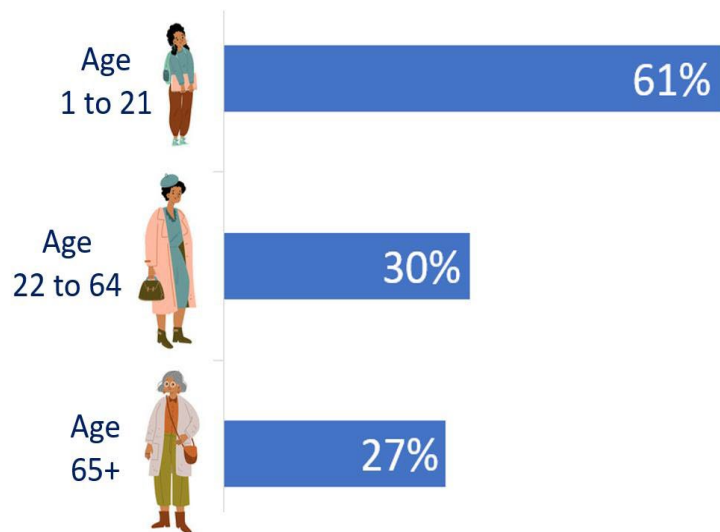


Bridging the Gap From Classroom to Community

Transition Resources related to Communication

Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) results showed that 61% of people aged 1 to 21 who do not communicate with words have a system for communication. However, for adults aged 22 to 65+ only 27-30% have a system in place.



This resource bundle includes:

[Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\)](#)

[Visual Gestural Communication \(VGC\)](#)

[American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#)

[Speech and Blind/Visual Impairment](#)

[Tactile Communication](#)

[Limited English Proficiency \(LEP\)](#)

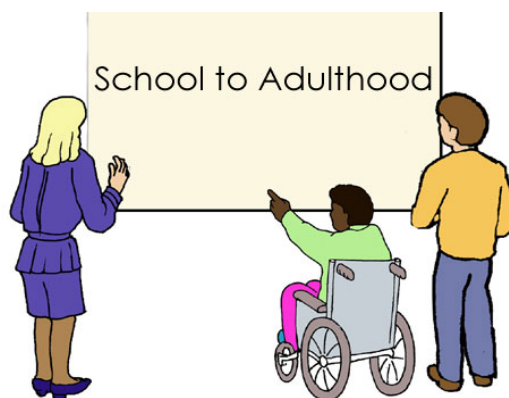
What is Transition Planning?



Transition planning helps students with disabilities and their families get ready for life after high school. It includes planning and preparing for employment, further education or training, and living independently. It involves a partnership between the youth, their family, educational staff, school-age services, post-school services, program providers, and others.

Transition planning in Pennsylvania is part of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) during the year in which a student turns 14; however, transition planning can begin at any age. Once a student ages out or graduates from high school, they are no longer eligible for services through the educational system. If desired, the youth must apply for and meet eligibility requirements for adult services.

Transition planning helps bridge supports between youth and adult service systems and promotes continuity of services. The following resources will help ensure access to communication during the transition process.



Transitioning from School to Adulthood with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)



Tips for Successful Transition with AAC

 Start Planning:	• At least a year before transition, start planning. Lots of children use school-owned devices. Start the process of getting a device that can be used outside of school. • Where will the individual be during the time that they were typically at school? It's important to try to get a clear picture of what the new environment will look like to identify the best way to support communication. • Request access to any language proficiency and communication assessments completed by school staff to better understand the individual's current level in reading, writing, listening, and understanding English.
 Connect with Consultants or Specialists:	• Develop a relationship with a local consultant or Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) outside the school setting. The school SLP and the new SLP or consultant can assist with developing a transition plan. • Things change, we change, and technology also changes. Having a specialist available if a new evaluation is needed is important.
 Provide Pre-Transition Support to the New Setting:	• Communication partner training with the new people in the individual's life can be extremely beneficial. Demonstrating good communication strategies specific to the individual and showing the meaning of the individual's modes of communication such as behaviors and gestures, is a valuable way to support both the AAC user and those new to them.

