6. Independent Living and Community Engagement

- Independent Living Skills Development
- Planning for Future Living Arrangements
- Travel and Transportation
- Recreation and Leisure
- Community Based Experiences
- Faith Based Experiences
- Civic Engagement
- Mental Health Supports
6. Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.1 Independent Living Skill Development
What is independent living skill development?
...Learning how to manage everyday adult responsibilities for life after high school.

6.2 Planning for Future Living Arrangements
What does it mean to plan for future living arrangements?
...Exploring and preparing for your living and housing options after high school.

6.3 Travel and Transportation Skills
What are travel and transportation skills?
...The skills you learn to travel independently and safely in your community.

6.4 Recreation and Leisure
What are recreation and leisure activities?
...Fun events, a club, a group, or sporting event you can participate in with your peers, family, and friends in your community.

6.5 Community Based Experiences
What are community based experiences?
...Opportunities to learn skills in the community to prepare you for work, post-secondary education, and being part of the community.

6.6 Faith Based Experiences
What are faith based experiences?
...Activities organized by a church, synagogue, mosque or other place of worship.

6.7 Civic Engagement
What is civic engagement?
...Activities where you volunteer to help others and organizations in your community.

6.8 Mental Health Supports
What are mental health supports?
...Counseling, therapeutic services, and resources that support your emotional and psychological well-being.
Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.1 Independent Living Skills Development

- Independent Living Skills Development
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- Community Based Experiences
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- Mental Health Supports
What is independent living skill development?
...Learning how to manage everyday adult responsibilities for life after high school.

Ideally, independent living skill development includes...
• Preparing you to take care of yourself
• A chance to learn about how to get along with people
• Helping you plan for where you want to live
• Exploring the types of support that you would like to have
• Living where you want to live, with the supports you want and need
• Having the kind of life you want and deserve

Independent living skill development results in...
• Having a healthy life
• Skills to take care of yourself
• Being able to manage your time to do what you need to do
• Learning how to manage your money and pay your bills
• Being safe where you live

“He still lives at home with us. He’s always talked about moving out. We’ve done a lot of person-centered planning around him, like a PATH process, and he has taken a lot of ownership of that. He does get some in-home supports through the waiver services throughout the week as well. So they continue to help with him with his home goals as far as living on his own, what that looks like for him at home and then out in the community, doing all kinds of activities. He goes to the gym every day. He loves to work out.”

Family of transition-age youth
Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.2 Planning for Future Living Arrangements

- Independent Living Skills Development
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- Recreation and Leisure
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- Faith Based Experiences
- Community Based Experiences
- Faith Based Experiences
What does it mean to plan for future living arrangements?

...Exploring and preparing for your living and housing options after high school.

Ideally, planning for future living arrangements includes...

- Learning how to ask for help, make decisions, and solve problems
- Learning skills to live on your own, such as managing your healthcare and medicine, and being safe in your home
- Understanding how to budget, manage your money, and use banks
- Exploring living options focused on where you want to live
- Identifying supports to help you succeed

Planning for future living arrangements results in...

- Having a plan for where you want to live based upon your dreams and goals
- Developing the skills to access the supports and live where you want to live after high school
- Being able to make decisions and manage your living arrangements with supports

“After high school, I want to make sure everything’s planned: going to college, living on my own, and then finding a job.”

Transition-age youth
Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.3 Travel and Transportation

- Independent Living Skills Development
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- Mental Health Supports

Recreation and Leisure
What are travel and transportation skills?
...The skills you learn to travel independently and safely in your community.

Ideally, travel and transportation skills include...

- Partnerships with transit authorities and services where you can access transportation
- Learning how to safely use the local public transit system
- Opportunities to learn how to drive
- Creative approaches to identify transportation options that work best for you
- Learning how to manage your time so that you can get to work and appointments on time
- Becoming aware of and getting around in your community

Travel and transportation skills result in...

- Having reliable sources of transportation
- Skills to access transportation
- Knowing how to use transportation safely
- Getting around in your community

“Well, I have people helping me with my goals for the future. Like my peer-support, through the PA Mentor Network. She comes Mondays. Our goal is to get me independent and taking the Lanta Van. I never rode the bus alone, but I’m going to have someone, my peer support going with me. There’s a program I used to do called ICT, Independent Community Travel, it’s through the IU. That’s where we also learned the Lanta Bus, you learn street crossing; like the traffic lights, the signs that tell you when to walk and not walk. I did okay with it.”

Transition-age youth
Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.4 Recreation and Leisure

- Independent Living Skills Development
- Planning for Future Living Arrangements
- Travel and Transportation
- Community Based Experiences
- Faith Based Experiences
- Civic Engagement
- Mental Health Supports
- Recreation and Leisure

TRANSITION DISCOVERIES

HOME
What are recreation and leisure activities?

