

# GET READY! For Study and Work



Getting young people with disability  
ready for study and work:  
**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

# Acknowledgements

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This resource forms part of our Get Ready series, which also includes a workbook for young people with disability, a workbook for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and our programme websites. The original top ten tips for getting ready for life after school, on which this resource is based, were developed by Nicole Sharp. They were developed using evidence from research and best practice, and with input from a wide variety of stakeholders. The authors gratefully acknowledge the input of National Disability Coordination Officers from around Australia, Teacher/Consultants from TAFE NSW, Disability Advisers from NSW universities, Support Teachers (Transition) from NSW Department of Education and Communities and other valued stakeholders. We particularly acknowledge the parents, educators and other service providers who had input into this parent Guide.

All of our Get Ready resources are freely available to download from our website [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips). For more information, please contact:

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A PDF that allows electronic completion of the activities, saving and printing is available at [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips). Here you will also find a plain text version which may be more accessible to screen readers.

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## A note on language

Please note that we use the term parent throughout this Guide for simplicity. We acknowledge and respect that you may be a parent, carer, guardian, other family member or mentor of a young person with disability. Likewise, we use the terms young person, and son or daughter interchangeably within this Guide. We acknowledge that the terms son or daughter may not be appropriate to every person's individual circumstances.



# Introduction

## What is this Guide about?

- This guide aims to provide parents, carers, and families with information, advice and resources to help their young person prepare well for their life after school. In particular it aims to inform parents so they can help their young person with disability to make a successful transition from school into further study or work.
- This resource is designed to be used with our Get Ready Workbook that is for young people themselves – if your son or daughter doesn't already have one you can find it on our website [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips)

## Is this Guide relevant to me?

- You have either found, or been given, this Guide because your son or daughter has a disability. You may not think of your young person as having a 'disability' but the definition under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1992) is very broad and includes learning disabilities, chronic medical conditions, and mental illness. Nearly one in five Australians has one or more disabilities, and the vast majority of them are hidden. You can find more information about the broad nature of disability on our website [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco)
- Your young person's disability may be visible to others, or it may not. It may have a minimal, or a significant, impact on their life. But the important thing is that you are both aware that if they have a disability under the DDA they may be entitled to access support in post school settings, like in training, at university or work. We understand that further education and employment may not be possible for all young people with disability, so we have included information about other post-school programs as well.
- Does your son or daughter have to put in extra effort at school because of an illness, impairment or health condition? Do they access exam provisions at school? While your young person may not like the term disability, or wish to be 'labelled' as disabled, it is important they understand this is the term used by the law, and by many services and supports. This doesn't mean they have to tell everyone they have a disability, but they may wish to tell certain people who can help them. In order to receive the support that will help them to overcome the impact of their disability, they will need to disclose and obtain evidence which will be used in confidence by specialist staff.
- If you haven't spoken with your young person about them having a disability yet, it is important that they develop an understanding of what this means, and that there is support available. It is also important that they learn to explain to others about their disability or medical condition and how it may impact them in study or work.
- This Guide will provide key information about successful planning for life after school, including understanding disability and disability rights, and knowing about the wide range of post-school pathways young people can take and support available.

- Please note that this guide contains information that is relevant across Australia. There are also State and Territory specific programs that might be of interest. You can find links to State/Territory programs in the back of the Get Ready workbook for young people. The workbook is available on our website [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips)

## **I keep hearing about transition planning – what does it mean?**

- Our Guide addresses the move from secondary school to further education, training and employment, which we refer to as ‘transition’. But it is important to remember this is just one part of a much broader change for your daughter or son, as they take on adult roles in all areas of their life. This could also include changes in living arrangements, community life, and relationships. Making transitions is exciting, but can also be challenging. People who plan their transitions well, with help where needed, are likely to have a better outcome than those who don’t.
- This life stage can be difficult for all young people, but for young people with disability, it may be even more so. Additional factors are likely to play an influencing role in their experiences and plans. These include opportunities (or lack of) in education, employment, relationships and community life, access to support and information, and environmental and attitudinal barriers.
- In response to these additional transition considerations and challenges for young people with disability, it has become common practice for Australian schools to have a transition planning process at school. Transition planning is a systematic process initiated and administered by a school which sets goals and steps to be taken to support and prepare the young person to reach agreed goals for life after school. Being actively involved in this process is very important.
- Effective transition planning should:
  - start early and genuinely involve the young person and their family
  - involve a team of personnel from both the secondary and post-secondary settings
  - set formal written agreed goals, tasks and strategies that reflect the young person’s individual preferences, strengths and longer term vision
  - work on short, medium and long-term objectives
  - be regularly reviewed, and where necessary adjusted
  - incorporate activities which:
    - promote self-awareness
    - provide skill building across a range of areas, including direct experiences such as work experience and community activities
    - promote access to up-to-date information about options
    - develop knowledge of supports available in post-school settings and how to access them.
- If you haven’t been involved in your son or daughter’s transition planning to date, or you don’t feel that it has been as effective as it could be, it’s a great idea to speak to staff at the school and raise any concerns you might have. This Guide will provide you with information and resources to help you feel informed and to explore options with the school.

## What post-school options does my young person have?

- There are now a huge range of options available to young people with disability. This includes a range of support to assist people with disability to participate in mainstream courses and workplaces, as well as a range of disability specific programs and employment options. There is an introduction to the main options in this Guide, and links to additional information. The main pathways include:
  - Post school transition and community participation programs funded by States and Territories
  - TAFE
  - University
  - Other education and training, such as through private registered training organisations and community colleges
  - Apprenticeships and traineeships
  - Open employment, or self-employment
  - Supported employment within Australian Disability Enterprises
  - Volunteering.
- Which options are relevant or realistic for your young person will depend on a range of things, including their interests and skills and the type and severity of their disability. But it is important to consider and find out about the full range of options so your family can make an informed decision. This Guide will help you to understand the options and discuss them with your young person's school. It is great to listen to the advice of educators as they have a lot of experience and knowledge. But you know your young person best and it is important to explore all options you think may be suitable. Your knowledge of your son and daughter, along with the tips and information included in this Guide, should help you and your young person to plan well for life after school.

## What's in the Guide?

- This Guide starts with an overview of the role and value of parents in transition planning. There is an introduction to the various post-school pathways and links to more information about each.
- The Guide then works through our top ten tips for successful transition planning, with lots of ideas, information and links to additional resources.
- There is a glossary which explains many of the key terms you will hear during transition planning and provides links to further information, and a list of common acronyms to help you understand some of the jargon you will more than likely hear in the coming years.
- There is some information about the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Programme and how to contact your local NDCO should you need further information.

We hope you find this Guide helpful and welcome your feedback.

# Value and role of parents in transition planning

Everyone knows that a **parent's role changes as their children become young adults**. But for parents of young people with disability this change can be **more complicated** and difficult to navigate. It is widely recognised that there is a large gap in the information and support available to parents of young people with disability about parenting during this phase.

This section offers guidance on the **shifts** your parental role will make throughout the transition process. We also provide a description of the types of **positive role/s** parents can play during this transition period, as well as **challenges** you may face and **tips on overcoming them**.

It is really important to remember that **parental involvement in transition planning and activities is vital and makes a crucial difference to a young person's outcomes** in their study or work after school. Research shows that when parents are involved in transition, their young person has an easier transition and achieves more after school.

## Changes in your role through the transition process

- Because this transition involves your daughter or son growing from being a child to a young adult, the types of roles you play at the start of the process will be **different** to the roles you will play by the end of the transition.
- At the beginning, your role is likely to be one of direct involvement and will inevitably **become less 'hands-on' and more facilitative** as your young person leaves school and enters their post-secondary study or work environment. However, especially for young people with disability, you are likely to remain a vital part of the support network they need to get by in the post-secondary setting.



