Youth in Transition (YIT) Guidebook

Rhode Island Division of Developmental Disabilities

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About This Guidebook

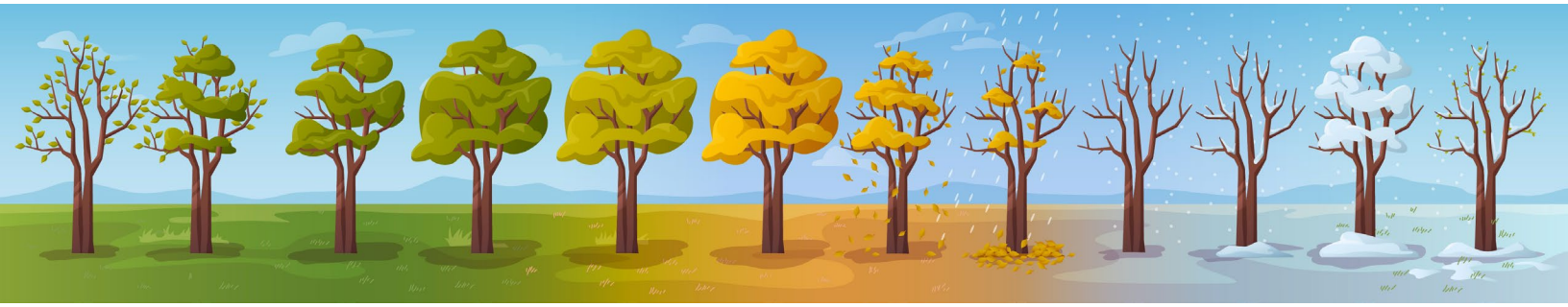
This guidebook explains what **Youth in Transition (YIT)** is all about. The overall goal is to help you—the young person with **intellectual and/or developmental disabilities** (I/DD)—prepare for adult life. This includes things like graduating from high school, getting a job, making friends, being part of your community, exploring your interests, and getting the support you need.

This guidebook focuses on helping you move into adulthood though **Division DD services**. In this guide, you will learn about:

- What it means to transition from childhood to adulthood. This includes what it means to go from child developmental disability (DD) services to adult DD services.
- What adult DD services are like and how you can apply for them.
- Things you can do at certain ages to get ready to transition to adult DD services.
- Other non-Division supports you can explore.
- Tools and resources to help you learn even more about YIT.

This guidebook was created for you—the young person with I/DD who is 14 or older and still in school. You, along with your parent(s), teachers, and other supporters, can use this guide to help you get ready for adulthood.

The transition to adulthood is a major life change! Like with the change of seasons, this time can be both exciting and overwhelming. You are not alone in this process. The Division is here to help you prepare, move through, and complete the transition to adulthood successfully.



