



TRANSITION SERVICES

Welcome Students and Families to the 2024-25 school year! We are excited to work in partnership with you this upcoming school year!

We recently expanded our Transition team and now have three full-time Transition Specialists who work with students age 13 and older in planning for their postsecondary needs. We work closely with program coordinators and classroom teachers to integrate transition-related concepts into instructional programming in the areas of career exploration and development, self-advocacy, work readiness, and independent living. Our goal is to help students gain insight to their long-term goals and to develop an increased awareness and understanding of their responsibilities at school, at home and in the community. In addition, we also assist parents in navigating community resources and support services as their students moves closer to graduation.

We believe effective transition planning takes a village. School personnel, parents/family members, and students all play an important role in advancing movement toward a student's desired post-secondary outcomes. Throughout the year, we will be sending you information regarding information sessions, community resources and other events that may be offered here at Ivymount as well as in your home communities. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities to help you prepare for the "next steps" in the Journey to Adulthood.

We look forward to working with you in the coming year. Should you have questions or wish to discuss any transition needs, please feel free to contact us.

Warm Regards,

Sharon Nickolaus snickolaus@ivymount.org

Becca Schwartzman rschwartzman@ivymount.org



Pathways to Possibilities: A Post-Secondary Education Webinar Series

Hosted by Dale Frengel (College Counselor), the Ivymount School

DFrengel@ivymount.org



What is Post-Secondary Education?

Any learning or training that happens after high school. This includes:

- 2-year colleges (like community colleges)
- 4-year universities
- Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Programs (IPSEs)
- Vocational and trade schools
- Certification programs (in fields like healthcare, technology, or skilled trades)

It's all about gaining new skills, earning credentials, and preparing for a career or further study. Whether you're aiming for a degree, a certificate, or hands-on training, post-secondary education opens doors to more opportunities and higher earning potential.

So Basically...It's your next step after high school—where you choose how to grow, learn, and build your future.



What is the Webinar Series About?

Whether you're a 7th grade student beginning to explore your future, or a parent/guardian eager to support your child's journey, this engaging webinar series is designed to guide you through the many pathways available after high school. The series focuses on the breadth of post-secondary education offerings. From college admissions and financial aid to career development and inclusive education options, each session offers practical insights, expert advice, and real-world resources to help families make informed decisions.



Who Should Attend:

- **Students:** Get inspired, ask questions, and start building your future. Students who are considering or want to explore any form of post-secondary education should attend.
- **Families:** Gain tools and knowledge to support your student's journey.
- **Staff:** Learn how to guide students through the evolving landscape of post-secondary options.

What to Expect:

This series is divided into sessions tailored for students, families, and staff, covering a wide range of topics including:

- **Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Overview & Planning**
Kick off with a comprehensive look at what post-secondary education means, how to prepare, and how to start planning early.
- **Admissions & Financial Aid**
Learn the ins and outs of applying to colleges and securing financial support.
- **Exploring Local Options**
Discover opportunities at nearby 2-year and 4-year colleges, including programs for neurodiverse learners.
- **Career & Workforce Development**
Not every path leads to college—explore certifications, diplomas, and workforce programs that lead to meaningful careers.
- **Inclusive & Supportive Programs**
Understand the services, accommodations, and inclusive programs available to ensure every student thrives.
- **Interactive Family Workshops**
Wrap up the series with a hands-on session to ask questions, reflect, and plan your next steps.

Each session is designed to be welcoming, informative, and empowering—because planning for life after high school shouldn't be overwhelming. It should be exciting.

Need additional support and guidance in a 1:1 format?

Dale Frengel (College Counselor) works to support your child and your transition planning, in addition to your child's Transition Coordinator and their program team. Dale focuses on aspects of transition planning related to post-secondary education.

Contact Dale at DFrengel@ivymount.org to explore post-secondary education for your child.

Approximate Timeline for Transition



Below is an approximate timeline that can be used for transition-related activities.