## Activity

Spend some quiet time remembering an earlier successful transition in your son or daughter's life (or that of another son or daughter) where your role as a parent had to gradually become less hands-on (for example, starting school, learning how to drive, going on their first play-date without you, going out alone).

Have a think about some of the strategies you used to build your son or daughter's confidence as you gradually changed the nature of the role you played for them. Also reflect on how and what you did to cope with this change. Jot down some of the tactics you will use again to make this change successfully:

*If you can't think of an earlier successful transition you've made, ask around. Talk to family and friends (especially those with a child with a disability) about things that have worked well for them.*

## About your role in transition planning

- Research has shown for some time now that the best transition outcomes are achieved when parents and the young person with disability are **actively involved** in transition planning, major decision making and any relevant activities.
- The following are examples of the types of **positive roles** you can fill during the transition planning period:
  - participate directly in meetings at school where transition plans and goals are discussed and agreed
  - maintain an open and constructive relationship with the professionals involved in school-based transition planning and seek their advice
  - help your son or daughter gather information about and understand their options
  - initiate and encourage your young person to give substantial consideration to their goals and which options suit them best
  - assist your young person to develop the skills, independence and resilience they will need in life after school



- get involved in practical activities with your daughter or son, such as work experience, visiting potential future education/training or work settings and/or practicing travelling independently
- guide your young person to work out what supports they will need, how to get them and who to speak to, perhaps make the first contact with a disability service that could help in the post-school setting
- talk to your young person about their disability and encourage them to be able to speak confidently about the impacts of it on study or work
- provide support in giving both positive and negative feedback around services they receive.

## About your role in post-secondary settings

- It is important that parents **encourage their young person to ‘take the driver’s seat’** wherever possible (and this may not always be possible, depending on their type and level of disability) once in their study, training or work option after school. However it is important that your daughter or son understand that you will remain a solid support for them, just in a different way.
- The following are examples of the types of **constructive roles** you can take on as your son or daughter enters their post-school environment. Of course the level and specific way you are involved with your young person’s post-school setting will be determined by individual circumstances:
  - it may be appropriate to be present with your son or daughter for their first contact with the disability service or support officer that will be assisting them in their post-school setting
  - avoid making direct contact with the post-school personnel without your young person’s permission; have your young person involved, and leading the process, wherever possible
  - respect that once your child turns 18, post-school support services cannot legally share information with you without your adult child’s permission
  - where problems arise, provide resources, information and emotional support
  - support your son or daughter to identify solutions to problems rather than solve them directly yourself
  - be a role-model to your son or daughter on issues of managing new experiences; resolving conflict; handling criticism, feedback or instructions from others; and/or coping with difficult situations
  - where appropriate, provide practical help, such as with transport, organising meals or getting financial assistance through Centrelink but encourage independence wherever you can.

## Activity

Jot down the roles you think you could play in your son or daughter's transition while they are still at school and when they enter their new situation after school:

At School	After School

## Challenges you may face and tips on overcoming them

**Every family will face its own challenges during transition.** Some are more complicated than others and each family will deal with them in their own unique way. Transition from school to life after school always brings some challenges for young people and their families. This can be especially true where a son or daughter has a disability. Experience and research tells us that there are some **common difficulties** that families of young people with disability often face. This section briefly looks at these. But more importantly it provides some **positive strategies** that may be helpful to address any challenges your family may experience.

Here are some of the barriers you *may* encounter:

- A gap in information, support and/or guidance about parenting during this transition phase, future options available for young people with disability and/or details of types of support available (we hope this resource will help!)
- Getting good advice for your son or daughter that recognises their needs
- Getting good support that does not restrict their options based on their disability
- Overly-bureaucratic responses from others about support to your young person and/or their future options
- Not knowing who or how to contact someone to ask about your son or daughter's future pathways
- Having limited knowledge or experience of the many new career pathways available
- Family stress due to changes and extra demands
- Personal stress for the young person due to facing new experiences and learning new skills and information
- Personal stress for you due to all of the above!



There are things you can do to help address and at least minimise some of the difficulties. This resource is a great place to start, and here are some other suggestions:

- **Start transition planning early** – this gives you more time to resolve any problems
- **Get to know your rights** and what is reasonable to expect from the secondary school and/or future education, training, disability service providers, and employers
- **Use your best advocacy skills** and abilities to solve any problems with professionals in a constructive and calm way
- **Keep talking** with your son or daughter so that you stay in touch with their preferences, plans, dreams and any arising difficulties
- **Gather all information you can** through internet searches, reading resources and talking to professionals involved
- **Get to know the broad range of career pathways** that are available
- **Expect and make time to be involved** in school-based transition planning discussions, meetings and activities
- **Ask lots of questions** about who can help, what will be involved and how to access support, whenever discussing possible options for your son or daughter
- **Consider getting support for yourself** as a carer. Carers Australia [www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au) and the Working Carers Gateway [www.workingcarers.org.au](http://www.workingcarers.org.au) are great places to start.

We surveyed parents and experts in the field and asked them what their advice would be about making a good transition. Here are some of the tips they offered to address some of the common challenges faced by parents during transition:

"Have planning meetings at school with the transition, team school counsellors and special support teachers"

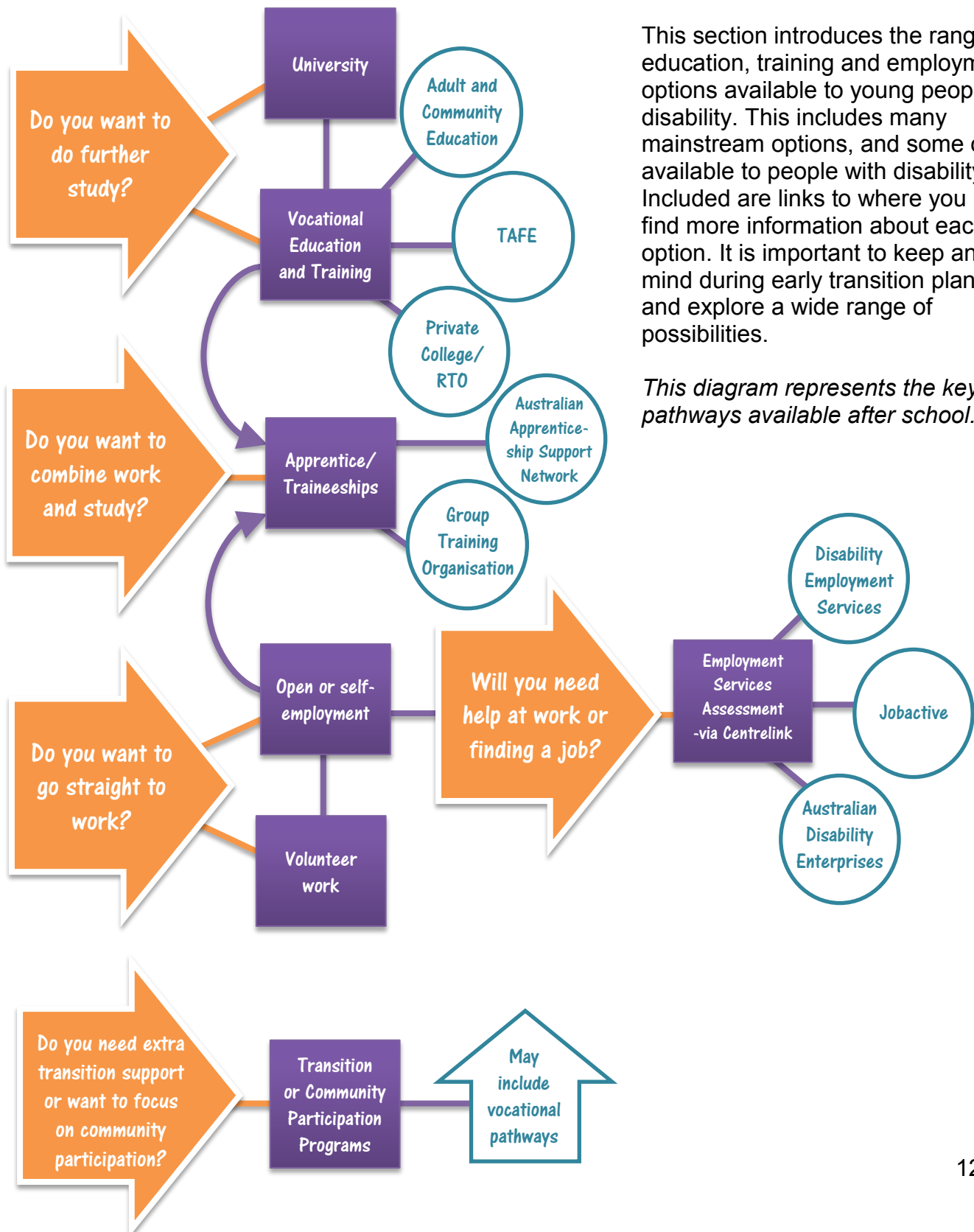
"Attend with your child a meeting with the Disability Officer (at the further education or training setting) before classes start"