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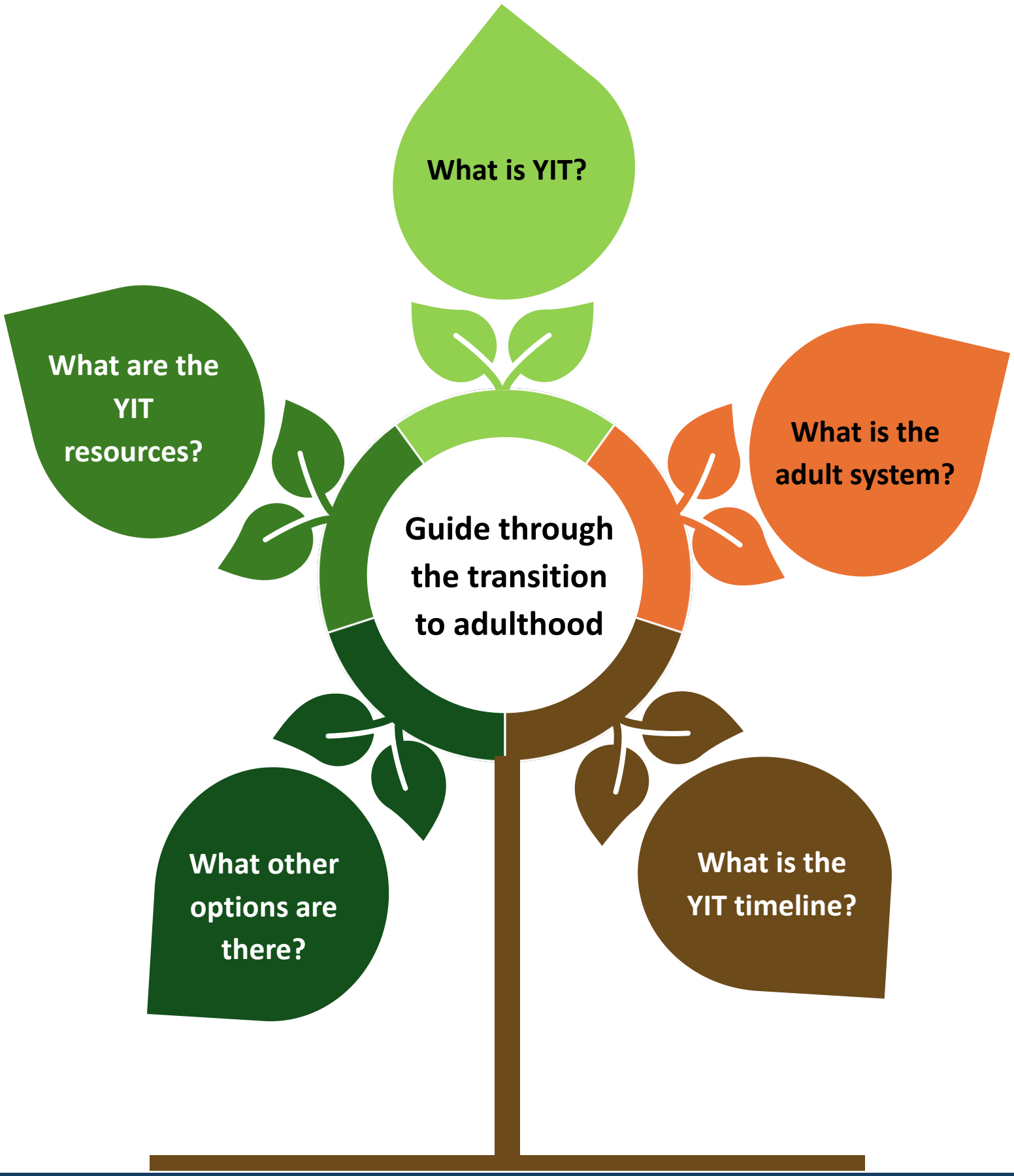
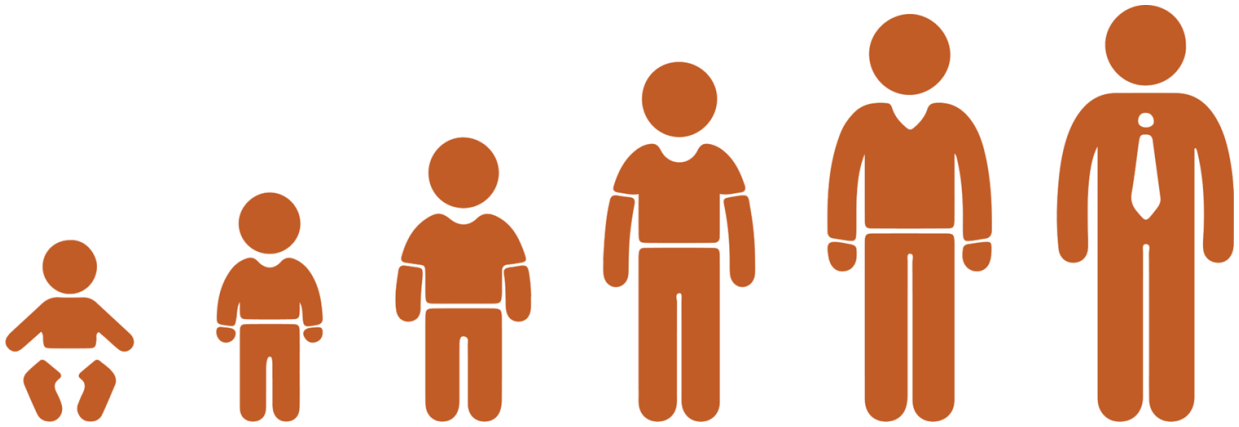


What is Youth in Transition (YIT)?



