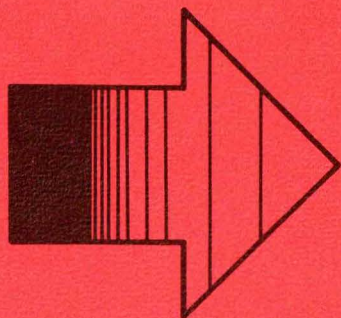


A PARENT HANDBOOK:
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FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE

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SECTION B: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

**A PARENT HANDBOOK:
TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE**

John W. Struck

SECTION B: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

May 1987

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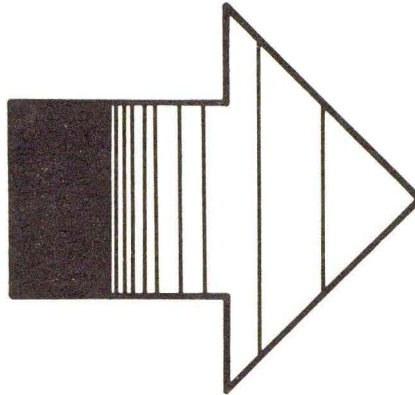
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INTRODUCTION

In the first section, “*What Is Transition?*” we discuss what transition is, why it is important, and a transition planning process. In this section, “**Where Are We Going?**” we talk about various employment options and living arrangements once your son or daughter leaves school. Although the material contained in this section applies equally to both males and females, we have used female nouns and pronouns throughout the entire section so that it is easier to read. *A reminder as you read this section: be sure to encourage and expect schools, adult service providers, your daughter or son, and yourself to communicate, cooperate, and commit to developing a plan that leads to a meaningful adult life.*



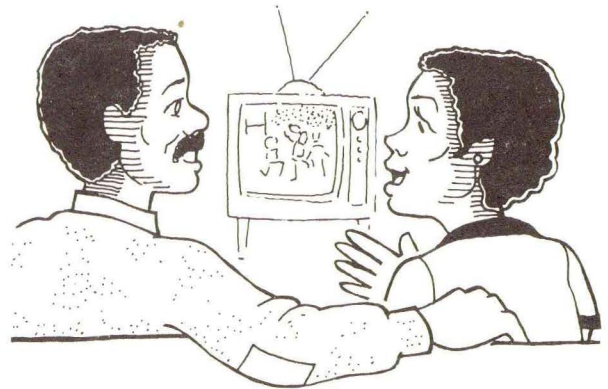
SECTION B: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

SCENE TWO:

(Lynn and her father are watching football on television. During a commercial the following conversation takes place.)

Lynn: "Dad, guess what? Today begins my last year of high school. I can't wait to get out!"

Paul: "Yeah, sounds exciting!" (TO HIMSELF) I wish I knew *where Lynn's going* to end up. I'm worried about her. What is she going to do?



As a parent, what were some of the questions, fears, and thoughts you had as you completed your last year of high school? Did you have a clear picture of where *you* were going — where you were going to *work*, *live*, and with whom you were going to *socialize*? Probably not.

The same is true for many individuals, especially those who have a disability. Completing school and looking at the future can be scary, frustrating, and cause some anxiety.

A song by John Denver says it this way:

*"Looking for something I can
believe in*

*Looking for something that I'd like
to do with my life,*

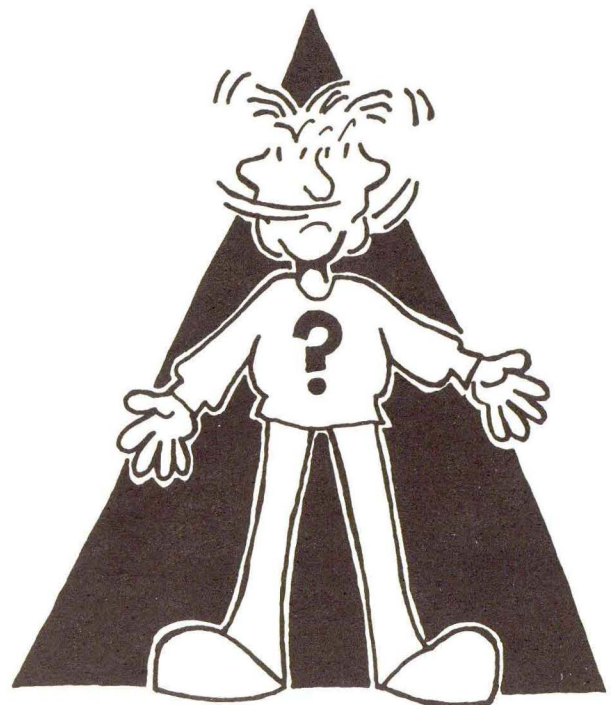
*I don't know what the future is
holding in store,*