"Always have more than one option formulated, even if there is a first preference"

"Don't leave it to the last few terms of school!"

"Be fully informed of all the options and be open minded on them"

# Education, training and employment options



This section introduces the range of education, training and employment options available to young people with disability. This includes many mainstream options, and some only available to people with disability. Included are links to where you can find more information about each option. It is important to keep an open mind during early transition planning and explore a wide range of possibilities.

*This diagram represents the key pathways available after school.*



## Transition or Community Participation Programs

States and Territories fund a range of transition and community participation programs specifically for people with moderate to severe disability. In areas where the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has commenced, supports are instead provided by the NDIS through an individualised plan and package of supports. Transition programs may be designed to support people to develop the skills needed for work or tertiary education, for example time and money management, independence, work experience, travel training, and teamwork. Community participation programs focus on individual goal achievement, skill development and active participation in the community.

### Useful links

- Our Get Ready workbook for young people includes a State and Territory specific links section which will help you locate programs in your area:  
[www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips)
- Information about the NDIS: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

## TAFE or Institutes of Technology

TAFE offers a wide range of nationally recognised courses in many vocational areas and at various levels. TAFE also offers a range of flexible learning options including part-time courses, evening courses and distance or online learning. TAFE colleges provide support and adjustments for students with disability. Support offered includes assistance with course selection, exam provisions, note-taking, access to assistive technology, and tutorial support, depending on the individual needs of the student. Students with disability who are registered with support services may also be entitled to fee concessions or exemptions.

### Useful links

- Find information on the website of your local institute.
- Links to the disability services in each State and Territory:  
[www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-tafe/](http://www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-tafe/)
- General information about vocational education and training and to search for courses:  
[www.myskills.gov.au](http://www.myskills.gov.au)
- Information on financing tertiary study:  
[www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au)

## University

All Australian universities have disability services staff who are responsible for providing reasonable adjustments for students with disability. Upon registering with this service and providing appropriate documentation, your young person may receive support including assessment and exam adjustments, access to equipment or assistive technology, advice and advocacy. It is important to remember that even if your young person does not get into university based on their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or Overall Position (OP, in Queensland), there are many alternative entry pathways that may assist them gain entry to university. These include Educational Access



Schemes, admissions tests, tertiary preparation courses or through having previously studied vocational courses.

### Useful links

- Find more information on the websites of universities your young person is interested in
- Check out [www.myuniversity.gov.au](http://www.myuniversity.gov.au)
- Get Ready for Uni website [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getready](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getready) is a great resource for young people with disability interested in university study
- Find contact details for disability services at Australian universities: [www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-university/](http://www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-university/)
- Information about financing tertiary study: [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au)

### Other further education and training options

There are a range of other further education and training options that your son or daughter may wish to consider. These include Adult and Community Education, such as local Community Colleges, and Registered Training Organisations. They may offer a range of benefits including flexible learning options and small class sizes. However it is important to be aware that the majority of registered training organisations will not have a specific disability service in place. *All training providers are required by law to provide reasonable adjustments* to students with disability, however your young person may need to negotiate and advocate for these directly with the organisation or their teaching staff. Some providers are also able to offer fee exemptions and concessions to students with disability.

### Useful links

- Information about rights to access support in tertiary study: [www.ddaedustandards.info](http://www.ddaedustandards.info)
- Information about vocational training and to search for courses: [www.myskills.gov.au](http://www.myskills.gov.au)
- Information and links to community colleges: [www.cca.edu.au](http://www.cca.edu.au)
- Information about financing tertiary study: [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au)

### Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Australian Apprenticeships (including both apprenticeships and traineeships) are available in a huge range of career areas and levels. They can be a great way to “earn while you learn” and combine the benefits of structured learning with on the job training. Australian Apprentices with disability may be able to access tutorial and mentoring support during their coursework, and workplace modifications through the Employment Assistance Fund. Their employer may also be eligible for wage incentives through the Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support Scheme. Your young person could even consider starting an Australian Apprenticeship while they are still at school!

### Useful links

- Information about Australian Apprenticeships and to find your local Australian Apprenticeships Support Network provider: [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)

- Information about support for Australian Apprentices with disability: [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/publications/support-australian-apprentices-disability](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/publications/support-australian-apprentices-disability)
- Additional information and resources: [www.aapathways.com.au](http://www.aapathways.com.au)
- Information about Group Training Organisations: [www.grouptraining.com.au](http://www.grouptraining.com.au)

## Open or self-employment

Your son or daughter may wish to seek a job in the open labour market, or set up their own business. There is support available to do both of these things. It is important to be aware that it is illegal for an employer to discriminate against an employee or potential employee on the basis of disability, and that your young person is entitled to *reasonable adjustments* in the workplace, so long as those adjustments do not cause the employer *unjustifiable hardship*. These terms are explained in the glossary. The Employment Assistance Fund can assist with workplace modifications, equipment and other support your young person may need to participate successfully at work. There is a range of specialist assistance available for people who require assistance to find and/or maintain open employment, for example Disability Employment Services and Jobactive. There is also a New Enterprise Incentive Scheme to assist eligible people to start their own small business. Centrelink can help you access these and other employment services.

### Useful links

- Information about employment for people with disability, including services, rights, reasonable adjustments and much more: [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au)
- Details of financial assistance and employment and information services: [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/people-with-a-disability](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/people-with-a-disability)
- Information about Disability Employment Services: [www.jobaccess.gov.au/content/disability-employment-services](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/content/disability-employment-services)
- Information about Jobactive: [www.employment.gov.au/jobactive](http://www.employment.gov.au/jobactive)
- To find local providers of employment services: [www.jobsearch.gov.au/ServiceProviders/Search](http://www.jobsearch.gov.au/ServiceProviders/Search)
- New Enterprise Incentive Scheme: [www.employment.gov.au/new-enterprise-incentive-scheme-neis](http://www.employment.gov.au/new-enterprise-incentive-scheme-neis)



## Supported employment – Australian Disability Enterprises

If your young person will require ongoing support at work, they may wish to consider an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE). These are supported workplaces for people with moderate to severe disability. ADEs are commercial businesses which perform a range of services, including packaging, assembly, production, garden maintenance and landscaping, cleaning and laundry services. Employees are paid a productivity based wage for their work, which means that they are paid a portion of the full wage based on their level of productivity, usually in addition to a Disability Support Pension. ADEs can be a great way to learn new skills and develop the confidence to later move into open employment.

## Useful links

- To find local enterprises: [www.ade.org.au](http://www.ade.org.au)
- [www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-service-providers/australian-disability-enterprises](http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-service-providers/australian-disability-enterprises)

## Volunteer work

Volunteer work could be a great way for your young person to: build confidence; develop skills; explore different types of work to see which career they would like to pursue; and identify the types of support or adjustments they may need at work. It is also a great way for them to give back to the community and contribute to issues they are passionate about. It can also lead to paid work!