...Fun events, a club, a group, or sporting event you can participate in with your peers, family, and friends in your community.

Ideally, recreation and leisure activities...

- Help you learn how to get along with others and build friendships
- Help you find out and connect with fun activities that you like to do
- Include you in events, activities, and programs available to everyone in your community

Recreation and leisure result in...

- Time for you to be with peers and friends to relax and have fun
- Making friends

“I like to run. I did track last year. I’m thinking about continuing it through this year and next year. And maybe my senior year.”

Transition-age youth

“I’m always doing something, doing anything: Basketball, best buddies, swimming, bowling, I have too many, I can’t name them all.”

Transition-age youth
Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.5 Community Based Experiences

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- Faith Based Experiences
- Community Based Experiences
What are community based experiences?

... Opportunities to learn skills in the community to prepare you for work, post-secondary education, and being part of the community.

Ideally, community based experiences...

• Are designed based upon your dreams, interests, and goals
• Are arranged by you, your family, and your transition team
• Help you learn to get along with others and make connections
• Build in supports to help you succeed
• Happen in your community with others
• Include volunteering and service opportunities

Community based experiences result in...

• Developing skills to communicate and get along with others
• Learning about yourself so that you can plan for work, school, and being part of your community after high school

“We help people find jobs. There really are a lot of opportunities out there that can really help youth be a meaningful part of their communities. It’s a lot of planning and thinking and I think one of the things I figured out most is having conversations and saying, ‘What do you want to do?’ That’s really overwhelming, it’s not meaningful, and you’re not going to get a great answer out of that. And we’ve had really nice experiences, where we’ve partnered with some schools and we get the students out of the schools and actually trying different jobs out in the community so they can actually do it and see if they like it. Because it’s very different than sitting in the classroom, talking about it rather than experiencing it.”

Transition professional
What are faith based experiences?

...Activities organized by a church, synagogue, mosque or other place of worship.

Ideally, faith based experiences...

• Help you learn about your faith
• Build your character to be a good person
• Develop your understanding, acceptance, and compassion for others
• Provide a safe place where you can build trusting relationships and friendships

Faith based experiences address...

• Spirituality
• Friendships
• Being part of your community

“The Friendship Circle is an inclusive group that’s run primarily by the Jewish community. They have all sorts of social programming and it really brings in peers and individuals with various disabilities. You can pick and choose the programs you want to attend. And it’s to this point been free and they have like a bowling league on Sundays. Most of it is on Sundays, some of them are Wednesday nights. It might provide an opportunity for your child to connect with other people. And so the activities are all geared to be welcoming to everyone and there’s no pressure and it’s an easy place for my son to go because he doesn’t feel pressured to perform. If he doesn’t want to, that’s okay. If he wants to, that’s great. It’s always about the person and I think that’s what makes it a wonderful organization to be involved in.”

Family of transition-age youth
Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.7 Civic Engagement

- Independent Living Skills Development
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- Civic Engagement
What is civic engagement?
...Activities where you volunteer to help others and organizations in your community.

Ideally, civic engagement...

- Includes community clubs, organizations, schools, social groups, and faith based organizations
- Includes people in your community who have similar interests
- Promotes learning about yourself
- Helps you give back to others
- Gives you a sense of pride in your work
- Helps you vote and have a voice in government

Civic engagement addresses...

- Service learning
- Work skills
- Friendships
- Voting
- Building a sense of belonging and value in your community

“I was a part of a bunch of different clubs, too. I did some volunteer clubs. I did some leadership based stuff. I worked. So I did like a bunch of things, I was in something called leadership club. We did volunteer events and planned things for youth throughout our area. I also worked part-time after school. So it was just like one of the many things I did.”

Transition-age youth
Independent Living and Community Engagement

6.8 Mental Health Supports

- Independent Living Skills Development
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- Community Based Experiences
- Faith Based Experiences
- Civic Engagement
What are mental health supports?  
...Counseling, therapeutic services, and resources that support your emotional and psychological well-being.  

**Ideally, mental health supports...**

- Meet you where you are  
- Provide a safe, trusting environment where you can learn about yourself  
- Help you learn how to talk about and manage your emotions  
- Prepare you to engage with new people and in new experiences

**Mental health supports address...**

- Your mental health needs  
- Your confidence and sense of belonging  
- Goal-setting

“Several counties have drop-in centers for youth and young adults that are in mental health recovery. Those have proven to be successful. Peer support services and psychiatric rehabilitation services are very helpful for youth and young adults because many times they haven’t mastered certain developmental assets and so they don’t have the skills for independent living. So, psych rehab really goes back and teaches people those skills.”

*Transition professional*