Age 14

- Attend transition nights or programs
- Consider how your son/daughter can attend/participate in IEP meetings
- Help them practice and develop their advocacy skills, including disability awareness and how it impacts them
- Complete the DDA application
- Organize and regularly update a file of the student's school and medical records, benefits, employment/volunteer experiences
- Create social connections that may continue after school
- Apply for Pre-ETS

Age 16

- Apply for a driver's license or ID through MVA
- Apply to DORS
- Participate in work or volunteer experiences
- If thinking about attending college, identify colleges that provide needed supports, attend college fairs, etc.
- Create a support network
- Begin planning for future needs
 - Special needs trusts
 - Living arrangements
 - Health benefits, including continuing medical insurance benefits
- Help them continue to practice their advocacy skills, including disability disclosure and how it impacts them

Age 17

- Explore post-secondary education options including work-based opportunities, day programs, college
- Investigate high school transition Programs

Age 18

- Apply for SSI
- Explore the need for guardianship or other least restrictive options such as supportive decision-making
- Register to vote
- Register for selective service
- This is the age of majority in Maryland which means they can legally make decisions for themselves

Age 18-21

- Explore employment, transportation, and living options
- Develop a resume of work/volunteer experiences
- Sign a release/request of records form for the school to share necessary information with adult providers
- If eligible for DDA, meet with the Service Coordinator & interview adult service providers
- Develop a schedule to transition into adult services

Postsecondary Education/Disability Support Services

It is important for students to understand the difference between the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the provisions they provide students. While in high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) outlines how educational supports are provided through the IEP process. When a student enters college (postsecondary education), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guarantees the right of individuals with disabilities to receive reasonable accommodations in order to be successful in postsecondary education. The chart below lists the differences between high school and college.

High School	College
Legal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) entitles students with disabilities a free and appropriate education. IDEA is about SUCCESS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 guarantees reasonable accommodations. ADA is about ACCESS.
Required Documentation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in IDEA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High School IEP may not be sufficient. Students <u>may need to get an evaluation(s)</u> at their own expense. Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations, and demonstrate the need for specific reasonable accommodations
Advocacy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are actively involved in advocating for appropriate services and supports for their children. Schools reach out to parents and their participation in the IEP process is required. Parents talk directly to their child’s teachers on a regular basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are expected to advocate for themselves. Parent involvement is not always actively sought and may be discouraged at times. College faculty and staff do not typically communicate with parents directly without student consent.

Supported Decision-Making

Everyone needs help with making decisions! Some people with disabilities need more or different types of supports to make decisions. Supported Decision-Making (SDM) is getting help, when you need it, from people you trust so you can make your own decisions. SDM is an alternative to guardianship. SDM helps people keep their rights and have more control over their own lives. SDM will look different for everyone. It is individualized!



Maryland law allows adults to use Supported Decision-Making to get support to understand, consider, and make decisions about healthcare, finances, living, and employment. Other people (for example doctors and bankers) must allow these adults to use SDM to make their choices with support.



Definition

Supported decision-making is when a person with a disability exercises their right to make decisions for themselves, while accessing a support network and tools of their choosing.



Principles

Everyone has the right to make choices, people can get assistance without giving up the right to make choices, people will often need help in understanding, making, and communicating their choices. This is the least restrictive option and increases autonomy and independence.



Agreement

The person with the disability chooses which individual they would like to help with making different types of decisions. It is a written plan and can change over time. There is not a specific form required in MD and no court process involved. Areas for support that are common are: health, finances, education, employment, social life, and housing.



Bottom line...

When people use SDM to make their own decisions, instead of having a guardian make decisions for them, they can have more control over their lives and more *self-determination*. That's important because studies show that, when people with disabilities have more self-determination, they can have better lives: they are more likely to work, earn more money, live independently, be more involved in their community and be safer. Another study found that people with disabilities who used SDM were more independent, self-confident, were better at making decisions and made better decisions.



What does a supporter do?

- Agree to help the person understand, consider, and communicate decisions
- Support the preferences of the adult
- Act in good faith and follow the agreement
- DO NOT make the decisions for the person



Tools for Support

- Use plain language materials
- Extra time to discuss choices
- Lists of pros and cons
- Role play activities
- Supporter takes notes
- Person-centered planning

How do you start the SDM process?

1. Help the individual think about the areas they would like support in and make a list of strengths, needs, and interests
2. Explore how the person uses support now and what has worked well
3. Find supporters and coordinate support
4. Put it in writing



What good is having a right if you are not allowed to use it?

A word about guardianship...

Guardianship is a legal process where a judge takes away a person's right to make some or all decisions. That doesn't mean guardianship is wrong. If people truly can't make decisions or direct their lives, guardianship can be a good thing. However, if people can make decisions by themselves or when they get help, putting them in guardianship can hurt them. In addition to SDM, some other alternatives to guardianship are representative payee, power of attorney, special needs trust, ABLE accounts, and advanced medical directives.