I don't know where I am going

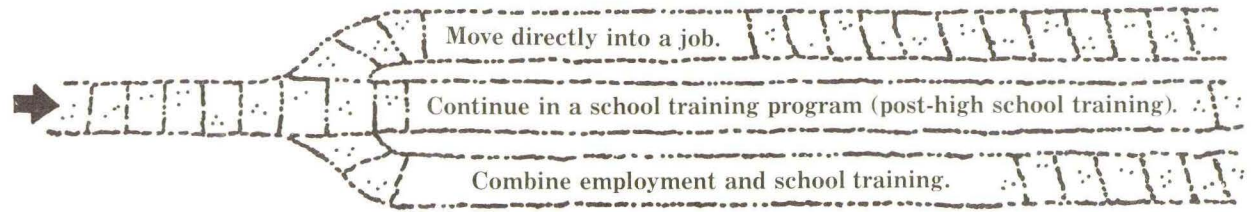
Not sure where I have been"

Sweet Surrender

(1974)

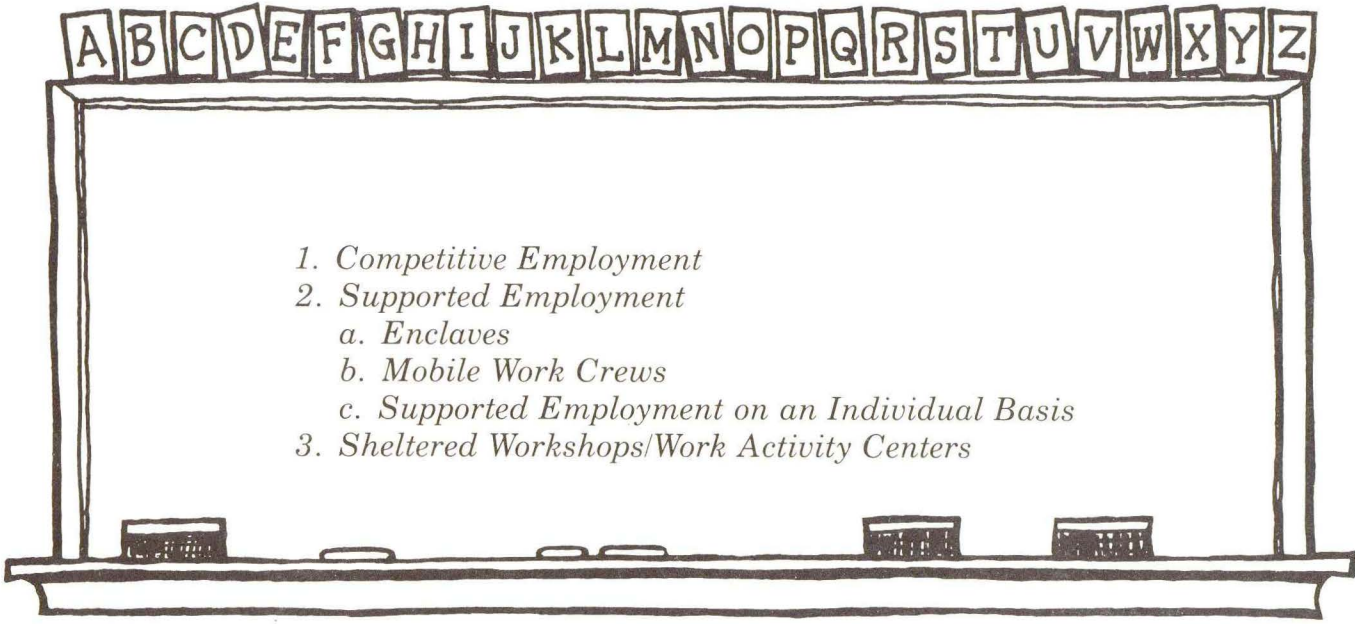


For most young adults getting a job, having a career, and being accepted is the "something that I'd like to do with my life." Upon graduation, your daughter can choose one of three paths that leads to a job or work. They are (a) moving directly into a job, (b) continuing in a school/training program (post-high school training), or (c) combining a job and school/training.



Employment Options

If your daughter selects the first path, direct employment, there are several alternatives. Let's look at these on the chalkboard.