## Useful links

- [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au)
- [www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au)

## Activity

Have a discussion with your son or daughter about all of these post-school options. Make a note of the ones you want to explore further as a family. Also note down any questions you may have so that you can seek answers.





# Top tips for parents

This section provides an introduction to the **top ten tips for parents of young people with disabilities who are getting ready for study and work** – we'll be working through each one in this Guide. Our Get Ready Workbook for young people with disabilities also works through these Top Ten Tips. If your young person doesn't already have a copy of the workbook, you can download it for free at [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips)

## Tip 1: Get ready early

Starting transition planning and activities as early as possible is a top priority and can make a huge difference to the success of the transition journey and to your young person achieving their goals.

## Tip 2: Get the big picture

Take a look at the bigger picture, including the many upcoming changes for your young person, you as a parent and the whole family as you move through this transition. It's also time to start looking at your young person's interests, longer term goals and how their disability may affect their future study and work.

## Tip 3: Get connected

Make connections with your son or daughter about their future study and work, what they would like to do and what help they would like or need from you after school. Offer your support. Also talk to people at your school, at the various post-school settings and in your own networks about getting through your young person's transition successfully and how to help them reach their goals.

## Tip 4: Get to know the options

Things are very different from when most of us left school, especially for young people with disabilities. Research and keep an open mind about different post-school options and help your young person identify realistic ones for them.

## Tip 5: Get them skilled up

Identify the skills your young person will need for future study and work. Which skills do they already have and which new ones will they need? Do what you can at home to help them to develop these new skills.

## **Tip 6: Get them to be organised**

Being able to be organised and manage time effectively can make a big difference when a young person enters a post-school education or training setting. This is a time for parents to start handing over responsibilities and helping their son or daughter learn and practice ways of organising their own affairs wherever possible.

## **Tip 7: Get support**

Think about where you can get support, the types of support you and your young person may need through this transition and what type of support they may need in any study, training or work after school.



## **Tip 8: Get involved**

Get involved in any school-based transition planning meetings, discussions and/or activities relating to life after school. Research shows that when parents are involved in transition, their young person has an easier transition and achieves more after school. Also, help your young person get involved in activities that give them new and different experiences and build up their skills and confidence for the future.

## **Tip 9: Get to know their rights and responsibilities**

Help your young person learn about their rights in education and employment and how they are protected. Find out how your role will change as your young person comes of adult age and legal status, and how this will affect your involvement in their future education, training and/or employment.

## **Tip 10: Get them confident**

Encourage your son or daughter to practice taking responsibility, handling constructive criticism and standing up for themselves effectively and non-aggressively. Having these life skills are essential to building your young person's resilience and ability to cope in the new adult situations they will soon face.

# Tip 1: Get ready early

Starting transition planning and activities **as early as possible** is a top priority and can make a huge difference to the success of the transition journey and to your young person achieving their goals.

- It is recommended that at **age 14 to 15** families should start to plan for the young person's transition out of school and into further education, vocational training and/or employment. This is especially important for young people with disability to allow extra time to cover any additional disability-related things to consider and plan for. If your son or daughter is older than this, don't worry this Guide will help you get started now.
- Recent research suggests that young people make a **more positive and less stressful** transition into life after school when their transition is **better planned and started early**. When transition is successful it leads to better outcomes, greater success and higher levels of life-long participation in further education, training and employment.
- Check out the rest of this Guide to find out more about the **practical steps** that you and your young person can take next.
- We asked experts in the field and parents of young people with disability their **advice** about making a good transition, and many talked about getting ready early. Here are some of their comments:

"Talk to your young person with disability well in advance about what will happen after they leave school."

"Start early, not at the beginning of Year 12. Start planning as early as Year 7 to begin exploring what their child is interested in, what they might be good at and how they can begin to develop interests in possible careers."

# Tip 2: Get the big picture

**Take a look at the bigger picture**, including the many upcoming changes for your young person, you as a parent and the whole family as you move through this transition. It's also time to start looking at your young person's interests, longer term goals and how their disability may affect their future study and work.

- **Remember that transition into adulthood includes much more than just moving into further study and work.** There may also be transitions around living arrangements, relationships, and service providers. It is important not to think about these important changes in isolation.
- **Keep in mind that transition is a long-term process**, not a single event. It is a time when young people need opportunities to develop individual values, skills, independence, and to problem solve. As a parent it is important to provide these opportunities wherever possible and to the greatest extent that your son or daughter can manage.
- **Your relationship and roles you play in your son or daughters' life will change** during this process. You will remain a key influence and support to your child – it's about being involved, but not always in control.
- **Support your young person to develop self-awareness.** Help them think about and learn to understand themselves. What is important to them? What are their values, their short and long term goals, their strengths?
- **Provide opportunities for your daughter or son to practice expressing their values, goals, interests, skills and strengths** to others. It is important for young people to be able to tell others what they are aiming for so they can help them reach their goals.
- **Encourage your young person to consider a range of goals and interests** – not just career goals. Help them to think about the full range of life areas and how these can fit together:
  - education
  - employment
  - leisure
  - roles and responsibilities
  - living situations
  - friends, family, and relationships.
- **Encourage your young person to talk with you, your family, friends and others** – have them discuss their goals and ideas and get input from others as well.
- If you haven't spoken with your young person about them having a disability yet, it is important that they **develop an understanding of what this means**, and that there is support available. It is also important that they learn to **explain to others** about their disability or medical condition and how it may impact them in study or work.



## Activity: Help your young person get to know their disability

What does their disability involve?

How is it likely to affect their participation in different settings?

What supports might they need?

What help have they had at school?

Are they likely to need this same type of help at TAFE, university, in training or work?  
Different environments will have different expectations and challenges to consider.



# Tip 3: Get connected

**Make connections with your young person about their future study and work.** What would they like to do and what help would they like or need from you after school? Offer your support. Also talk to people at school, at the various post-school settings and in your own networks about getting through your son or daughter's transition successfully and how to help them reach their goals.

- We recently surveyed parents and experts in the field and over **90% of people responded that knowing how to access support was of the highest importance to a successful transition** – that's what *Getting connected* is all about!
- **Help your young person make contact with people who can help their transition** – start with school careers advisers, counsellors and year advisers. These people can also help young people link in with specialist teachers if needed, for example transition teachers, support teachers and welfare teachers. Specialist teachers may have various titles in different states and territories.
- **Make links with disability staff at the post-school settings your young person is considering**, for example disability services at TAFE or university, or a Disability Employment Service provider. It is important to make connections early, and it is recommended that your young person make contact themselves if possible. Your young person's school, or your local NDCO, can help you make these connections if necessary. Also see *Tip 7 – Get support*.
- **Encourage your young person to talk** with yourself and extended family members, friends, and other people with disabilities about their experiences after school, about help that is available, and about suggestions for your son or daughter's future directions.
- **Support your young person to keep a record** of the names and contact details of people who have been helpful – they may be useful contacts in the future.
- We asked experts in the field and parents of young people with disability their advice about making a good transition, and lots of them talked about the **importance of connections**. This is what they had to say:

"Why not try meeting with other parents and young people who have already had the experience?"

"Connecting with appropriate services before leaving school is vital to a smooth transition"

# Tip 4: Get to know the options

**Get to know the options** encourages parents and young people to look at and **consider all the feasible alternatives** and find out about what is involved. Things are very different from when most of us left school, especially for young people with disabilities. This means that you need to do some **research** about the wide range of options that are now available. **Keep an open mind** about different post-school options and help your son or daughter identify realistic ones for them. Get to know how their disability is likely to affect them in their future work or study.

