

***So your child is wanting to pursue services from Division of Developmental Disabilities...***

# ***Tips for Parents***

*Where will your child live and work after high school? Who can provide services? How do these services and supports get paid for? Thinking about the future can be pretty scary. The intent of this brochure is to assist you and your child in preparing for the future. More knowledge in the transition process typically means feeling more confident and comfortable in advocating for services and programs that will lead to a better quality of life for your child.*

## **While in high school, your child should...**

- ✓ Consider applying for the Youth Leadership Forum (activity sponsored by TSLP).
- ✓ Learn about his/her disability.
- ✓ Become involved in extra-curricular activities.
- ✓ Share strengths, learning styles, challenges and needed accommodations with the general education teachers.
- ✓ Tour and visit with adult service providers.
- ✓ Explore long term adult service options through the Home Community Based Services (Choices) Waivers from Community Service Providers or the Family Support 360 Program.
- ✓ Consider applying for services through the Division of Rehabilitation Services and gain work experience through Project Skills.
- ✓ Actively participate in IEP meetings.

## **Did you Know?**

When students decide to graduate with a regular high school diploma, the school district will no longer be involved with any services for them. When students graduate with an unsigned diploma, they could continue to receive services until the end of the school year (June 30) following their 21st birthday based on an IEP determination.

If the IEP team determines that a student will not meet the graduation requirements or substantially complete his/her IEP measurable annual goals or continued transition services are needed, the IEP team must develop a new IEP for the next school year and the student can continue to receive services. Many school districts in South Dakota are developing and implementing creative educational opportunities for students who continue to receive special education services through their 21st birthday. Funding for many adult agencies may not be available until a student is 21 years old, so if a student graduates too early, they may be unable to access long term adult services

## **Division of Developmental Disabilities**

The mission of the **Division of Developmental Disabilities** (DD) is “to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have equal opportunities and receive the services and supports they need to live and work in South Dakota communities.” Through the programs and services that they provide, this mission can be accomplished when individuals with developmental disabilities access services available through this Division.

Some examples of an individual who may be eligible for services through the Division of DD are an individual with Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and/or cognitive impairment (mental retardation).

Resource Coordinators are employed by the Division of DD and contacting one of them is your first step in accessing these services. Resource Coordinators assist individuals and their families access an array of services, which help the person’s needs to be met through a system of individualized planning and supports. Four Resource Coordinators are available in SD and can attend IEP meetings with you to provide insight when you need support. If you have a question about whether your child would qualify for services through the Division of DD, please contact the Resource Coordinator in your area.

### **Resource Coordinator Contact Information:**

**Central Area** - Colin Hutchison, Phone: (605) 773-3438  
Toll Free: 800-265-9684

**Northeast Area** - Teri Bukowski, Phone: (605) 432-7851  
Toll Free: 877-647-0024

**Southeast Area** - Julie Johnson Dresbach, Phone: (605) 367-5250  
Toll Free: 888-510-9388

**Western Area** - Dona Deal, Phone: (605) 394-2302  
Toll Free: 888-895-4502

### **Encourage your Child to Attend a Transition Forum with You!**

**Transition forums** are informal and interactive meetings that allow you to network and make connections with adult service agency staff and identify resources that your child may access in the future. Representatives from Division of Rehabilitation Services and/or Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, area Independent Living Centers, Community Service Providers, Employment Specialists, Post Secondary Disability Services, Social Security Benefits Planning Specialists, and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services are invited to answer questions students & families may have. For more information on dates and locations throughout SD, contact the transition liaison in your area or go to the TSLP website at: [www.tslp.org](http://www.tslp.org)

## The Law & Guardianship

It can be a particularly worrisome time if you question your child's ability to make important life decisions when he/she turns 18. Guardianship may be an answer. To learn about the pros, cons, and alternatives to guardianship or for more information, contact either:

**The Guardianship Program, Inc.**

105 East Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 224-9647 or  
1-866-228-9119

[sd.guardians@gmail.com](mailto:sd.guardians@gmail.com)

**South Dakota Advocacy Services**

221 S. Central Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605)224-8294 or  
1-800-658-4782 [sdas@sdadvocacy.com](mailto:sdas@sdadvocacy.com)

## Opportunities for Your Child in the Adult Services System

The Division of Developmental Disabilities provides funding and monitoring responsibilities for nineteen non-profit community agencies serving people with developmental disabilities. These agencies are referred to as Community Support Providers(CSP's),previously known as Adjustment Training Centers.

