


Information for parents and
caregivers of young people
with special education needs



Preparing
to leave
school

TE TAKATŪ MŌ TE WEHE ATU I TE KURA



Leaving school is an important step for all young people. It can be an exciting time, and also a stressful time. This booklet is for parents of young people with special needs and anticipates some of the planning and support that needs to be put in place to help the transition from school go as smoothly as possible.

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KIA Wawe tō whakamahere, me te whakarite kua tatū
kē tētahi mahere whakawhiti takitahi – ko te tikanga
mā te taenga atu o tō tamaiti ki te 14 o ngā tau

Start planning early and have an Individual Transition Plan in place – usually by the time your child turns 14

- ▶ Starting to think and plan early is the key to making the transition from school to adult life as easy as possible.
- ▶ Most young people will need an Individual Transition Plan (also referred to as a Career Plan) in place by the time they're 14 but some might have one earlier, depending on when they plan to leave school.
- ▶ Planning for your son or daughter to leave secondary school should involve the full team of people who have been supporting them, including:
 - your son or daughter
 - their friends and family friends
 - you and your family/whānau
 - the school
 - representatives from community service providers or other Government organisations.
- ▶ An Individual Transition Plan is usually developed by the team of people who will be supporting your son or daughter, including you, and outlines:
 - their goals
 - how they will achieve those goals
 - what support they will need for employment, study, financial independence, taking part in community activities and groups, cultural support, leisure activities, living arrangements, mobility, transport, peer relationships, sexuality and self-esteem
 - what happens with any equipment your son or daughter uses at school and what equipment they'll need when they leave school.

The plan might follow a process called PATH (Planning Alternative Futures with Hope).

“My dream for my son is for him to just live an independent life in a good environment.”

Jenny

Some tips for making sure your son or daughter experiences a positive move from school

➤ Start planning by the time they turn 14.

- This means you have plenty of time to set up the right supports, and for your son or daughter to learn the new skills they might need when they leave school.
- The plan might become more specific as your son or daughter gets closer to the end of school.

➤ Your son or daughter can drive the process, wherever possible, but might need support to do this.

- They know their own dreams and aspirations and will be more likely to achieve them if they have a say in what happens.

➤ Identify your son's or daughter's interests, strengths and challenges in achieving their goals.

- Their plan should allow them to build on those strengths and interests. This will

make them more likely to succeed when they're in the community, working or studying.

➤ Get together with the team of people from both your school and your community.

- Include people from both the school and community – look at what happens at school and what happens after school.
- Consider who will act as liaison, information and advocacy people for you and your son or daughter.
- This means that when your son or daughter finishes school, there are people they know (and you know) who are familiar to them and familiar with what they need.

- Encourage someone from the school to be available and in touch with your son or daughter once they've left school. While schools think their responsibility ends once your son or daughter passes through the school gate, having a familiar support for the first few months can make all the difference to their confidence and ability to cope with change (and possibly to yours as well).

➤ Remember that what you might need as parents may be different from what your son or daughter might need.

- Parents have often said, "I thought my child wasn't ready for change but it turned out I wasn't ready!"
- The plan for your son or daughter to leave school should focus on their needs.

> The plan for your son or daughter should identify life skills that they'll need.

- With plenty of time to prepare, these life skills can be included in classroom activities and practised at home and other places in the community.
- Have regular conversations with your son or daughter about what adult life is like and what it involves. Involve them wherever possible in your everyday activities, such as budgeting, planning meals, preparing for work, keeping receipts of expenses. Give them more responsibility for daily tasks, such as cooking and cleaning.
- Give your son or daughter opportunities to make real-life decisions.
- Look at options for living arrangements, such as flatting and group or residential homes, and visit these types of places with your son or daughter to see how things work.

> The school can add activities into their classroom programme that will set your son or daughter up for life outside of school.

- The school curriculum looks at work, life, social, academic and leisure skills that young people will need in the adult world. Talk with the teacher about classroom activities that support their goals and aspirations in these areas.
- The teacher's aide can also be a job coach. For example, they can work with your son or daughter to develop visual schedules for work tasks, social skills, work ethics for the workplace and ways to develop independence.

> The plan for your son or daughter should include making a portfolio in their last two years of school.

