



Transition to Adulthood Roadmap

Planning for Education, Work, Living, and Independence (Ages 14–25)

Comprehensive Step-by-Step Educational Handbook & Printable Toolkit.

Created by AutismHearts | Autism Resource Directory

Notice: Educational guide — not legal or medical advice.

Orientation & Overview

Core Philosophy

Transition is a phased journey — not a single sudden event. It spans adult healthcare, higher education, employment, housing, and legal rights.

Part 1: Knowing Yourself and Your Voice

Before a young adult can advocate for college accommodations or workplace adjustments, they must understand their neurodivergent profile.

Self-Advocacy & Self-Awareness Worksheet

1. Three things I excel at or find deeply interesting:

2. Environments where I feel most focused and calm:

3. Sensory accommodations that help me succeed:

4. One major goal for the next two years:

Part 2: Planning at School (IEP Transition)

- Mandatory transition planning begins by age 14 or 16 in the IEP.
- Measurable post-secondary goals in education, employment, and daily living.
- Students should actively lead and participate in their transition IEP conferences.

Transition IEP Checklist

Transition Focus Area	Status	Action Notes
Are goals based on age-appropriate assessments?	☐ Complete	Review vocational test
Does student participate in setting meeting agenda?	☐ Complete	Present 1-page profile
Are adult agencies (Voc Rehab) invited to meetings?	☐ Complete	Contact VR counselor
Is there a clear diploma and graduation track?	☐ Complete	Confirm credits plan

Part 3: Education, Training & Work Options

- 4-Year Colleges: Supported via campus Disability Support Services (DSS).
- Community Colleges: Flexible degrees, smaller classes, transfer pathways.
- Vocational & Trade Programs: Practical technical training in IT, trades, and culinary arts.
- Competitive Employment: General workforce jobs with on-the-job coaching.

Education & Career Exploration Worksheet

Pathways or Careers I Am Most Curious About:

Why I Like It / What Excites Me:

Accommodations I Will Need:

Part 4: Daily Life Skills & Housing Options

- Self-Care & Health: Hygiene, scheduling doctor visits, managing medication.
- Financial Literacy: Managing bank accounts, budgeting, paying bills.
- Housing Models: Family home, shared roommate apartment, supportive living communities.

Daily Living Skills Checklist

Independence Inventory

Prepares 3-5 simple meals independently ☐ | Manages laundry ☐ | Tracks weekly personal budget ☐ | Navigates public transit or rideshare ☐ | Manages keys and emergency contacts ☐

Part 5: Healthcare, Benefits & Legal Basics

- Transition from pediatricians to adult primary care physicians.
- Supported Decision-Making (SDM): Retaining legal rights while appointing trusted advisors.
- Power of Attorney (POA): Granting authority for financial or medical decisions.

Legal & Healthcare Planning Checklist

Milestone / Legal Domain	Status	Assigned Target Date
Identified adult primary care physician	☐ Complete	
Created personal medical summary card	☐ Complete	
Explored Supported Decision-Making (SDM)	☐ Complete	

Part 6: Building a Support Network

True independence does not mean doing everything by yourself. It is built upon natural family supports, peer networks, and professional mentors.

Support Network Mapping Worksheet

1. Family & Close Friends (Emergency anchors):

2. Professionals & Mentors (Job coaches, therapists):

3. Community & Peer Networks (Special interest clubs):

Master Transition Action Plan

1. Education & Training Goal for This Year:

2. Employment & Career Goal for This Year:

3. Independent Living Goal for This Year:

Master Transition Timeline (Ages 14–25)

Age Stage	Key Milestones & Action Items
Ages 14-15 Foundation	Explore personal interests and sensory profile. Begin attending IEP meetings. Practice home living routines.
Ages 16-17 Exploration	Job shadowing and career inventories. Tour trade schools and colleges. Open Vocational Rehabilitation case.
Ages 18-21 Bridge Phase	Review adult legal rights at age 18 (SDM/POA). Shift to adult primary care physician. Secure job or college placement.
Ages 22-25 Adulthood	Consolidate community living routines and budget. Join adult neurodivergent advocacy networks.

Resource Directory: Services & Housing

Discover verified independent living coaches, supported housing communities, and vocational rehabilitation services at autismhearts.com.

Platform Guide: Using AutismHearts

AutismHearts provides verified directories, transition checklists, and parent advocacy tools to bridge youth services into adult autonomy.

About This Roadmap & Disclaimer

Professional Disclaimer

Educational transition guide. Laws, benefits, and eligibility rules vary by region. Consult qualified legal and healthcare professionals for individualized counsel.

Autism Hearts Mission

Message from Autism Hearts

"Thank you for utilizing the Transition to Adulthood Roadmap. May this guide serve as a steady companion toward an empowered, self-determined adult life."