FAQs	Guardianship	Supported Decision-Making
What is the role of the court?	In a formal legal process before court, a judge determines guardianship is necessary and appoints a guardian. All future changes have to go through the court. If there is a problem with a guardian, or if the guardian dies, the court must approve any changes or appointment of new guardians.	There is no formal legal process. The person with a disability can change supporters they use anytime they want without a court process. They can easily add supporters and get the insights of many people. There are certain rules in Maryland to be followed by the supporters and for the agreement.
Who makes the decisions?	The guardian has the right to make final decisions about the person's life. The court outlines terms of the guardianship through an official order. The court is the ultimate guardian.	The person with a disability uses support, but ultimately makes the final choices about their own life.
What are the protections for safety?	Typically, only one guardian makes all the decisions. Guardianship does not prevent people from being hurt, abused, getting into trouble or being arrested.	There will usually be multiple supporters in different areas. Having more than one supporter provides a check against abuse or manipulation by any one supporter.
How are the person's needs addressed?	The guardian makes personal decisions for the individual including provisions for healthcare, food, clothing, and where they live.	The strengths and needs of a person are discussed with supporters. The person's abilities are based on what they can do both alone and with supports.

Resources and Tools for Supported Decision Making

[The Supported Decision-Making Brainstorming Guide](#)

[The Missouri Stoplight Tool](#)

[Setting the Wheels in Motion Guide](#)

[National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making \(sample forms\)](#)

[ACLU How to Make a Supported Decision-Making Agreement](#)

[Center on Youth Voice, Youth Choice](#)

[Sample Supported Decision-Making](#)

[Agreement](#): These materials were developed by the Cross-Disability Supported Decision-Making Coalition. This is a sample form. If you have questions about your rights, please contact an attorney.

a. [Alternate Supporter Supplement](#)

b. [Additional Supporter Supplement](#)

[Life Course Tools: Supported Decision Making](#)

Contact Us



410-768-9100



www.pppmd.org

Supporting Your Youth's Transition to Life After High School

What Is Secondary Transition?

Secondary transition is a planning process that helps prepare students with disabilities to 'transition' or move from high school to adult life. This process includes preparing for:

- Postsecondary education or training
- Employment
- Independent living
- Community participation

Who Leads the Secondary Transition Process?

In Maryland, once a student reaches age 14, his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) **must include** Transition Services as required by federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The **IEP and Transition Services team** organize and facilitate the transition planning process until graduation. **Students with disabilities and their families should play an active role** in leading their transition planning meetings and can invite other agencies such as Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers and local community members to collaborate.



Why Family Involvement Matters in Secondary Transition

1. Families Know Their Child Best

Parents and caregivers have deep insight into their child's strengths, challenges, interests, and dreams. Their input helps create a transition plan that is truly personalized and meaningful.

2. Improves Student Outcomes

Research shows that when families are actively involved, students are more likely to:

- Graduate from high school
- Enroll in postsecondary education or training
- Gain meaningful employment
- Live more independently

3. Supports Self-Advocacy & Independence

Families can encourage and support their child's active participation in their IEP and transition planning meetings to learn to speak up for themselves, understand their rights, and make informed decisions—skills that are essential for adulthood.

4. Builds Stronger Plans

When families collaborate with schools and agencies, transition plans are more comprehensive and better coordinated. This ensures smoother connections to adult services and supports.

5. Bridges School and Community

Parents often serve as the link between school and community resources, helping to identify opportunities for work-based learning, independent living, and social engagement.

6. Encourages High Expectations

Family involvement helps maintain high expectations for what students with disabilities can achieve, which is a key predictor of post-school success.

Tips for Effective Family Involvement in Secondary Transition



1. Start Early, Think Long-Term and Update Annually

- Begin discussing your child's future goals and interests well before age 14
- Encourage exploration of jobs, hobbies, and college or technical training options



2. Be an Active Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team Member

- Attend all IEP meetings and ask questions about transition planning and transition services
- Share insights about your child's strengths, needs, and aspirations



3. Encourage Self-Advocacy

- Help your child practice speaking up about their goals and needs
- Support them in participating in their IEP meetings



4. Focus on Skill Building

- Reinforce and practice life skills at home (e.g., budgeting, using public transportation)
- Support academic and functional skills that align with future goals



5. Connect with Community Resources Early

- Learn about local services like vocational rehabilitation, job training, and independent living programs
- Attend transition fairs or workshops to explore options
- Explore job and volunteer opportunities



6. Maintain High Expectations

- Believe in your child's potential and communicate that belief
- Set realistic but ambitious goals for education, employment, and independence



7. Document and Organize

- Keep records of assessments, IEPs, and transition plans
- Use tools like a transition portfolio to track progress and achievements



8. Stay Informed

- Learn about your child's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Use trusted resources like Wrightslaw and National Technical Assistance on Transition (NTACT) (*see more on the next page*)
- Learn about legal and financial planning (e.g., Supported Decision Making, Guardianship, and Benefits)