The word **transition** means to change. Throughout your life, you will go through many different transitions. One important transition is moving from childhood to adulthood. This kind of change doesn't happen overnight — it happens over many years.

During this time, you start to become the main decision-maker in your life instead of your parent(s) or caregiver(s). This means you make more of your own choices, while still being able to ask for help or advice whenever you need it.

This transition includes things like:

- Graduating high school.
- Applying to college.
- Getting hired at a job.
- Finding a new adult primary care doctor.
- Making choices about services and supports to get.
- Moving into a new apartment alone or with a partner or roommate(s).
- Deciding what to do with free time, including who to spend time with.
- Learning how to get around your community using transportation services.

Transitioning to adulthood can be exciting, but it can also feel stressful because of all the new choices **you** will be making. The good news is that **you don't have to do this alone**. The Division offers support to **you** and your family as you move from childhood to adulthood. This support is called **Youth in Transition (YIT)**.

What Are YIT Supports?

Youth In Transition (YIT) supports are available to **you** if you are between the ages of 14 and 22, have **intellectual and/or developmental disabilities** (I/DD), and are still in school. YIT staff work with **you**, your family, and your teacher(s) to help you move from child services into adult **DD services**.

Sharing information and resources

YIT staff work with you by:

- Introducing the adult DD system, service pathways, and service options.
- Explaining the guidelines a person needs to meet to get adult DD services.
- Tips and tools to support life planning.
- Understanding adult responsibilities.

Joining planning meetings

When invited, YIT staff will join your Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. They will help with:

- Setting school and life goals.
- Understanding how to apply for adult DD services.
- Supporting new skills and interests.

Checking in

YIT staff will check-in often with you about the transition. They will:

- Learn about your progress
- Answer your questions and share more resources.
- Keep supporting your new skills and interests.

How to Start YIT?

Youth in Transition (YIT) staff work in different high schools. If you want to learn more about the transition process or what DD offers, you can:

- Ask your teacher to invite DD to your next Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting

Call us at 462-3421 and let us know you'd like to learn more about Transition services

Check out our Youth in Transition page here: https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/transitioning-adult-services

Schools can ask DD to join your IEP meeting. To do this, the school must fill out the online IEP invite form.

Here is the link for the school to send DD the meeting invite: https://tinyurl.com/online-IEP-invite-form

Child vs. Adult DD Services

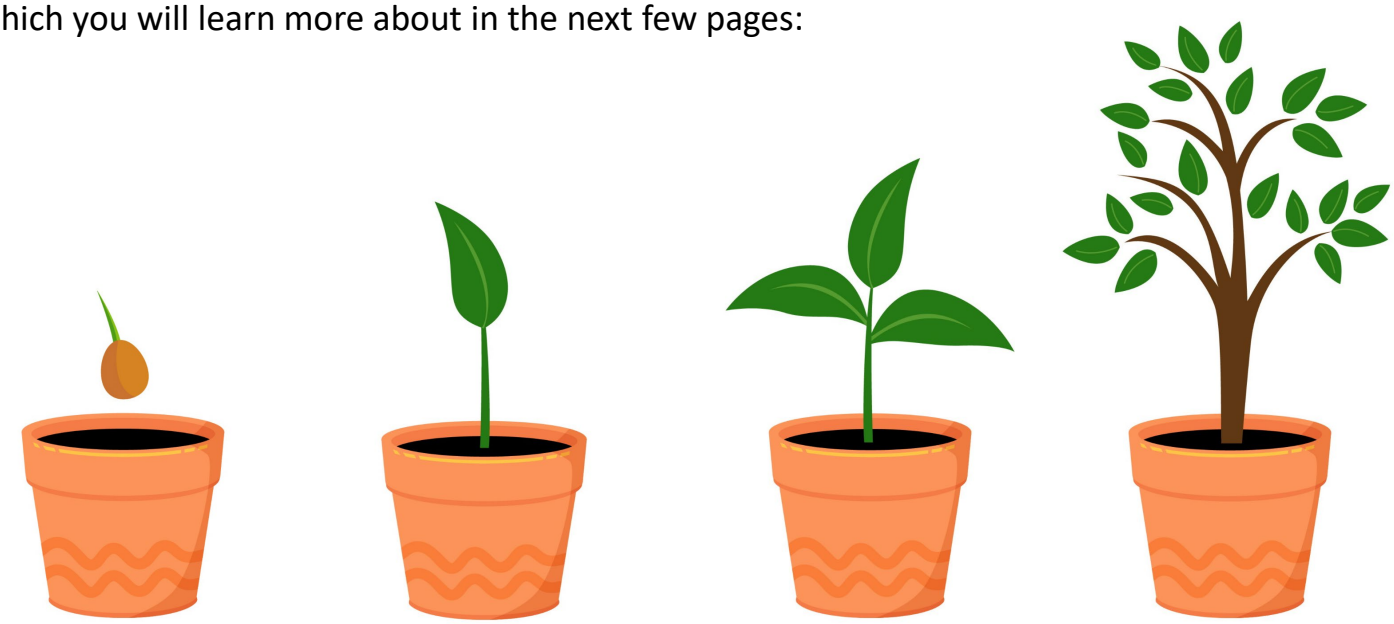
Getting DD services as a child is very different from getting DD services as an adult. Here is an overview of the differences between child and adult DD services.