- Get familiar with the broad facts on **as many options as possible**. This will allow you to help your young person **evaluate the benefits of each alternative**. This includes exploring various career possibilities, but also the full range of education pathways and alternative ways of reaching the same end goal. Refer to the overview of the main post-school pathways earlier in this Guide and check out the useful links for more information.
- Encourage your young person to **research, ask questions and speak to people** about different post-school options.
- Support young people to **explore online resources**. Here are some helpful websites:



- Our **Get Ready workbook** for young people with disability includes an activity that guides the reader through various career options they may like to consider and questions to ask when starting to research. Find it on our website [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytoptips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytoptips) if you don't already have a copy.
- Help young people **find out about support** that is likely to be available in different settings. The support available can sometimes determine whether an option is realistic, even opening up new opportunities previously thought to be unworkable.
- Help your son or daughter to **think about whether each pathway is likely to work for them** and how their disability may affect their options. **Encourage reality checks** where you can while still supporting your son or daughter to pursue their own interests and goals. Some of the questions you may want to consider with them include:
  - Is your son or daughter's disability likely to have an impact on their daily work life?
  - Will they need support or adjustments?
  - Are there supports available that can make this option more sustainable?
  - There are always some things you *have* to be able to do in order to pass a course or be successful in a job; these are usually called the **inherent requirements**. What are they and will the young person's disability prevent them from being able to meet these requirements? Are there ways that they could meet these requirements with some support/ technology/equipment? If it seems likely that your son or daughter won't be able to meet the inherent requirements, even with **reasonable adjustments**, then it is probably best to consider an alternative career path. You can find out more about inherent requirements and reasonable adjustments in the glossary.
- We recently surveyed parents and experts in the field and **over 90% of people responded that knowing the full range of options is the most important information** parents of young people with disability need during the transition process. We asked them for advice about making a good transition, and lots of them talked about the importance of getting to know the options. This is some of what they had to say:



"Talk to your school to help identify the most appropriate type of post school option for your young person"

"Collect information and share options with young people early - show them industry and educational environments"



# Tip 5: Get them skilled up

**Identify the skills your young person will need for future study and work.** Which skills do they already have and which new ones will they need? Do what you can at home to help them to develop these new skills.

- Key evidence around successful transition planning reinforces that it is important to **consider the full range of skills, not just academic skills.**
- **There are a wide range of skills that are relevant to all careers and all post-school pathways;** these are sometimes called employability skills. Provide as many opportunities as possible for your son or daughter to practice these skills, and try to model good skills in these areas yourself. They include:

- Communication
- Team work
- Problem solving
- Initiative and leadership
- Planning, organisation and time management
- Working independently
- Decision-making and prioritising
- Goal setting
- Negotiating and conflict resolution.



- **Encourage your young person to believe in themselves**, in their skills and ability to succeed. It is important to support the development of self-determination – to help young people have choice and control, be able to advocate and stand up for themselves, know when to ask for help and how to evaluate outcomes. Self-determination is best learned through real-world experiences, which will include taking risks, making mistakes and reflecting on what worked and what didn't.
- **Discuss with your young person other practical skills that will be very important after school.** Without considering practical issues, young people may struggle to decide on realistic post-school pathways. Some things to think about, and practice, include:
  - How will they get to TAFE, university, college or the workplace?
  - Can they travel independently? Can they drive, or use public transport?
  - Can they find their way to other places for meetings or lunch?
  - Are they able to manage their own money?
  - Will they need to move out of home? Is this realistic? If so, what new skills will they need to develop to manage independently?

Try to spend time as a family building their skills, experiences and independence in these important areas.

- **Encourage your young person to get actively involved in career planning and work experience** at school. Evidence suggests that varied learning experiences in this area leads to better post-school outcomes:
  - Most schools have career development and work experience programs that will help your student develop important skills
  - Your son or daughter may also like to consider studying vocation based subjects while still at school. There are vocational subjects in areas including business services, hospitality, information technology and primary industries
  - Students can also study vocational courses at TAFE while still at school. Your school careers adviser can help you find out what's on offer in your area
  - Your young person could also consider a school based apprenticeship or traineeship. These provide an opportunity to gain a nationally recognised VET qualification as well as the final school Certificate. Find out more: [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/want-apprenticeship/australian-school-based-apprenticeships](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/want-apprenticeship/australian-school-based-apprenticeships)
  
- **Support your young person to find part-time work** if this is manageable for them, or try to organise additional work experience, for example at your own workplace, that of a friend or family member, or through volunteering. Having a range of previous experiences to record on their resume will be very important for their future job-seeking.
  
- **Being able to access and use technology is extremely important in most post-secondary settings.** Consider your son or daughter's skills using technology, including computers, word processors, tablets, smart phones, apps, the Internet and email. Even if you aren't skilled in using all of this technology yourself, encourage your young person to practice and learn new skills if necessary. Think about whether they will need equipment, support, or **assistive technology** to help them access and use technology. Here are some useful links on assistive technology:
  - Useful summary of assistive technologies: [www.adcet.edu.au/resource/8211/assistive-technology-in-the-workplace](http://www.adcet.edu.au/resource/8211/assistive-technology-in-the-workplace)
  - EduApps - free applications: <http://eduapps.org/>
  - Accessibility features of Microsoft products: [www.microsoft.com/enable/](http://www.microsoft.com/enable/)
  - Accessibility features of Apple products: [www.apple.com/au/accessibility/](http://www.apple.com/au/accessibility/)



# Tip 6: Get them to be organised

Being able to be **organised** and **manage time effectively** can make a big difference when a young person enters a post-school education, training or work setting. This is a time for parents to **start handing over responsibilities** and helping their young person learn and practice ways of organising their own affairs to a level suited to them. This is especially important for young people with disability.

- Create opportunities for your son or daughter to develop their own **organisational and time management skills**. Recent research highlights that this is vital during the high school years. It is suggested that this is one of the most important factors for a successful transition into post-secondary education, training or work. Wherever possible, encourage and teach your son or daughter to **take responsibility for themselves**, organise themselves and manage their own time effectively.
- Start this process **as early as possible** using small steps at first. This is because where a young person has a disability this skill development may take longer than for others, be more complicated due to extra considerations and/or even more stressful than for other young people and their parents.
- Some organisational tasks you could start with include:
  - following up on queries at school, their sports/community club or at work
  - creating and maintaining a calendar (perhaps in their mobile phone) of their own school assignments and key dates, sports/community club commitments, and work/home chore schedule
  - following through with tasks that require some level of coordination by them
  - taking responsibility for making and keeping their own appointments.
- Help your young person learn how to keep copies of all documentation and **maintain their own records and paperwork**, as they are likely to be asked for it often. This transition phase will require you to hand-over the responsibility of being the keeper of your son or daughter's records and documentation. For many families of young people with disabilities, keeping the paperwork about the child's disability has been critically important and a key role of their parents. However when your son or daughter enters post-school education, training or work *they* will be expected to produce and manage this type of documentation independently. It would be helpful to encourage your young person to set up a file or folder where they can keep all important documents together.

## Activity: Getting practice taking responsibility

1. Write down 2 tasks that you currently organise for your son or daughter/the family that you could ask your young person to take responsibility for.
2. Note down 2 strategies that you could suggest they use to help them manage the tasks effectively.
3. Set a date with your young person when you will discuss together their progress with handling their new responsibilities and put it on the family calendar.
4. At this time ask them about their own thoughts on the experience and offer both positive and constructive feedback. Give some concrete recommendations, if needed, of how to do the task more efficiently. Jot down some ideas of what you will say:
5. Repeat these steps for 2 more new responsibilities soon after to help reinforce the new skills learnt. Continue the gradual process until your young person is skilled at handling their own responsibilities and time.

# Tip 7: Get support

Think about where you can get support, the types of support you and your young person may need through this transition and what type of support your son or daughter may need in any study, training or work after school.