Competitive Employment

The majority of individuals with disabilities leaving school can be trained to get and keep a job without any special support services. This is called competitive employment. Competitive jobs are found within public or private business or industry. Employees are paid and receive the same benefits (vacation, insurance, sick leave) as nondisabled workers depending on if they are considered full or part time. Competitive jobs are found in a

number of ways — by friends, you, your daughter, relatives, agencies (Department of Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation), and newspapers. A good strategy is to use any or all of these resources in working with your daughter in finding a job. Another form of competitive employment is where an individual has her own business (painter, seamstress, child care provider).

Competitive employment can be a realistic goal for *many* individuals with disabilities. Opportunities for competitive employment are influenced by many factors such as (a) vocational training, (b) employability skills (social and personal), and (c) the local economy.

Supported Employment

Most individuals with disabilities can be prepared to work in the community after a specific training period or training program. Some individuals, however, will need ongoing support if they are to work in the community alongside people without disabilities. This type of program is called “supported employment.” Supported employment programs include (a) enclaves, (b) mobile work crews, and (c) supported employment on an individual basis. A description of each of these follows.

Enclaves. In this type of program individuals with disabilities work as an intact group among nondisabled workers in a business or industry. The group works in a separate area within the employment setting. For example, one department in a factory employs only workers with disabilities. The enclave or group of workers is often supervised by a professional from an adult service agency who is usually not an employee of the business. The workers receive pay and work the same work week as individuals who are nondisabled. Potential jobs for enclaves include, but are not limited to, assembly tasks such as putting parts on an electronic board or putting objects in a container for shipment.

Mobile work crews. Mobile work crews are crews that travel from one job to another within a community. Each work crew includes several individuals with disabilities and a supervisor. Work crew members are usually employed by a local work activity center or sheltered workshop (see the next section for a description of work activity centers or sheltered workshops). Some potential jobs include janitorial service, yard work, or park and recreation maintenance.

Supported employment on an individual basis. Rather than working in an enclave or on a mobile work crew, the individual with disabilities may be trained to work as an individual in a community business alongside nondisabled workers. If the individual can be trained to work without any additional assistance, this is called “competitive employment.” If the individual needs ongoing help in order to perform the job, this is called a type of supported employment. “Supported employment on an individual basis” is a form of supported employment which places an individual in a community work site where she gets help from a “job coach.” The job coach gives the individual ongoing training, assistance, and supervision as needed. He may also help with transportation or problem solving. The job coach may be an employee of the business or may be hired by an adult service agency. The type of assistance varies, depending on the needs of the individual. This “buddy system” allows an individual with disabilities to work on an individual basis in the community.

Placement in Sheltered Workshop or Work Activity Center

One of the goals of sheltered work is to give an individual with disabilities an opportunity to develop skills necessary for competitive employment. Sometimes, however, the individual may remain an employee of the sheltered workshop or work activity center for a number of years. In some cases, one of the goals of sheltered workshops or work activity centers is to function as a successful business enterprise to provide long-term employment for individuals with disabilities. Workshops or activity centers provide work such as assembly line tasks and piece work. All individuals are paid according to Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division regulations. Exact pay is determined by the *amount* of work the individual is able to do over a certain period of time.

Living Arrangements

“Where am I going to live?” is another question you probably asked yourself when you completed your high school education. A variety of living arrangements is available to adults. The level of care and type of living arrangement should be based on the needs of the individual. Arrangements can extend from 24-hour care to living independently in the community.

The type of living options available in your community depends on where you live. If your daughter needs a state supported living arrangement following high school, contact your county Department of Human Services for this service. This contact should be made during your daughter’s sophomore or junior year, as there can be a two- to three-year waiting list for many community residential service programs.

Types of living arrangements include the following: (a) living with the family, (b) living independently, (c) living in supervised living arrangements, (d) living in a residential care facility, (e) living in a family life home, or (f) living in an intermediate care facility.

Living with the Family

Many young adults live with their parents while attending school, looking for a job, or working. Living at home may be an appropriate short-term option for young adults with disabilities. Some families, however, may not want to have the young adult live at home forever. Families also may not always be able to care for the young adult; thus, future living arrangements need to be discussed and planned. Young adults who live with their family should be encouraged to develop or improve independent living skills such as housekeeping, shopping, washing clothes, and budgeting.

Living Independently

When a young adult lives independently, she lives by herself or with roommates in a house or apartment. In this living arrangement, little or no help is necessary. If help is needed, it is given by family members or adult service providers through visits or telephone contacts.