Helpful Resources for Families	Description
<u>Maryland Secondary Transition Planning Guide for Individuals with Disabilities</u>	Guidance for special education and transition planning
<u>DORS – Division of Rehabilitation Services</u>	Pre-employment and vocational services for students with disabilities
<u>DDA – Developmental Disabilities Administration</u>	Services for individuals with developmental disabilities
<u>SSI – Supplemental Security Income</u>	Financial support for eligible youth with disabilities
<u>Think College</u>	College options for students with intellectual disabilities
<u>WrightsLaw</u>	Legal information about special education and transition rights
<u>Center on Youth Voice Youth Choice</u>	Research, advocacy, and teaches about <u>alternatives to guardianship (A2G)</u>
<u>National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)</u>	Evidence-based practices and tools for transition planning
<u>Charting the LifeCourse</u>	Planning tools for families and individuals with disabilities
<u>Plan for Your Future - Maryland PROMISE</u>	Resources for parents and transition age youth related to secondary education, work, benefits, money, health, well-being and social connections.

TIPS & TRANSITION TIMES MEETINGS



2025-2026



MCPS Transition Services Unit
Potomac Community Resources, Inc.



Adult Services Night

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 || 6:30pm - 8:30pm

IN PERSON - NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR THIS MEETING

Where: Richard Montgomery High School Cafeteria
250 Richard Montgomery Drive
Rockville, MD 20852

- Learn about the role of the Coordinator of Community Services in the TY process
- Families will have a chance to speak with DDA provider agencies

All meetings below are virtual on Zoom:



Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Wednesday, September 24, 2025 @ 6:30pm
[Zoom Registration Link](#)

- How to Apply for SSI/SSDI
- Eligibility Requirements



Self-Directed Services Panel

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 @ 6:30pm
[Zoom Registration Link](#)

- Navigating DDA System
- Self-Directed Services Process
- Q&A with Parent Panel



College Resource Night

Thursday, December 4, 2025 @ 6:30pm
[Zoom Registration Link](#)

- Montgomery College Disability Support Services
- Graduate Transition & Challenge Programs
- Montgomery College & USG
- TerpsEXCEED









Montgomery County Police Resources & Community Safety

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 @ 7:00pm
[Zoom Registration Link](#)

- Autism/IDD, Alzheimer's and Dementia Outreach UnitMCPD Outreach/Initiatives
- Safety Tips

To access the registration links from a paper flier, please scan the QR code on the back.

All meetings below are virtual on Zoom:

 <p>Guardianship & Supported Decision Making Tuesday, February 3, 2026 @ 6:30pm Zoom Registration Link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guardianship• Supported Decision Making	 <p>Financial Planning Thursday, February 5, 2026 @ 6:30pm Zoom Registration Link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Needs Trusts• ABLE Accounts
 <p>DDA: Coordinators of Community Service (CCS) Wednesday, March 25, 2026 @ 6:30pm Zoom Registration Link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process of CCS• Panelist of CCS	 <p>DORS & Social Security Wednesday, April 15, 2026 @ 6:30pm Zoom Registration Link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A presentation by DORS Staff about Pre-ETS and Employment Services• Social Security Application Process
 <p>Social & Recreation Opportunities Wednesday, May 27, 2026 @ 6:30pm Zoom Registration Link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recreation Opportunities in and around Montgomery County	 <p>TBD Wednesday, June 17, 2026 @ 6:30PM Zoom Registration Link</p>

Scan QR code for registration links:



Need language interpretation?
(ASL & Spanish included)

Please contact your high school Transition Support Teacher for any other language.



Questions?

MCPS Transition Services Unit at 240-740-5900

Melissa Wyman, PCR Respite Care & Community Engagement Director at mwyman@pcr-inc.org.

Virtual Community Service Provider Information Nights

Wednesday
September 24
7:00 p.m.

Thursday
October 9
7:00 p.m.

Hosted by the MoCo Nonpublic Coalition
for Transitioning Youth



Sheppard Pratt
School

Community School
of Maryland



Scan to Register

9/24/25 Service Providers

Abundant Grace Health Care
Adonai Homecare Services, Inc.
Allied Community Care
Devotion Cares, Inc.
DOOB Community
EvolveCares Services
Jubilee Association
NextGen Health Services
Persons First, Inc.
Verigreen, Inc.

10/9/25 Service Providers

Community Care Development
Services
Heart of Gold, Inc.
Latter Rain, Inc.
Maximum Community
Meadow Haven
Mid Atlantic Resource Services, Inc.
Rock Creek
Unified Community Connections
WeAchieve