- This records all the skills they've developed and samples of their work and references from others.
- Discuss with them what they'd like to have in their portfolio.

> Contact the relevant disability support agencies.

- They can help support your son or daughter in community settings, such as the local library, swimming pool, gym, local businesses and clubs.

> There is a wide variety of tertiary courses out there and it can be confusing. As well as identifying your son's or daughter's academic aspirations and particular strengths, you can narrow the list of potential courses in other ways.

- Location: does your son or daughter want to be close to home, or do they want the challenge of travelling to study?
- Size: some courses have large classes and little interaction with tutors; others are smaller and more intimate. Ask your son or daughter what they would prefer.
- Atmosphere: some tertiary institutions and courses are known for their friendliness. Ask current students or graduates about the atmosphere and how well they feel they're supported.

Support for moving into tertiary education

Your school might have a transition programme that allows their students to try courses at tertiary institutions. By trying a course, your son or daughter might have a better idea about whether it's for them.

- ▶ All tertiary providers have a contact person or service for people with disabilities. Contact the provider and ask for this person's details.

- ▶ Study Link can help with student loans and allowances.
- ▶ Work and Income can provide you with information about Training Incentive Allowances, and other allowances.
- ▶ The Tertiary Education Commission funds a number of schemes to help young people who leave school with no or low qualifications. These include

the Youth Guarantee scheme, the Youth Training scheme and Training Opportunities Programmes (TOPs).

- ▶ Workbridge provides funding for training support as well as supporting people with disabilities to find employment.
- ▶ Some specific disability agencies might also have specific funding.



live at home any more, and be a bit more independent and we're working towards those things."

Tong

Support for moving into employment

- ▶ Workbridge can help your son or daughter to find work, write their CV and access equipment and support related to their disability.
- ▶ Careers New Zealand provides career information advice and services at school and outside of school.
- ▶ Work and Income provides a service in some areas called PATHS – Providing Access to Health Solutions. This provides extra health assistance to people who receive a sickness benefit and want to find work. Contact your local office to see if it is available in your area.
- ▶ There is a range of supported employment agencies in different regions around New Zealand. They are funded to help people with disabilities find meaningful paid employment. They provide career planning, job matching and training, work experience and other support, such as transport. Local agencies are listed on the website of the Association for Supported Employment in New Zealand.
- ▶ Gateway is available through the Tertiary Education Commission and provides vocational pathways for students from school to the workplace through work placements.



Support available as your son

From people at school

- ▶ Principal
- ▶ Teacher
- ▶ Careers advisor
- ▶ Teacher's aide
- ▶ SENCO
- ▶ Resource teacher
- ▶ Specialists
- ▶ Tertiary providers – learning support contact person

Support they can provide

- ▶ Will lead the development of your son's or daughter's transition or career plan and work with the team around them
- ▶ Can include academic and life skills in classroom learning that support their goals and aspirations
- ▶ Might use the teacher's aide as a job coach
- ▶ Will monitor their transition or career plan
- ▶ Can provide careers advice and support through a careers advisor
- ▶ Can help your son or daughter put a portfolio together
- ▶ Might have work experience programmes or can assist with trying out tertiary courses



skills, interests, strengths,

From Government agencies

- ▶ Work and Income
- ▶ Tertiary Education Commission
- ▶ Housing New Zealand
- ▶ Ministry of Education
- ▶ Ministry of Health
- ▶ Ministry of Social Development
- ▶ ACC

Support they can provide

- ▶ Specialist services
- ▶ Benefits
- ▶ Student loans
- ▶ Training allowances and funding for courses
- ▶ Work placements and training
- ▶ Transition services and support
- ▶ Needs assessment and service coordination

or daughter leaves school

Support they can provide

- ▶ Can help with careers advice and planning, job matching and finding work, writing CVs, work experience
- ▶ Can help with accessing equipment, housing modifications, transport and other support related to your son's or daughter's disability
- ▶ Can provide advocacy
- ▶ Can provide flatmate services, and group and residential homes and day services
- ▶ Some community support organisations have funding for post-school courses, training and study



dreams and aspirations

- ▶ Can provide support for you as parents
- ▶ Can provide peer group support and social networks
- ▶ Can help with free budgeting advice