- We recently surveyed parents and experts in the field and about **90% of people responded that finding out about support available** at each post-school setting is one the most important pieces of information parents of young people with disability need during the transition process.
- **Young people with disability need a range of supports and parents also need support** to enable them to help their young person with disability through and beyond the transition from school.
- There a few different types of support to think about at the beginning stage of transition:
  - your young person may need support now from you and others to get a handle on **getting ready** for entering post-school settings, **learn new skills, make decisions** and deal with the many upcoming changes
  - you (or others in your family) may need help to get through the extra **demands, new challenges and inherent stresses** involved in this phase of raising a young person with disability
  - your young person may need support in their future study and/or work, and you may also need some help to feel confident assisting them settle into their post-school setting.
- Consider a **range of sources for support** including school-based educators, staff at post-school settings, disability professionals, community services, friends, family, support groups, carers associations and internet-based information and advice. This Guide provides more information about who can help.
- Contact **Centrelink** once your young person turns 16 to make sure they are accessing any services or financial support they are entitled to.
- Also keep up to date on the **National Disability Insurance Scheme** rollout and be sure to check eligibility when it becomes available in your region. See [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

## Activity

To help you get started jot down your ideas for your first steps for getting support. Start with the support your young person will need now.

What do you think they will need help with most?

What will they need help with first?

What support can you give and what support will you and your son or daughter seek from others?

*From me:*

*From others:*

Do you already know where to get that support, if so where? If not, how will you and/or your son or daughter find out where to get the support you need?





- Think about the kinds of support your son or daughter **currently receives** at school. If your young person has help at school, they may also need some support in future study and work. Even if they don't receive regular classroom support, think about whether they receive special provisions for exams (like extra time, or a reader or scribe, or a separate classroom) or access to any special equipment.
- Disability support in post-school work or study settings is often called adjustments or accommodations. These adjustments are recorded in documentation that is often called an Academic Integration Plan (AIP).
- Find out which potential future study or work settings will be able to give your young person the **most appropriate support** that suits their needs.
- **Different adjustments may be available in different environments** and it is important that young people understand what support they can realistically expect to receive as this will help them make a decision about the right pathway for them.
- There are **people who can help your daughter or son access adjustments**, for example each TAFE and university has a disability service to contact, and there are Disability Employment Services (DES) for people with disability looking for work. Now is the time to help your young person check out who your local contacts are and what support will be available. Prospective students can make contact with disability services even before they start at a TAFE or university, and your young person may be able to start working with a DES in the last six months of school. See the introduction to education, training and employment options earlier in this Guide, and the glossary, for links to more information.



- Many young people also find having a **mentor** very helpful. A mentor is usually someone who is older and more experienced, and can offer advice, support, direction, advocacy, encouragement and role modelling.
- Encourage your young person to find a role model or mentor.
  - They may find a mentor informally through a school, community, sporting, or family contact
  - There are also formal mentoring programs which your young person may be able to get involved in. Local community services may be able to help young people connect with mentors in their area, or try searching for a mentoring program on the Youth Mentoring Network website at [www.youthmentoring.org.au](http://www.youthmentoring.org.au)
- Here are a few things to remember about support which apply to support needed now or in the future, for you or others in the family, and no matter what type of pathway your son or daughter is considering:
  - Everyone needs support from time to time and during this transition support is even more important than usual
  - This change in your son or daughter's life is broad and big. They may need help for more than their education and employment needs
  - **Now is the time to start planning for support** in any future education or training: *not* after enrolment.



# Tip 8: Get involved

**Get involved** in any school-based transition planning meetings, discussions and/or activities relating to your young person's life after school. Research shows that when parents are involved in this transition, their young person has an easier transition and achieves more after school. Also help your young person *get involved* in activities that will gain them new and different experiences and build up their skills and confidence for the future.

- Research has shown for some time now that **the best transition outcomes are achieved when parents and the young person with disability are involved** in transition planning, major decision making and other relevant activities, such as work experience and visiting potential future education/training or work settings.
- **Get your son or daughter involved in their own transition planning and preparation.** This is just as critical as, maybe even more than, your involvement. It is one of the ways your young person will develop the adult skills and independence they will need for future study and work, and the other areas of their life after school. Involving your young person will also help to ensure that the transition goals and plans set for them actually reflect their interests, preferences and strengths.
- **Adapt your involvement in your young person's transition according to what suits them,** their abilities, you and your family. It's important to get involved in whatever way and to whatever level you and your son or daughter can.
- **Get involved and encourage your young person to get involved in any transition planning** being done for them by their high school. Input from educators can be extremely important and brings the benefit of years of transition experience to your son or daughter's preparation for life after school. These professionals often have loads of information, contacts and expertise. It is important to remember though, that you know your child best. Make sure to explore a range of different options.

"Be involved with the school throughout their high school life – having an ongoing relationship makes it easier when the crucial times arrive and good communication ensures everyone is on the same page"

"Spend time discussing their future and involve the young person in all meetings and at every level of the decision making process"

"Ask questions...lots of them"

"Teach your child to advocate for themselves, or know how and where to get support"

- **Support your young person's participation in as many relevant real-world experiences** as possible. Help them get involved in work experience, volunteer work, paid work, school or community groups, committees, and leisure activities. These activities can help your son or daughter develop important skills that are transferable to future study and work, for example responsibility, team work, reliability and communication skills.

## Activity

What activities does your young person participate in at present?

What skills are these activities helping your son or daughter to develop?

Are there new activities you could recommend for your young person, or that you could do together?

- **If necessary encourage your young person to ask for support** and accommodations to adapt the environment to help them participate. Help them to problem-solve ways to reduce or remove barriers they might face.
- **Encourage your son or daughter to consider practical issues** around participating in various activities:
  - How will they get there?
  - Will they need help getting around?
  - Are there costs involved?
- **Consider getting involved, or supporting your young person to get involved**, in advocacy and community education. Create awareness of the contributions of people with disabilities to help dispel myths and stereotypes.

# Tip 9: Get to know their rights and responsibilities

Help your young person learn about their rights in education and employment and how they are protected. Find out how your role will change as your young person comes of adult age and legal status, and how this will affect your involvement in their future education, training and/or employment.

- **Be well informed**, and help your young person be informed, of their rights. There are laws that protect the rights of people with disability.
- **Having rights also means having responsibilities**. Make sure your young person understands that their responsibilities are just as important as their rights, and that the best way to protect their rights in study, training or work is to also know and meet their responsibilities.
- **The Disability Discrimination Act** is designed to ensure that people with a disability aren't treated less fairly than people without a disability. It covers a range of life areas, including access, education, employment, activities and sport. If a person with disability feels they have been discriminated against, they can make a complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission. See [www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights)
- Building on the Disability Discrimination Act, there are specific **Disability Standards for Education**. These standards set out the rights of people with disabilities particularly in education settings. This includes at school, TAFE, private training organisations or university. See [www.ddaedustandards.info](http://www.ddaedustandards.info) and [www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education](http://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education)
- Pass on to your daughter or son during this transition period any information, advice and/or effective techniques you have used over the years of ensuring that your young person's rights and best interests were protected. As your parental role changes, standing up for their rights will increasingly become the responsibility of your son or daughter.
- **Education providers and employers are responsible for making reasonable adjustments** to enable people with disabilities to participate in education and work on the same basis as others. Reasonable adjustments depend on the impact of a person's disability and are negotiated between the person with disability and their education provider or employer. Some examples include installation of a ramp or hand rail, alternative formats for course materials, assistive technology, flexible working hours, provision of visual aids, extra time for exams, alternate assessment tasks.