 Learn How to Program Your Device:	• AAC users and their support people should take the time to learn how to use functions within an AAC system like editing and backing up vocabulary files.
 Have a Backup System in Place:	• Having a backup system available is always important, but even more so during transitions. • A low-tech backup helps to support all individuals if their main AAC system is broken or not available. One quick and easy way to create a backup system is to print screenshots of the main AAC system and assemble those into a communication book or binder.
 Have Troubleshooting Resources:	• If something malfunctions, do the individual and their support people know how to fix the problem? Technology isn't perfect and things break. Many companies have quick handouts with troubleshooting tips that can be provided as a resource.
 How to Contact Technical Support:	• It's important to know where to go if something is not working. Know the phone number, e-mail, or social media resource for specific systems and keep it handy so it can easily be accessed if there is a problem.
 Create a Communication Dictionary, Communication Passport, and/or Communication Profile:	• A Communication Dictionary is an excellent tool to help teach people who are just meeting an individual who uses AAC more about how to be a good communication partner. It is a paper or digital guide that outlines what someone does, what we think it means, and what a good communication partner can do to respond. • Communication Passports can be developed. It belongs to the individual, provides information that is important to the AAC user, and is created with person-centered planning in mind. • The Communication Profile is a quick one-page training tool. This person-centered support helps those that may not know the individual well enough to communicate effectively with them.

For questions about this resource, please contact: ra-pwspecialpopunit@pa.gov

Transitioning from School to Adulthood with Visual Gestural Communication (VGC)



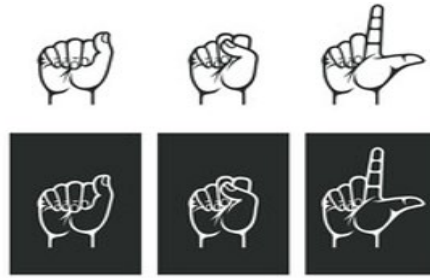
Tips for Successful Transition with VGC

 Start Planning:	• At least a year before transition, start planning. Where will the individual be during the time they were typically at school? It's important to get a clear picture of what the new environment will look like to best support the individual and ensure effective access to communication. • Document the meanings of the individual's gestures, body language, and facial expressions. • Document any supplementary communication tools that have been used or tried in school, so they can continue to be used and/or modified if necessary. Make sure to include any tools that were tried but were not effective. • Request access to any language proficiency and communication assessments completed by school staff to better understand the individual's current level in reading, writing, listening, and understanding English.
 Connect with Consultants or Specialists:	• Develop a relationship with a local consultant or Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) outside the school setting. The school SLP and the new SLP or consultant can assist with developing a transition plan. • Learn your resources in the adult system. Have a specialist available if a new evaluation is needed.
 Provide Pre-Transition Support to the New Setting:	• Communication partner training with the new people in the individual's life can be extremely beneficial. Demonstrating good communication strategies specific to the individual and showing the meaning of the individual's modes of communication such as behaviors and gestures, is a valuable way to support both the VGC user and those new to them. • Consider what training will be given to new staff. Ensure the training will include the individual's likes and interests, as well as their dislikes. It is always easiest to start communication around a topic the individual enjoys.

 Learn and Use Supplementary Communication Tools:	• A Visual Schedule is a tool that uses pictures, symbols, and words to help individuals understand and follow tasks/routines. It can be used for one specific activity, or for an entire day, week, or month. • A Choice Board is a tool that uses visuals or objects that allows individuals to select from various activities, tasks, and things. • A Photo Gallery of important people can be used to display their photos and personal identifiers such as name signs. It can be used to share the schedule for who will be there and who will be doing which things. • Some people benefit from using objects as a reference, starting with concrete objects and slowly moving to more abstract objects to augment communication.
 Teach and Model Supplementary Communication Tools:	• Communication tools need to be taught and modeled through exposure and practice. Involve the individual in the process of creating and reviewing their communication tools. Use lots of repetition to reinforce learning. • Ensure that all support people take the time to learn the individual's tools and work together to ensure consistency.
 Ensure Shared Meaning:	• Respond to any communication attempts to reinforce communication and shared meaning. When an individual makes a communication attempt, affirm that you understand, and assign meaning.
 Create a Photo/Video Dictionary, Communication Passport, and/or Communication Profile:	• A Photo/Video Dictionary teaches people who are just meeting an individual who uses VGC how to be a good communication partner. It is a paper or digital guide outlining communication that the individual is using such as unique home signs and gestures, behaviors, what we think their behaviors mean, and how to respond. • Communication Passports can be developed. It provides information that is important to the individual and is created with person-centered planning in mind. • The Communication Profile is a quick one-page training tool that can be handed out. This person-centered support helps those that may not know the individual well enough to communicate effectively with them.