Supervised Living Arrangements

The purpose of supervised living arrangements, such as supervised apartments, is to offer a structured living situation for individuals who, because of their disability, need some support or supervision. Young adults in supervised living arrangements receive continued assistance and training in independent living skills such as meal planning, use of community resources, and money management. Supervision of the young adult is usually provided by personnel from a local adult service provider or agency. This person is trained in working with young adults who have disabilities.

Residential Care Facility

Residential care facilities include group homes which offer help to young adults who cannot live independently, but are capable of spending time in the community with a minimum amount of supervision. Community resources are used for recreation, medical, or social services. The staff works with the young adults to develop independent living skills. Group home staff are employed by a local agency or adult service provider and are trained in working with adults who have disabilities.

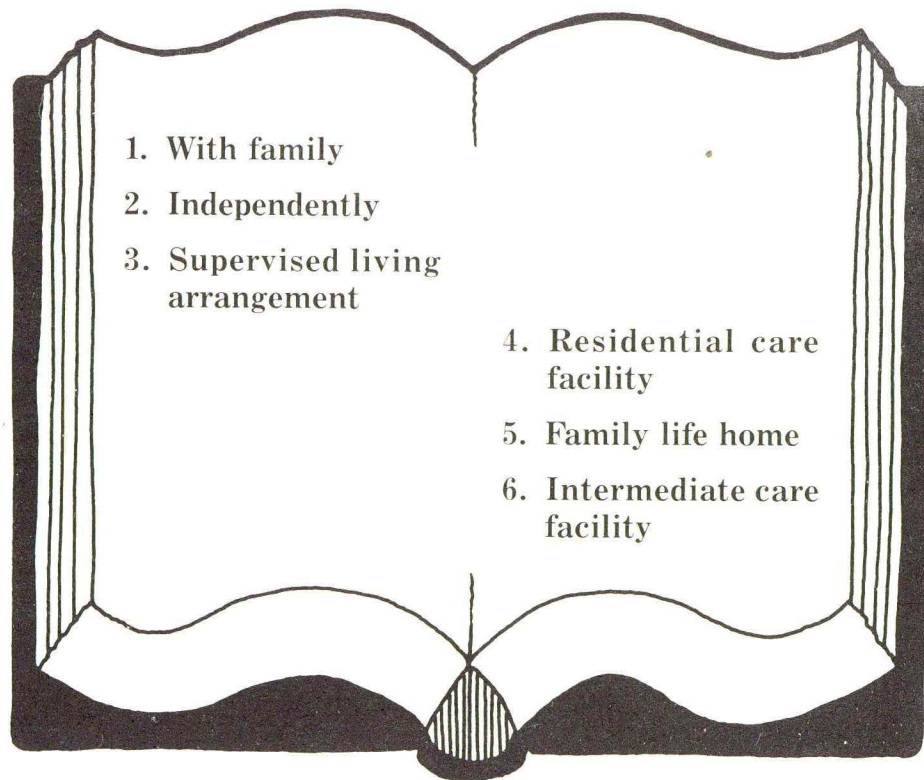
Family Life Home

A family life home is a private household that offers protective social living for individuals who are unable to live independently. The family offers the young adult room and board. Opportunities for participation in social, educational, and recreational activities within the community are also provided by the family life home.

Intermediate Care Facility

An intermediate care facility provides 24-hour care for individuals who, through an illness or disability, require ongoing nursing and medical services. This medical service must be provided by a registered or licensed practical nurse or doctor.

As we finish this section, let's review in the book of facts the six living arrangements to consider for your daughter.



Social and Leisure Skills

Making new friends is another part of the move from school to adult life. When you completed your schooling, did you have a clear picture of with whom you would spend free time? Social skills and leisure time are important points to consider when planning for the future.

Social Skills

Getting along with co-workers, sharing an apartment with a friend, discussing an assignment with a classmate, attending a school dance, or responding to criticism from an employer requires a certain understanding and demonstration of social skills. In order to act appropriately in these situations, development of social skills is important. Social skills such as telling the truth, asking questions, being dependable, and responding to others (saying hello or talking with) are important for getting along with co-workers and friends (see Appendix C for a sample list of social skills). The importance of teaching social skills is shown in the following example:

Often the behaviorally disordered student, after a brief period of work evaluation, has been placed on the job in an unfamiliar environment, with co-workers she does not know, with a supervisor she does not trust, and with infrequent visitations by whatever liaison person is available. The student is expected to model after her co-workers, respond appropriately to her supervisor, and become comfortable in the new environment while learning the skills required for the job itself. The change is too abrupt.

