Big changes, adventures and opportunities are ahead for your young adult with a disability! There will be change, new experiences, new challenges and most importantly new rewards!! Transitioning to adulthood for young adults with disabilities incorporates four areas of life… live, learn, work and play.

School provided(s) foundational skills but we need to be prepared for when the bus stops coming and we become the main support to the young adult. We need to be ready and prepared to help them make decisions and choices that will put them on the path to adulthood.

Key elements of transition are to identify the young adult’s strengths and needs in all areas of life:

• Have conversations around what their future goals are and what they need to do to achieve those goals
• Provide opportunities for them to develop the skills they will need to be productive members of their community
• Provide activities that will encourage and grow their self-determination and their self-advocacy

Adult activities that help young adults continue to develop their skills could be:

• Continued education (college)
• Vocational training (trades)
• Employment (supported/competitive)
• Adult services (programs)
• Independent living
• Participating in the community

Some or all of these activities will help lead to the achievement of their goals and will help develop independence and self-sufficiency that promotes confidence in your young adult.
Tip for your Transition Toolbox

Understanding the difference between school services (a world of entitlements) and adult services (a world of eligibility) is very important.

While in school students receiving special education are given a lot of entitlements, programs, services and supports the school HAS to provide to help the student successfully complete their education.

Our adult services systems are based on eligibility through documentation and meeting criteria to receive services. The young adult and their family are the initiators and must complete the applications and follow-up.

Become familiar with the Adult Services Systems such as:
- Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
- Office of Mental Health (OMH)
- Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)
- New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)
- Independent Living Centers (ILC)
- College Accessibility Offices
- Department of Labor One-Stop Centers

These systems can provide guidance, support and services which help the young adult with disabilities develop the skills and opportunities that are needed to achieve their goals.

Check back next month for Part 2!
For more tip sheets and resources available please visit www.parentnetworkwny.org