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Transitioning from School to Adulthood with American Sign Language (ASL)



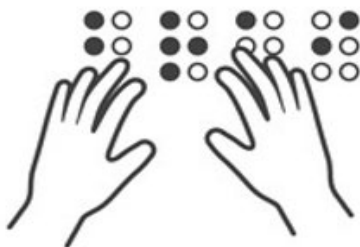
Tips for Successful Transition with ASL

 Start Planning:	• At least a year before transition, start planning. Where will the individual be during the time they were typically at school? It's important to get a clear picture of what the new environment will look like to best support the individual and ensure effective access to communication. • Document any supplementary communication tools that have been used or tried in school, so they can continue to be used and/or modified if necessary. Make sure to include any tools that were tried but were not effective. • Request access to any language proficiency and communication assessments completed by school staff to better understand the individual's current level in reading, writing, listening, and understanding English.
 Connect with Consultants or Specialists:	• Develop a relationship with a local consultant or Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) outside the school setting. The school SLP and the new SLP or consultant can assist with developing a transition plan. • Learn how to access resources in the adult system. • Evaluate situations where the individual may need an ASL interpreter, and request and arrange interpretation services as early as possible. It is also important to assess the individual's ability to use an interpreter effectively. • Understand how and when the individual uses Video Relay Services (VRS). • Connect the individual with the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) for resources. • Contact the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Deaf Services Coordinator at RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov for questions, resources, and support.

 Provide Pre-Transition Support to the New Setting:	• Communication partner training with the new people in the individual's life can be extremely beneficial. Demonstrating good communication strategies specific to the individual and showing the meaning of the individual's modes of communication such as behaviors and gestures, is a valuable way to support both the ASL user and those new to them. • Ensure that new people supporting the individual are aware of Deaf culture and can effectively communicate with the individual using the individual's preferred method of communication, as well as other communication modes used.
 Advocacy for Accessibility:	• If the individual uses auto captioning, ensure that the individual's support people are familiar with the platforms used and that they understand how to use them. • Assess situations where an individual may need to use Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART), and make sure support people know how to request these services.
 Have a Backup System in Place:	• Understand all methods of communication that the individual uses outside of ASL, and make sure that communication tools, devices, and technology are up to date and functioning.
 Have Troubleshooting Resources:	• Many ASL users also use a variety of technology for communication access. Regularly test the individual's devices and technology for proper functioning. If something malfunctions, ensure that the individual and their support people know how to fix the problem. Many companies have quick handouts with troubleshooting tips that can be provided as a resource.
 Socialization:	• Ensure that the individual has meaningful socialization opportunities by encouraging them to participate in programs and events that support ASL, to maintain and improve their language skills. • Support and encourage self-advocacy by helping the individual express their needs and preferences in social settings and situations.
 Create a Photo/Video Dictionary, Communication Passport, and/or Communication Profile:	• A Communication Dictionary is an excellent tool to help teach people more about the individual's communication. It is a paper or digital guide that outlines what someone does, what we think it means, and what a good communication partner can do to respond. • Communication Passports can be developed. It provides information that is important to the individual and is created with person-centered planning in mind. • The Communication Profile is a quick one-page training tool that can be handed out. This person-centered support helps those that may not know the individual well enough to communicate effectively with them.

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Transitioning from School to Adulthood with Speech and Visual Impairment/Blindness



Tips for Successful Transition with Speech and Visual Impairment/Blindness

 Start Planning:	• At least a year before transition, start planning. Where will the individual be during the time they were typically at school? It's important to get a clear picture of what the new environment will look like to best support the individual and ensure effective access to communication. • Determine what accommodations need to be made in the new environment to provide safety, mobility, accessibility, and equal opportunity. • Document any supplementary communication tools that have been used or tried in school, such as assistive technology, so they can continue to be used and modified if necessary. Make sure to include any tools that were tried but were not effective. • Request access to any language proficiency and communication assessments completed by school staff to better understand the individual's current level in reading, writing, listening, and understanding English.
 Connect with Consultants or Specialists:	• Develop a relationship with a local consultant or Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) outside the school setting. The school SLP and the new SLP or consultant can assist with developing a transition plan. • Know how to access resources in the adult system. • Connect the individual with the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) for resources. • Set up services with a local Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist to assist the individual with navigating their new environment.