Guetzloe

Effective social skills can be taught and practiced in the home or school. They should be included in your daughter's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Social skills used on a job are sometimes called employability skills. These skills may include being reliable, having proper hygiene, following instructions, and getting along with co-workers (see Appendix D for a list of employability skills). This list of skills is commonly used in high school vocational programs. You may want to check this list and evaluate your daughter's skills within your home and community. Also, your daughter could do a self evaluation.

Leisure Skills

SCENE ONE:

(Co-workers Maggie and Jake are leaving work for the day.)

Maggie: "It's almost 5:00, what are you going to do after work?"

Jake: "Oh nothing, I think I'll go home and watch TV."

Maggie: "It seems like every night you go home and watch TV. Do you really like to watch TV that much?"

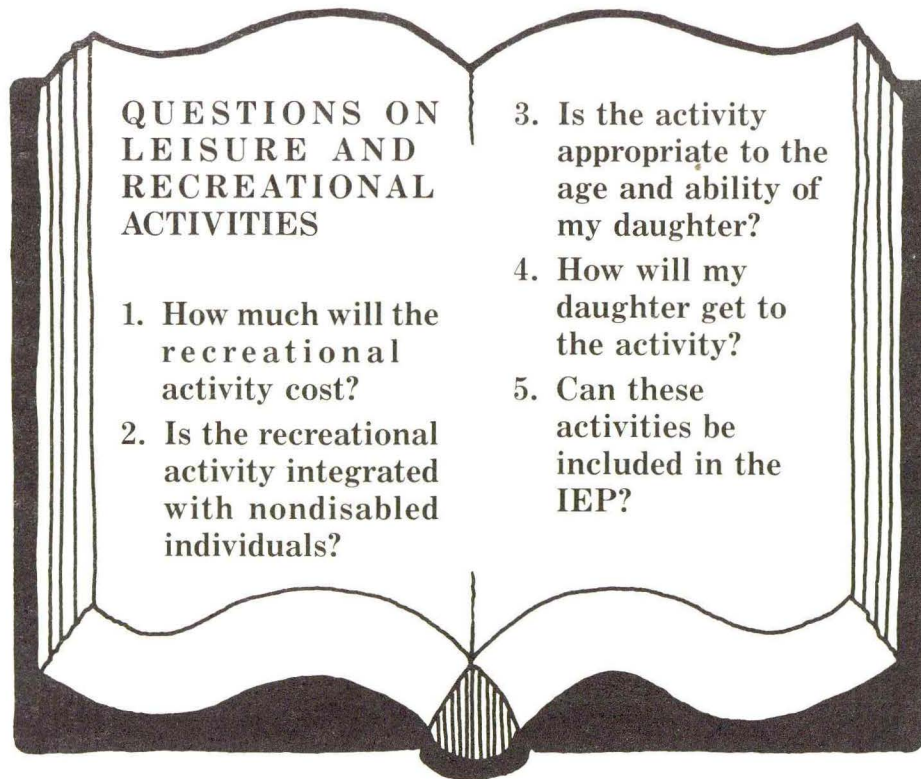
Jake: "No, not really, I guess I just don't know what else to do in my spare time."



Sound familiar? Seems like a lot of individuals spend time watching television. Those who spend hours watching television may be doing so because they are not aware of leisure or recreational activities or feel they lack skills to participate. A number of communities offer a variety of leisure and recreation opportunities. Parks and recreation programs, community centers, YMCAs, social organizations, and church groups offer group activities, classes, and social events for all ages and interests. Individual sports such as hiking, biking, walking, and swimming are also available and should be encouraged.

One of the first steps in helping your daughter develop leisure skills is to identify leisure and recreational activities in your community in which she is interested (see Appendix E for a sample listing of leisure activities). Time can be allowed for awareness of and skill development in a variety of leisure and recreational activities by including these in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

Let's look at the book of facts to review some questions that could be asked about leisure and recreational activities.



**QUESTIONS ON
LEISURE AND
RECREATIONAL
ACTIVITIES**

1. How much will the recreational activity cost?
2. Is the recreational activity integrated with nondisabled individuals?
3. Is the activity appropriate to the age and ability of my daughter?
4. How will my daughter get to the activity?
5. Can these activities be included in the IEP?

You have finished with Section B. Please continue to Section C: "Who Can Help Us Get There?"

