental disabilities. Basic services such as having a safe place to spend the day, personal care supports, transportation, and sometimes free or reduced lunches that are provided during the K – 12 school years, may no longer be available. Involvement in a program during these later teen years may help some transition to a successful life as an adult with developmental disabilities.

Students with developmental disabilities, age 18-21, are entitled to programs to help prepare for adulthood. These transition programs are offered through school districts, and help them learn life skills such as personal hygiene, safety, and social interaction. More and more, transition programs are also training them to be ready to enter the job market. In fact, helping a student figure out what type of job they would be good at as an adult is becoming common. This type of goal usually requires planning and support.

Strong family support can help successful transition into adult life. Some teachers use Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) to help students and their family members design their educational goals and get involved in what the student is learning. It can be helpful to include other people in planning for a student’s life as an adult, especially people who know the student well and can identify the student’s strengths and skills. Having friends and family involved and working towards a common goal for the future helps to ensure that a youth with disabilities is more likely to succeed.

There are companies, organizations, and programs in our community to help students with developmental disabilities plan their future. These resources provide all kinds of services, such as helping someone find a job, learning how to ride a bus, or living as independently as possible. Depending on what your student with developmental disabilities wants to achieve, these resources may help you get to that goal. Learn more about available services and programs by getting involved!

The Thurston-Mason County Developmental Disability Program hosts the annual **Transition Fair on Thursday March 3, 2011 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm** at the Labor and Industries Building in Tumwater. The fair is open to anyone interested in services for people with developmental disabilities, including people with disabilities and their family members. There will be over twenty companies and organizations at the fair to share their programs and how get involved.

- For more information, or to ask for an accommodation, please contact Anne Butigan at Thurston-Mason County Developmental Disability Program, 360-867-2520 or butigaa@co.thurston.wa.us

Hope to see you there!

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