- **It is important that your young person consider the issue of disclosure.**  
Disclosing means intentionally telling other people about a disability or chronic medical condition. See the Choosing your Path website for more information:  
[www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/disclosure](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/disclosure)
- Your daughter or son may choose to disclose different amounts of information about their disability to different people or for different purposes. Telling others about their disability could be something your young person, and possibly you, will need to do multiple times during the transition process.
- **Getting to know their rights** and the many issues involved with regards to disclosure will help your young person make informed decisions. Being familiar with this information will help you if you need to guide your son or daughter through some of the dilemmas involved in telling others about their disability:
  - Did you know that **your young person does not have to disclose their disability** to others - unless they want to access reasonable adjustments OR their disability poses a risk to themselves or others?
  - *And if your son or daughter chooses to disclose, did you know that they can choose to disclose to only certain people and not to everyone? For example, at TAFE or university they only have to disclose to the disability support service not all their teachers, tutors, lecturers or peers.*
- Remember that as your son or daughter reaches adulthood it gradually becomes a legal obligation for others to treat any information about them (including their disability, supports they are receiving, applications for jobs, courses or training) as **private and confidential information**, even when communicating with their parents.
- This is likely to significantly **change the role you play** as a parent of a young person with disability and how you address any arising problems you'd like to help your son or daughter solve. Think about ways you can adjust your approach to match this new situation and perhaps discuss it with your daughter or son.
- **Be prepared** for some of the questions your young person may have about disclosure and be available to talk it through with them. It may be helpful for your daughter or son to hear about how you have made decisions about what to tell different people about their disability in the past.





# Tip 10: Get them confident

**Identify opportunities** to build your son or daughter's resilience. Encourage them to practice taking responsibility, handling constructive criticism and standing up for themselves effectively and non-aggressively. Having these life skills are essential to building your young person's ability to cope in the new adult situations they will soon face.

- **Resilience is the ability to bounce back in the face of challenges and to continue to grow and thrive.** It is really important to try to build your son or daughter's resilience, especially because as a young person with disability they are likely to face additional challenges.
- Australian research has identified some common qualities among resilient people. A clinical psychologist, Lyn Worsley, has developed a resilience-building tool called **The Resilience Doughnut** (see [www.theresiliencedoughnut.com.au](http://www.theresiliencedoughnut.com.au)). You might like to read more about this tool.
  - This model identifies that resilient people have strong positive beliefs in three areas: awareness of support, a positive view of self, and confidence in their abilities. This is represented by the terms "I Have", "I Am" and "I Can" in the image below
  - Resilient people are also likely to have positive external factors in their lives. Not *all* of these areas need to be strong, but resilient people seem to be able to focus on those areas that are strongest:

- *Parent Factor*: strong and effective parenting
- *Skill Factor*: evidence of self-competence
- *Family and Identity Factor*: Connectedness within the family
- *Education Factor*: Connectedness during learning
- *Peer Factor*: Positive peer interactions
- *Community Factor*: Supportive community demonstrating positive values
- *Money Factor*: Ability to give and to take from society through employment and purposeful spending



The Resilience Doughnut  
(image used with permission)

- Lyn's work suggests that by identifying the three strongest external factors in your young person's life, and using and identifying opportunities to enhance these and have them interact in everyday life, you can **make them even stronger and build resilience**. The Resilience Doughnut is about identifying strengths and putting these strengths to work.

- **Encourage your young person to self-advocate** – to practice standing up for him or herself and clearly communicate how their disability affects them and their activities:
  - young people shouldn't be afraid to explain to people what they need
  - there is no need for them to tell others everything about their disability – but it is important that they can clearly explain to others how their disability impacts on their study or work.
- **Support your young person to believe in him or herself, believe in their skills and in their ability to succeed.** Encourage them to practice communicating their strengths and skills to others. This will help them become self-determined young adults – allowing them to have choice and control about issues affecting them.
- Encourage your young person to **maintain a portfolio** providing evidence of the skills they are developing – they may do this already at school. Having an up-to-date portfolio will be very useful when they are preparing for work and will help them demonstrate their strengths and skills to others.
- It is important that your young person practice **taking responsibility for making contact with supports** him or herself. While you can offer great support, post-school settings will expect to work with your young person as an adult, and it is important they build the skills to take on this responsibility wherever possible. In particular, once your son or daughter reaches legal age, services may not be able to speak with you without your young person's consent.
- Support your young person to **practice giving feedback** to others:
  - it is important that they let people know when things are going well
  - they also shouldn't be afraid to tell people if things are not working out. Remind your young person that the sooner people know that there are ongoing problems or challenges, the sooner they can help resolve them.
- **Reinforce to your young person that when they need to raise a problem, they should practice doing it in a proactive and positive way.** This can be difficult, but it is important as it will help to reduce conflict. Remind them that they may have to work with the people they are approaching again during their training or career.



## Activity

- **STEP 1:** Write down 3 strengths your daughter or son already has in this area and 3 areas you think they could improve:

Strengths	Areas to work on

- **STEP 2:** Think of some practical ways that you can work on strengthening your young person's resilience and confidence, ready for life after school. Here are some examples:
  - ☐ Gradually allocate them more responsibility for themselves and within the family, especially with any new tasks that will gently stretch your son or daughter's skills and confidence
  - ☐ Point out some of the good things the young person has done today or this week
  - ☐ Take on a new experience or activity together or as a family
  - ☐ Start to regularly share stories from your day or personal experience where you have had to resolve conflict; give some critical feedback; and/or stand up for yourself. Talk about how it made you feel, what you found hard about it and what you did to get through the tricky situation
  - ☐ Remember an earlier transition in your son or daughter's life and the things that they did well during this time. Find ways to drop this in any conversations about their transition to highlight your confidence in their strengths and their past experience with coping in times of change
  - ☐ Imagine some of the positive things that will happen for your young person in their life after school and remind yourself of this when you are feeling anxious about their future. This will help to keep your messages to your son or daughter positive and reassuring

# Glossary and useful links

## Adult and Community Education

Adult and Community Education (ACE) refers to a diverse range of community based education courses, most often delivered by Community Colleges. ACE promotes lifelong learning, and courses cover leisure skills, life skills and professional skills. See [www.cca.edu.au](http://www.cca.edu.au) for more information.

## Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is a broad term that includes any equipment, device, hardware or software that is designed to help people with disabilities perform tasks that would otherwise be difficult or not possible. Some examples of assistive technologies include screen-reading software, speech recognition software, text telephones, screen-magnification software and on-screen keyboards.

## Australian Human Rights Commission

The Australian Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory organisation that works to protect and promote the human rights of all people in Australia, including people with disability. See [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

## Centrelink (Department of Human Services)

Centrelink provides employment assistance and a range of services and programs for people with a disability to help with looking for work and planning for the future. This includes a range of allowances and access to services and programs for people with a disability. Often a referral from Centrelink is required to access other services. For more information see [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/people-with-a-disability](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/people-with-a-disability)

## Disability

The definition of disability is extremely broad. 1 in 5 Australians have one or more disabilities. A disability can be temporary or permanent, visible or hidden. A person may be born with a disability or acquire it later in life. The definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) includes: total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions; total or partial loss of a part of the body; the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body; a disorder or malfunction that results in a person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement, or that results in disturbed behaviour.

## Disability Advisor/ Disability Liaison Officer

All universities have staff who are responsible for arranging disability services and reasonable adjustments for students with disability. These staff are known by various titles including Disability Advisors, Disability Liaison Officers, Disability Consultants, Disability Coordinators, or Equity Officers. Their role includes planning for assessment adjustments, exam provisions, equipment and assistive technology provision, liaison, advice and advocacy. To locate contact details for disability advisors at Australian universities, see [adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-university/](http://adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-university/)

## Disability Employment Service

Disability Employment Services play a specialist role in helping people with disability get ready to look for a job, find a job and keep a job in the open labour market. They provide a range of supports to meet individual needs, including training in specific job skills, job search support, on the job training and co-worker and employer supports. See [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-employment-services](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/disability-employment-services)

## Disability Discrimination Act

The Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. Disability discrimination happens when people with a disability are treated less fairly because of their disability than people without a disability. Disability discrimination also occurs when people are treated less fairly because they are relatives, friends, carers, co-workers or associates of a person with a disability. See [www.humanrights.gov.au/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act)

## Disability Standards for Education

The Disability Standards for Education help make sure everyone understands that, under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), students with disability have the right to study on the same basis as students without disability. This means that a person with disability has the same right to take part in education and training as people without disability. The Education Standards explain that there are times when a school, TAFE, training provider or university must make reasonable adjustments to allow people with disability to take part in education. See [www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education](http://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education) and [www.ddaedustandards.info](http://www.ddaedustandards.info)

## EduApps

EduApps is an umbrella term for a number of different collections of free assistive technologies. They consist of open source and freeware Windows applications, which run directly from a USB stick. They include word processor, spreadsheet and presentation software, planning and organisation tools, multimedia tools, reading and writing support, keyboard and mouse alternatives, visual supports, and much more!! See [www.eduapps.org](http://www.eduapps.org) for more information and to download the collection that suits you.