From community support organisations

- ▶ Workbridge
- ▶ Enable
- ▶ Supported employment agencies
- ▶ Weka
- ▶ Hohepa
- ▶ Careers New Zealand
- ▶ DPA New Zealand
- ▶ CCS Disability Action
- ▶ IHC/IDEA services
- ▶ People First
- ▶ Citizens Advice Bureau
- ▶ Budget Advice Services

Support they can provide

- ▶ Have regular conversations with your son or daughter about what adult life is like and what it involves
- ▶ Involve them wherever possible in your everyday activities, such as budgeting, planning meals, preparing for work, keeping receipts of expenses
- ▶ Give them responsibility for daily tasks, such as cooking and cleaning
- ▶ Give your son or daughter opportunities to make real-life decisions

From people at home/ in the community

- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Whānau
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Siblings
- ▶ Church or community groups you're members of

Housing options and support

When looking at housing, you also need to consider the other aspects of living independently, such as:

- ▶ what daily living skills your son or daughter will need when living with others (cooking, cleaning, shopping, personal hygiene)
- ▶ what local transport and parking is like
- ▶ local medical and support services.

Options for living independently include:

- ▶ living at home (household rules and responsibilities can still give your son or daughter some independence)
- ▶ living in a house (this has maintenance responsibilities but there is often more living space and freedom to make alterations)

- ▶ living in a rental property (there are fewer maintenance responsibilities but less freedom to make alterations)
- ▶ Housing New Zealand accommodation (means support staff will be available, and the rent is assessed against income)
- ▶ group homes (where small groups of people with disabilities live together in the community and the home is managed by a community organisation)
- ▶ residential care (where larger groups of people with disabilities live together in houses or have individual rooms and often come together for meals).

Support for finding housing

- ▶ Both the Disabled Person's Assembly and CCS Disability Action have a flatmate service.

- ▶ Housing New Zealand has rental accommodation available depending on your son or daughter's income. They can also call on specialists, such as occupational therapists who can look at whether modifications need to be made to a Housing New Zealand rental house. Housing New Zealand can also look at support with buying a house.
- ▶ An occupational therapist can provide advice on making modifications to a house you want to buy.
- ▶ Your local Citizens Advice Bureau will have a list of group and residential homes in your local area.



Support from Government agencies

- ▶ STAR (Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource) is available through the Tertiary Education Commission and provides funding for senior secondary students to access a range of courses that provide broader learning opportunities. Courses can be work-based or lead towards credits for a national qualification and can be provided by either the school or tertiary providers.
- ▶ Work and Income New Zealand can provide you and your son or daughter with advice about the:
 - disability allowance
 - invalid's benefit
 - accommodation supplement
 - training incentive allowance.
- ▶ The Vocational Services Transition Service is funded by the Ministry of Social Development. It assists all school leavers with high/very high needs who receive ORS funding to transition from school. You should receive information about this service before your son or daughter leaves school and the service will begin the year before your son or daughter leaves school.
- ▶ The Youth Transition Scheme, contracted out to community providers by the Ministry of Social Development, is available to all young people who have left school and who need extra support and encouragement to enter into employment or further training or education.
- ▶ The Ministry of Health's Disability Support Service provides funding for the *Needs Assessment and Service Coordination service* (called NASCs). NASCs work with disabled people to help identify their needs and outline what support is available. They allocate Ministry-funded support and assist with accessing other supports. Call the Ministry of Health or visit their website to find out the NASC service in your local area.

“Here I am today and I've done what I thought I couldn't do. If I could go back in time and talk to myself when I first started high school I'd probably say to myself if you think you can't do something just think the complete opposite...”

Zane, student previously receiving ORS

Support for you as parents

The community service providers outlined on next page will also help you work through any concerns you have as parents around your son or daughter leaving school.

Help with advocacy

Some nationwide advocacy agencies may have support in your local area.

- ▶ Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service provided by the Health and Disability Commissioner.
- ▶ Your local Citizens Advice Bureau.
- ▶ IHC Advocacy.
- ▶ People First.
- ▶ Disabled Person's Assembly.
- ▶ Parent-to-Parent.