Child DD Services	Adult DD Services
Focuses on education and meeting child milestones.	Focuses on adult living and employment.
Services funded by the school department.	Community support funded by the Division.
More support in home.	Custom support in the community and in the home.
Work closely with parent(s) or caregiver(s) to make choices.	Work closely with you to make choices.
Structured services managed by the school or child agency.	Individualized services provided through adult agencies or self-directed services.
Single service pathway from school or child agency.	Three service pathway options including self-direct, agency, or hybrid.

Timeline Overview

There are certain things that can be done to prepare for the transition to adult DD services and adult life. These activities change based on your age. These activities may be done by you, your family members, teachers, and/or YIT staff. We will call the age-based activities **phases**.

Everyone will not fit into each phase perfectly. The purpose of the phases are to give people an idea of what to expect and do at certain ages. Here is summary of the phases, which you will learn more about in the next few pages:



Age 14-15

Focus on growing your interests and skills. Start transition assessments and making life choices.

Age 16-17

Start thinking about employment.

Learn what's important for your health. Submit your application for DD services.

Age 18-19

This is a good time to focus on adult life after school. This is a good time to apply for social security and public housing. You could get ready to meet with Division staff.

Age 20-22

Participate in the Division assessments. Start writing your Person-Centered Plan (PCP) and get ready to start adult DD services.

Age 14 to 15

Transition planning starts at age 14. For the first two years of transition planning, the key is for you to start learning more about yourself. From ages 14 to 15, you and your support team can start planning for your future. You can:

Think about your interests and hopes. Connect with family, friends and community members to build interests. Explore activities and opportunities.

Grow self-advocacy skills to better speak up for yourself. Start making more choices, like setting goals and planning how to achieve them.

Work with your teacher(s) to write your yearly Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with goals around:

- Work
- Education and training
- Independent living
- Hobbies and community activities

Start taking transition assessments to find out where you need more support. Progress is reviewed each year during your IEP meeting.

Begin learning about adult DD service options and how to apply for them. This includes learning about the Division, ORS, Medicaid, and more.

Age 16 -17

Much of the work done during the ages of 14 and 15 will continue as you grow older. From age 16 to 17, you, with help from your support system, can also start:

Thinking about employment or work. Begin working with staff from ORS to explore career options and job readiness activities.

Learning even more about adult DD services from the Division. Learn about the 3 service models, including self-direction, agency based, and hybrid models. Learn about the DD service options.

Talking to your doctor about moving from child to adult medical care. Get to know what this change may be like. Ask your doctor to start making a medical summary about your health. This will be helpful as you move to an adult medical provider.

Gathering the documents needed to apply for Division DD services. You can submit your Division application 2-months before your 17th birthday. RIPIN staff can help with the application.

Explore community resources, like the:

RIPIN LINK HERE

- Got Transition family toolkit on health care.
- Center for Transition for Adult Health Care for Youth with Disabilities website.

Age 18-19

Once the you turn 18 years old, you can start doing things to prepare for life after high school. The transition activities you can do will vary depending on whether you decide to:

Leave school before age 22 and start getting adult DD services.

If you choose this option, you can:

- End any child services you get, like PASS or HBTS.
- Work with Division staff or DD Case Manger to:
  - Complete Division assessments.
  - Make adult DD service decisions.