**CSP's** in South Dakota provide a wide range of supports in the areas of employment, living, professional services, support services, and service coordination. Employment opportunities may include working in the agency workshop, job coaching and pre-vocational training for individuals looking for community jobs and expanded follow-along for those working in the community. CSP's provide supports for individuals living with their families or on their own as well as residential options, such as group homes or supervised apartments.

Personalized support plans are developed to assist individuals attain their desired dreams and goals. These individuals may need to learn how to brush their teeth, care for their clothing, cook, identify coins, balance a checkbook, increase their quality of work, improve their safety habits, get along with people, express their feelings, increase their community mobility skills, increase their participation in the community by joining service organizations, learn to vote, know their rights as a citizen, make purchases or pay bills, etc. CSP's work to meet the needs of the individuals receiving services there.

For a listing of SD **Community Support Providers**, go to <http://dhs.sd.gov/dd/atcslist.aspx> or call 1-605-773-3438.

**Family Support 360** is a program for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The program will do "whatever it takes" to enable people to get the services they need. These services are designed to make it possible for people to live in the community on their own. The mission of the **Family Support 360 Project** is to empower people to achieve their dreams through choice of services and supports.

**The goals of the Project are to:**

- help people make their own choices;
- help people live and work in their community; and
- help people find the supports that they want in their community.

**Supports & services include, but are not limited to:**

- Service Coordination - community resources and services
- Companion Care - social activities, recreational opportunities, community living skills, independent living skills
- Personal Care Services and Supplies
- Adaptive Equipment
- Respite Care
- Employment Services

For more info on this program, contact your regional Resource Coordinator. (see page 2)

## **What is SSI?**

SSI is short for Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a program under the Social Security Administration (SSA) that pays monthly benefits to people who are age 65 or older, are blind or have a disability and who have limited resources and income.

Often times, children (under 18 years of age) applying for SSI do not meet the financial and resource limitation allowance due to required reporting of all household income. However, when a child becomes an adult at age 18, the family's income and resources will no longer be considered when determining a child's financial SSI eligibility.

Students should make application for SSI in the month after they turn 18. The individual applying must be present at the meeting, along with the parents to assist with answering questions.

If you plan to have your child apply for SSA disability benefits, you need to call SSA to schedule an appointment or apply online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). For phone numbers of regional offices, go to [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov), click on "Find a Social Security Office" on the right hand side and then enter your zip code.

**NOTE:** If your child with a disability is receiving SSI benefits prior to age 18, he/she **must reapply** with SSA for SSI benefits as an adult. For this application, SSA will use somewhat different disability criteria that were used to evaluate his/her disability as a

child. The adult definition of disability for SSI eligibility states: "An individual age 18 and older is 'disabled' if he or she has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, which results in the inability to do any substantial gainful activity, and can be expected to result in death; or has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

SSI is to be used to pay the costs of food, clothing and shelter for the recipient. If your child is living with you and is approved for SSI after he/she turns 18, the SSI check will be reduced by one-third unless he/she is paying living expenses. The amount of living expenses does need to be a fair amount, one that a parent would charge for anyone who may rent a room in the household. A rental agreement between the parent and child should be developed and sent to SSA to address this reduction.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Services

There are a variety of vocational rehabilitation services that **Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)** can offer to students with disabilities. If your child hasn't applied for these services, please request the school to invite a VR counselor to meet with you and/or your child or attend an IEP meeting. Some services DRS may provide (based on eligibility, financial need and individual needs) are:

- ✓ guidance in transition planning;
- ✓ financial assistance for college or training, when appropriate;
- ✓ vocational counseling and guidance;
- ✓ work experience through Project Skills and/or job placement, job coaching, and employment/follow along services for competitive employment in the community.
- ✓ transportation, equipment and other services if needed for training; and
- ✓ assessing the need assistive technology equipment and services.

For information on the address and phone number of the DRS office nearest you, go to <http://dhs.sd.gov/drs/> or call (605) 773-3195.

## Final Thoughts . . . . .

- ✓ You and your child should take a leadership role in planning and implementing his/her transition IEP.
- ✓ Communication is essential - you and your child's IEP team need to begin the transition to post-secondary services early!
- ✓ Involve your son or daughter in completing ordinary tasks in your home.
- ✓ Make your child's school responsibilities (homework, projects) his/hers, not yours.
- ✓ Visit and share with other parents who are in the transition stage for their child!
- ✓ Help your child understand his/her disability. Share information with your child about others with disabilities who have achieved success in their lives!