 Provide Pre-Transition Support to the New Setting:	• Communication partner training with the new people in the individual's life can be extremely beneficial. Demonstrating good communication strategies specific to the individual and showing the meaning of the individual's modes of communication such as behaviors and gestures, is a valuable way to support both the individual and those new to them. • Ensure that new support people understand that vision impairments/blindness are a spectrum, and that they understand the individual's vision so that support can be most effective. • What training or information will be given to staff concerning the individual's vision, technology, and environmental conditions? Consider who would benefit from such information.
 Advocacy for Accessibility:	• Ensure that the individual and their support people know how to request accommodations. • If the individual requires text-to-speech services, install the appropriate software on the individual's devices. Test the software in different environments to ensure accuracy and responsiveness. • Use vivid, sensory-rich language that engages the individual's other senses. • Prepare for situations where telecommunication is used, and make sure the individual has access to tools that will convert visual information into auditory or tactile formats, such as screen readers or Braille displays.
 Learn How to Program Your Device and Have a Backup System in Place:	• Identify what equipment, tools, devices, and technology need to be considered and who will be responsible for purchases and emergencies. • Having a backup system or systems available is always important, but even more so during the transition process.
 Have Troubleshooting Resources:	• Regularly test the individual's devices and technology for proper functioning and maintenance. If something malfunctions, ensure that the individual and their support people know how to fix the problem. Many companies have quick handouts with troubleshooting tips that can be provided as a resource.
 How to Contact Technical Support:	• It's important to know where to go if something is not working. Know the phone number, e-mail, or social media resource for specific systems and keep it handy so it can easily be accessed if there is a problem.



**Create a
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- A **Communication Dictionary** is an excellent tool to help teach people more about the individual's communication. It is a paper or digital guide that outlines what someone does, what we think it means, and what a good communication partner can do to respond.
- **Communication Passports** can be developed. It provides information that is important to the individual and is created with person-centered planning in mind.
- The **Communication Profile** is a quick one-page training tool that can be handed out. This person-centered support helps those that may not know the individual well enough to communicate effectively with them.

For questions about this resource, please contact: ra-pwspecialpopunit@pa.gov

Transitioning from School to Adulthood with Tactile Communication



Tips for Successful Transition with Tactile Communication



Start Planning:

- Where will the individual be during the time they were typically at school? At least a year before transition, start planning. It's important to get a clear picture of what the new environment will look like to best support the individual and ensure effective access to communication.
- Determine what accommodations need to be made in the individual's new environment to provide safety, mobility, accessibility, and equal opportunity.
- Document any supplementary communication tools that have been used or tried with the individual in school, so they can continue to be used and modified if necessary. Make sure to include any tools that were tried but were not effective.
- Request access to any language proficiency and communication assessments completed by school staff to better understand the individual's current level in reading, writing, listening, and understanding English.

 Connect with Consultants or Specialists:	• If the individual currently has a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP), Occupational Therapist, or Physical Therapist, develop a relationship with a local consultant or specialist outside the school setting. The school professional and the new specialist or consultant can assist with developing a transition plan. • Know how to access resources in the adult system. • Connect with resources such as the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS), the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), and the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). • Evaluate situations where the individual may need a tactile ASL interpreter, and request and arrange interpretation services as early as possible. • Set up services with a local Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist to assist the individual with navigating their new environment, such as teaching cane skills, guide dog readiness, or human guide techniques, and recommending environmental modifications, such as bump dots to identify a specific door, or trailing rails to support navigation. • Connect with family resources and groups to find mentors who have experience with transitioning their own family member(s) into adulthood.
 Provide Pre-Transition Support to the New Setting:	• Communication partner training with the new people in the individual's life can be extremely beneficial. Demonstrating good communication strategies specific to the individual and showing the meaning of the individual's modes of communication such as behaviors and gestures, is a valuable way to support both the individual and those new to them. • Ensure that new support people understand the individual, in general. Make sure that they also know the individual's specific needs so they can choose the most effective strategies to support the person. • Ensure that new support people can effectively communicate with the individual using the individual's preferred method of communication such as tactile signing, object symbols, braille, as well as other communication methods used. • What training and information will be given to staff concerning the individual's needs? Ensure the training or information includes anyone that may interact with them.
 Advocacy for Accessibility:	• Make sure that the individual and their support people know how to request accommodations. • Prepare for situations where telecommunication is used, and make sure the individual has access to tools that will convert information into tactile formats such as Braille displays. • For individuals who use braille, make sure support people know how to request these services.