Stay in school but start getting some adult DD services.

If you choose this option, you can:

- End any child services you get until age 21.
- Begin work with Division or ORS staff to:
  - Complete Division assessments
  - Make Adult DD service decisions

Stay in school until age 22 and keep getting child services.

If you choose this option, you can:

- Keep getting child services, like PASS or HBTS until age 21.
- Keep working with your support team to:
  - Update your IEP.
  - Plan for life after school.

There are a few actions the you can take no matter which of the 3 choices you make. You can:

1. Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for financial support.
2. Keep working with your doctor for a medical summary and finding an adult doctor.

As you get closer to starting adult services, you will work with Division staff to complete the assessment process. This is called the 3-step assessment process. You must first have your Division DD service application approved to start this.

Age 20-22

From age 18 to 22, the transition timeline can be different for different people. That is because some may choose to leave school before age 22 others will choose to stay in school until age 22. Due to this, the transition activities listed from age 20 to 22 may be done sooner. Transition activities for you to keep in mind during this time are:

Making sure the Division received and approved your application with all necessary school assessments.

Apply for Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). This is needed to pay for DD services. This is managed by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS). The Division will help you apply for LTSS.

Working with Division staff to complete the assessment process, if you haven't already. The assessment will find your level of need. **Level of need** is how much support you need to complete daily activities and be successful.

Working with a case manager to begin your Person-Centered Plan (PCP). Your PCP explains your goals for the year, how you will work toward them, and the services and supports you choose.

You may also work with ORS to make an employment plan.

Ending child services by age 21, if you haven't already.

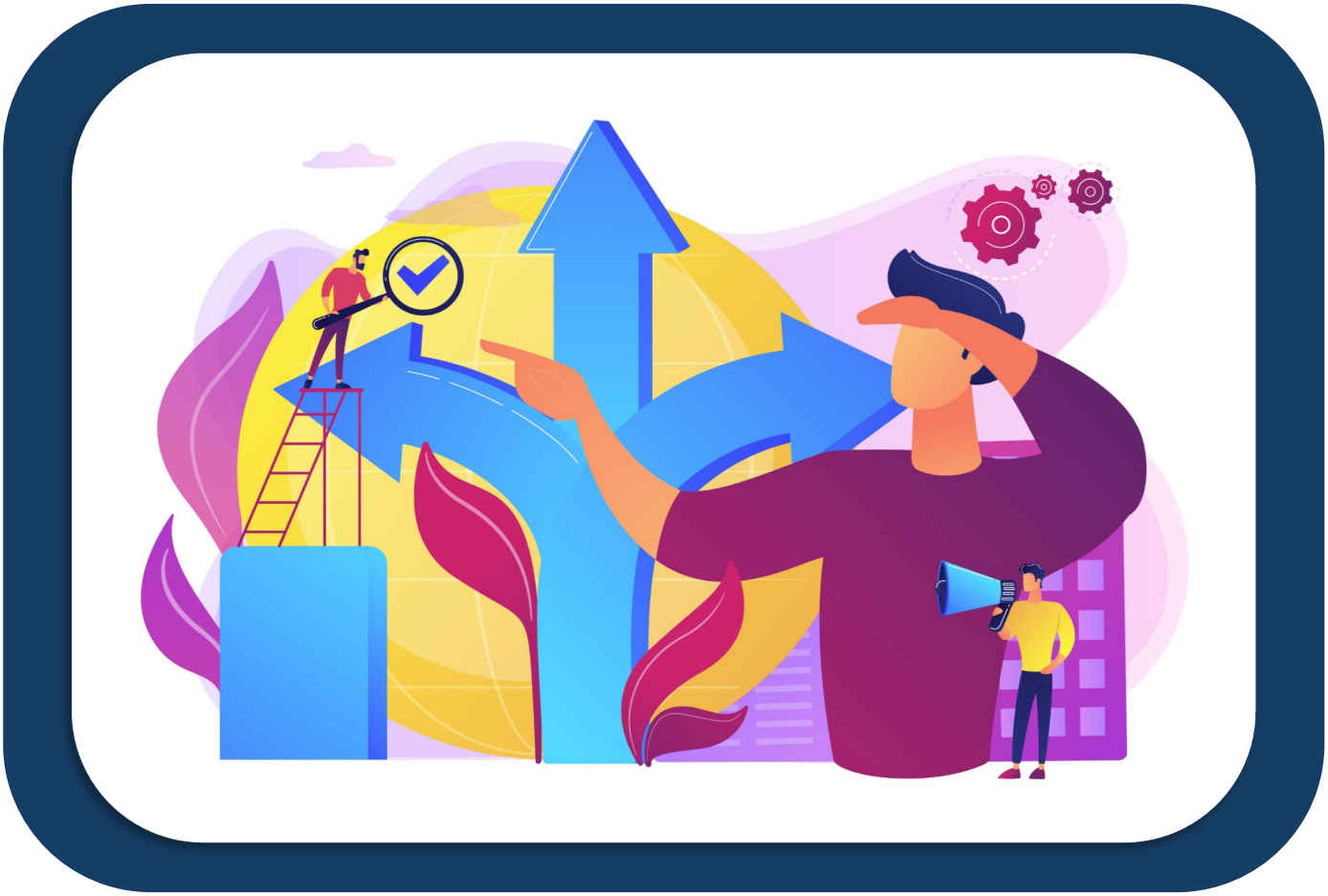
Start adult DD services!

