



Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

THEODORE KASTNER, MD, MS
Commissioner

Dear Parent/Guardian:

High school is an exciting time for students as they begin to think about and plan for the future. As the parent of a high school age student, you play a very important role in helping your child prepare for his or her future.

Transition planning is the process schools use to help students with disabilities and their families as they plan for their future after high school. School services are available to your child until the end of the school year in which he/she turns 21, or until your child graduates with a Regents or local diploma. We encourage you and your child to make full use of these services.

You and your child have the chance to discuss transition planning at all Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings. This discussion may include plans for education and training after high school to prepare for a job or career; adult continuing education or other education programs; being active in the community; getting and keeping a job; independent living; and/or other adult services. Your child's transition plan should be in effect by age 15 (8 **NYCRR** 200.4(d)(2)(ix)), but it can also begin earlier. The planning process is most successful when it includes both you and your child.

If your child has a developmental disability, you may want to learn about the services offered by the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). OPWDD provides many services, including supports at home, supports in the community, and employment training. All of these supports can help a student with a developmental disability move successfully from school to adult life. Students and their families must apply to receive these supports and also apply for Medicaid, if eligible, as part of transition planning. To learn more about OPWDD, you and your child can attend an OPWDD *Front Door Information Session*. For more information on the information sessions and to get a copy of the *Access To Services Resource Booklet for Individuals and Families*, go to <http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/get-started>.

If you think your child's future might include supports and services provided by OPWDD, it is very important for you to reach out to us as early as possible. Contacting OPWDD now will help us be ready for your child's future needs. If you would like the school district to invite an agency representative to participate in transition planning for your child, you will need to sign a confidentiality release form (required by the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and New York State regulations) and ask your school to invite the agency representative.

We want to make sure that your child receives the best supports available. We look forward to working with you and your child as together you make a transition plan to a successful future for your child.

Sincerely,

Theodore Kastner, MD, MS
Commissioner