 Technology and Troubleshooting Resources:	• Identify what equipment, tools, devices, and technology need to be considered and who will be responsible for purchases, maintenance, and emergencies. • Having a backup system available is always important, but even more so during the transition process. • Regularly test the individual's devices and technology for proper functioning and maintenance. If something malfunctions, ensure that the individual and their support people know how to fix the problem. Many companies have quick handouts with troubleshooting tips that can be provided as a resource. • It's important to know what to do or where to go if something is not working. Know the phone number, e-mail, or social media resource for specific systems and keep it handy so it can easily be accessed if there is a problem.
 Socialization:	• Ensure that the individual has meaningful socialization and intellectual stimulation, both at home and in the community, such as programs where staff are experienced with tactile communication, social groups and events, etc. • Support and encourage self-advocacy by helping the individual express their needs and preferences in social settings and situations.
 Create a Communication Dictionary, Communication Passport, and/or Communication Profile:	• A Communication Dictionary is an excellent tool to help teach people more about the individual's communication. It is a paper or digital guide that outlines what someone does, what we think it means, and what a good communication partner can do to respond. It includes the meanings of the individual's gestures, behaviors, body language, home signs, and facial expressions, and is a reference for new support people learning the individual's unique communication. • Communication Passports can be developed. It provides information that is important to the individual and is created with person-centered planning in mind. • The Communication Profile is a quick one-page training tool. This person-centered support helps those that may not know the individual well enough to communicate effectively with them.

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Transitioning from School to Adulthood with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)



Tips for Successful Transition with LEP



Start Planning:

- At least a year before transition, start planning. Where will the individual be during the time they were typically at school? It's important to get a good picture of what the new environment will look like to best support the individual and ensure effective access to communication.
- Document any supplementary communication tools that have been used or tried in school, so they can continue to be used and modified if necessary. Make sure to include any tools that were tried but were not effective.
- Understand how the individual's culture may impact their expressive and receptive communication, and document the meanings of the individual's gestures, body language, and facial expressions.
- Request access to any language proficiency and communication assessments completed by school staff to better understand the individual's current level in reading, writing, listening, and understanding English.



Provide Pre-Transition Support to the New Setting:

- Communication partner training with the new people in the individual's life can be extremely beneficial. Demonstrating good communication strategies specific to the individual and showing the meaning of the individual's modes of communication such as behaviors and gestures, is a valuable way to support both the individual and those new to them.
- Ensure that new support people understand cultural sensitivity and know the individual's cultural background and preferred language.
- What training will be given to staff concerning the individual's cultural background and language proficiency? Will the training include anyone that may interact with them?
- Ensure that new support people can effectively communicate with the individual in the individual's preferred language.
- Make sure support people are aware of environmental and cultural stressors that might affect communication and behavior.

 Advocacy for Accessibility and Language Access:	• Know how to access resources in the adult system. • Evaluate situations where the individual may need an interpreter and assess the individual's ability to use an interpreter to ensure effective communication. • Request and arrange interpretation services as early as possible and if the individual needs remote interpreting services, ensure that support people know how to request these services. • Utilize visual aids such as pictures, diagrams, and written words to support communication. • Provide written documents in the individual's preferred language when possible and ensure that translations are accurate and culturally appropriate. • Use plain language for all written documents to reduce confusion and to make communication clear. Avoid using jargon and slang.
 Learn How to Program Your Device and Have a Backup System in Place:	• Identify what equipment, tools, devices, and technology need to be considered and who will be responsible for purchases and emergencies. • Having a backup system available is always important, but even more so during the transition process.
 Have Troubleshooting Resources:	• Regularly test the individual's devices and technology for proper functioning and maintenance. If something malfunctions, ensure that the individual and their support people know how to fix the problem. • It's important to know where to go if something is not working. Know the phone number, e-mail, or social media resource for specific systems and keep it handy so it can easily be accessed if there is a problem.
 Socialization:	• Support and encourage self-advocacy by helping the individual express their needs and preferences in social settings and situations. • Create opportunities, resources, and tools for conversation practice and social interaction, such as translation apps, English as a Second Language programs, and peer tutoring, to assist with English language development, if the individual expresses interest.



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