Help Choosing

With so many options to choose from for adult services, it is normal to feel overwhelmed. One important thing to remember is that help is available.

The MyOptions RI website is a great resource to visit. It stores information about different adult service systems, like the Division. It also has an online self-screening tool to help people decide what long-term services may be best for you.

MyOptions RI also offers Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCOC). PCOC helps people explore all available choices to find your best choice. It is a free, short-term service. The counselor will get to know you by asking about your goals, wants, and needs. Then, the counselor will help connect you to resources, supports, and services.



At every stage of the transition, you and your family can find support. You should always be at the center of every conversation and plan. You should be as active as you want to be in setting goals and making choices.

Transition Checklist

Age 14-15	
	Grow interests and hopes. Connect with family, friends, and community members to build interest. Explore activities and opportunities.
	Grow self-advocacy skills. Make more choices, like setting goals and planning how to achieve them.
	Work with teacher(s) to build Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Include goals about work, education, independent living, and hobbies.
	Start transition assessments.
	Start learning about adult DD service options, like those from the Division, ORS, Medicaid and more.
Age 16-17	
	Think more about employment. Start working with ORS to explore career options and training.
	Learn more about adult DD services from the Division. Get help from RIPIN, who will join IEP meetings.
	Talk to doctor about moving to adult medical care and getting a medical summary.
	Apply for adult DD services from the Division. The earliest to apply is 2-months before 17th birthday.
	Explore community resources to learn about the transition from childhood to adult.
Age 18-22	
	Decide when to leave school (before age 22 or stay until age 22). Decide when to end child services and start adult DD services.
	Apply for other supports like SSI and public housing. Learn about Supported Decision Making and alternatives to guardianship.
	If approved for Division services, apply for Medicaid LTSS. Complete the Division's assessment process.
	Identify goals and the services and supports needed to achieve them. Write the year's Person-Centered Plan (PCP). Start adult DD services.

Transition Resources Part 1

Division Resources

- Transitioning To Adult Services webpage
- Eligibility and Application webpage
- Assessment Process webpage
- A Guide to Adult Services from the Rhode Island Division of Developmental Disabilities (PDF)
- Student IEP meeting invite to Division YIT staff

State and Government Resources

- MyOptions RI
- Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCOC)
- Youth Transition Services by the US Department of Labor
- Healthy Transitions And Behavioral Health Guide For Young Adults
- RI Department of Education (RIDE)
- Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)
- Social Security Administration
- Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS)
- State or Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)
- State of Rhode Island, Stay Covered RI
- Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Sherlock Plan

Transition Resources Part 2

Community Resources

- RI Healthy Transitions Program offered by community providers:
    - Community Care Alliance
    - Gateway Healthcare
    - Newport Mental Health
    - The Providence Center
    - Thrive Behavioral Health
- Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) Community Guide
- Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities, Rhode Island College
- Advocates in Action
- Got Transition
- Center for Transition for Adult Health Care for Youth with Disabilities
- The Sargent Center for Supported Decision-Making
- RI Housing
- Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL)
- Think College by the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston

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