Budgeting support

You and/or your child can talk to your local Citizens Advice Bureau or Budget Advisory Service if you need help with budgeting.

If your son or daughter has a case worker at Work and Income, they can also talk to them about getting budget advice.

Community service providers

Because your son or daughter is leaving the support of the school environment, it becomes all the more important that both you and they are connected with the community service providers who can provide a support base in the community. We've provided below a list of the organisations referred to in this booklet. Also ask to see our information sheet *Support organisations and useful contacts* for more detail.

Association of Supported Employment New Zealand (ASENZ)

Improves and expands inclusive employment opportunities and services for people with disabilities – provides a list of local supported employment providers.

www.asenz.org.nz

Careers New Zealand

Provides career information, advice and guidance at school and outside of school.

www.careers.govt.nz

CCS Disability Action

Works in partnership with disabled people, their families and whānau to ensure equality of opportunity, quality of life and an environment that enhances full community integration and participation. Also provides the nationwide Mobility Parking Permit Scheme. Contact your local branch for services and support.

www.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz

Citizens Advice Bureau

Provides information, assistance and referral to people in our communities.

www.cab.org.nz

National freephone 0800 367 222

DPA New Zealand

An umbrella organisation representing people with disabilities, the organisations involved in advocacy on their behalf, and service providers. DPA has a network of regional assemblies who advocate on local issues.

www.dpa.org.nz

Enable New Zealand

(Referred to as Accessable in Auckland/Northland area)

Delivers a range of services, including equipment and housing modification services for the health and disability sector.

www.enable.co.nz

**National freephone
0800 36 22 53**

www.accessable.co.nz

Freephone 0508 001 002

Hohepa

Establishes and maintains homes, schools, organic farms and day services throughout New Zealand for the care, support and education of intellectually disabled young people and adults.

www.hohepa.com

Housing New Zealand

Has rental accommodation available, depending on income, and can also provide support with buying a house.

www.hnzc.govt.nz

Freephone: 0800 801 601

IHC and IDEA Services

IHC advocates for the rights, inclusion and welfare of all people with an intellectual disability. IDEA Services, under the IHC umbrella, provides a range of support and services to help people with an intellectual disability to live satisfying lives in the community.

www.ihc.org.nz

National freephone 0800 442 442

Ministry of Health – Disability Support Services

DSS is responsible for planning and funding disability support services. Many of the services DSS funds are accessed through a Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) service. NASCs work with disabled people to help identify their needs and to outline what disability support services are available. They allocate Ministry-funded support services and assist with accessing other supports.

www.moh.govt.nz

Ministry of Social Development

Funds the Vocational Services Transition Service to assist all school leavers with high/very high needs who receive ORS funding to transition from school. Funds the Youth Transition scheme to provide extra support to young people who have left school and need encouragement to enter into employment or further training or education.

www.msd.govt.nz

New Zealand Federation of Family Budgeting Services

Provides free budgeting advice.

www.familybudgeting.org.nz

Freephone 0508 283 438

Health and Disability Commissioner

Promotes and protects the rights of health and disability services consumers, and facilitates the resolution of complaints.

www.hdc.org.nz

**National freephone
0800 11 22 33**

Parent to Parent

A support and information network for parents of children with special needs – support is provided voluntarily by trained support parents who have a child with the same or similar needs.

www.parent2parent.org.nz

People First

Provides people who have a learning disability with information and support networks.

www.peoplefirst.org.nz

Study Link

Provides students with financial support to undertake study.

www.studylink.govt.nz

Freephone 0800 88 99 00

Tertiary Education Commission

For information about:

- ▶ STAR
- ▶ Gateway
- ▶ TOPS
- ▶ Youth Training scheme
- ▶ Youth Guarantee scheme.

www.tec.govt.nz

WEKA

Disability information website, for disabled people, their families, whānau and caregivers, health professionals and disability information providers.

www.weka.net.nz

Work and Income NZ

Provides financial assistance and employment services for New Zealanders needing job search support, financial assistance and in-work support.

www.workandincome.govt.nz

Workbridge

A professional employment service for people with all types of disability, including people who have lived with the long-term effects of injury and illness.

www.workbridge.co.nz



New Zealand Government

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