## Employment Services Assessment

The Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) is an assessment, arranged through Centrelink, of an individual's ability to work. The assessment involves identification of any barriers to employment and any assistance that may be required to help a person overcome those barriers. For people with medical conditions or disabilities, the assessment also identifies their current and future work capacity. The ESAt is used to determine the appropriate type and level of employment service assistance that a person requires. See [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/disability-support-pension/employment-services-assessments-and-job-capacity-assessments](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/disability-support-pension/employment-services-assessments-and-job-capacity-assessments)

## Job Access

Job Access is an information and advice service funded by the Australian Government to offer help and workplace solutions for people with disability and their employers. It is an easy to use web site and a free telephone information and advice service where you can access confidential, expert advice on disability employment matters. See [www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au) or call 1800 464 800.

## Jobactive

Jobactive (previously Job Services Australia) is a national network of organisations, funded by the Department of Employment, and dedicated to helping job seekers to find and keep employment. It is designed to provide employment services tailored to the needs of individuals, and also operates as a recruitment service for employers. See [www.employment.gov.au/jobactive](http://www.employment.gov.au/jobactive)

## Job Capacity Assessment

The Job Capacity Assessment is a comprehensive assessment, arranged through Centrelink, of an individual's ability to work. The assessment involves identification of any barriers to employment and any assistance that may be required to help a person overcome those barriers. Job Capacity Assessments are used to determine medical eligibility for the Disability Support Pension. See [www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/disability-support-pension/employment-services-assessments-and-job-capacity-assessments](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/disability-support-pension/employment-services-assessments-and-job-capacity-assessments)

## National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Programme

The NDCO Programme works strategically to assist people with disability access and participate in tertiary education and subsequent employment, through a national network of regionally based NDCOs. The NDCOs work with stakeholders at a local level to reduce systemic barriers, facilitate smooth transitions, build links and coordinate services between the education, training and employment sectors. Find your local NDCO at [www.education.gov.au/ndcoprogramme](http://www.education.gov.au/ndcoprogramme)



## National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a no-fault insurance scheme that guarantees a level of financial support to people with a permanent and significant disability. Currently people with similar levels of functionality get access to quite different levels of support, depending on their location, the timing or the origin of their disability. The NDIS aims to ensure that no one 'slips through the gaps' in this respect. Information about the NDIS including details of trial sites and a NDIS access checklist can be found at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

## Registered Training Organisation

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are accredited providers of training and qualifications that are nationally recognised. RTOs are diverse, and include large organisations, professional associations, schools, TAFE and Adult and Community Education providers. Visit [www.myskills.gov.au](http://www.myskills.gov.au) to search for an RTO near you.

## Remote Jobs and Communities Program

The Remote Jobs and Communities Program is funded by the Australian Government to deliver employment and participation services in 60 remote regions. There is a single service provider with a permanent presence in each of the regions giving job seekers, communities, employers and others a single, local point of contact. See [www.employment.gov.au/remote-jobs-and-communities-program](http://www.employment.gov.au/remote-jobs-and-communities-program) for more information.

## Teacher Consultants/ Disability Services Officers

TAFE has specialist disability services for students with disabilities. They provide a range of services to assist students. These include helping you to choose an appropriate course, help with the enrolment process and help determining the appropriate classroom support and assessment modifications. The services provided may include tutorial support, the use of adaptive technology, a sign language interpreter, a note-taker or a disability assistant. Find contact details for your local institute at [www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-tafe/](http://www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/current-students/disability-services-tafe/)

## Translations

The NDCO Programme has a number of resources translated to several community languages to help people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities understand disability support in Australia and give primary contact points to get support in post school settings.

See <http://pubsites.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/links/communitylanguage.html>

## University

University refers to tertiary education institutions offering higher education to prepare students for professional careers. Universities focus on students developing an academic understanding of vocational skills, as well as developing technical skills needed in their chosen profession. Universities award various academic degrees including graduate

certificates, graduate diplomas, undergraduate degrees, honours degrees, masters degrees and doctorates. See [www.myuniversity.gov.au](http://www.myuniversity.gov.au)

## Volunteer work

Volunteering can be a great way to: build confidence; develop skills; gain real life work experience to add to your resume that will help when seeking paid work; explore different types of work to see which career you would like to pursue; meet new people; and identify the types of support or adjustments you may need at work. It is also a great way to give back to your community and contribute to issues you are passionate about. Find out more at [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org) and [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au)

## Willing and Able Mentoring

The Willing and Able Mentoring (WAM) Program matches enrolled university students who have a disability and are registered with disability services, with mentors in leading organisations. Mentees are matched with mentors in their field of interest for a series of discussion meetings. See

[www.graduatecareers.com.au/CareerPlanningandResources/GraduateswithDisability/WillingandAbleMentoringProgram/index.htm](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/CareerPlanningandResources/GraduateswithDisability/WillingandAbleMentoringProgram/index.htm)



# The jargon explained:

## Common acronyms

- AASN – Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (previously AAC – Australian Apprenticeship Centre)
- ACE – Adult and Community Education
- ADE – Australian Disability Enterprise
- AHRC – Australian Human Rights Commission
- AIP – Academic Integration Plan
- ATAR – Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- DA – Disability Advisor
- DDA – Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- DES – Disability Employment Service
- DLO – Disability Liaison Officer (alternative for DA)
- ESA – Employment Services Assessment
- JCA – Job Capacity Assessment
- JSA – Job Services Australia (now known as jobactive)
- NDCO – National Disability Coordination Officer
- NDIS – National Disability Insurance Scheme
- RTO – Registered Training Organisation
- TAFE – Technical and Further Education
- TC – TAFE Teacher/Consultant
- VET – Vocational Education and Training



# Your local NDCO Programme

The National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Programme helps people with disability access and participate in tertiary education and subsequent employment through a national network of NDCOs.

The NDCO Programme aims to address barriers by:

- improving links between schools, universities, vocational education and training organisations, job services and organisations that support people with disabilities
- improving transitions between school/community, tertiary education and work
- improving participation by people with disability in tertiary education and work

Your local NDCO can link you with local services in the tertiary education and employment sectors, let you know about upcoming career events and expos, provide information, resources and referrals, provide information about rights and support in tertiary education and work, and much more.

There are 31 NDCO positions in regions across Australia. For local contact details visit:

[www.education.gov.au/ndcoprogramme](http://www.education.gov.au/ndcoprogramme)

NDCOs have developed a number of quality resources that can help people with disability access tertiary education and employment. You can find links to the main ones here:

[www.adcet.edu.au/ndco/resources-to-recommend/](http://www.adcet.edu.au/ndco/resources-to-recommend/)

Don't forget to make sure your young person has a copy of our Get Ready Workbook, available at [www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips](http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips). The workbook covers the same ten tips as this guide, and contains lots of practical activities and advice. There is also a workbook for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. Both are also available in Easy English format and plain text, and both contain links to State and Territory specific programs and information. Check them out today!

## Notes

**Download this guide at**  
**<http://www.k YghYfbgnXbYmedu.au/ndco/getreadytoptips>**