

Things you can do to prepare your son or daughter to live independently:

- If your child collects income from wages and/or Social Security, it may be a good idea to put together a monthly budget. This will allow them to see exactly how their money is being spent. It will allow them to have an opinion and will show responsibility. This may also paint a realistic view of how expensive it may be to live independently and how important it is to plan ahead for expenses. It may also be a good idea to allow them to be responsible for making the payments on their cell phone or bus pass, etc.
- As a family, discuss a specific dollar amount your child may be encouraged to pay for their room and board in your home. This will also paint a realistic view of the responsibility of paying for non-negotiables such as rent and food when choosing to live independently.
- Practicing basic cooking, kitchen safety, and possibly having your child be responsible for preparing 1-2 family meals each week. Assist with looking up recipes, simplifying recipes, creating a grocery list, and setting a dollar amount for ingredients that may need to be purchased at the store. Encourage your child to use a calculator to stay on budget!
- Discuss possible activities your child may be responsible for as they live in your home, such as doing their own laundry, picking up groceries, cooking a family meal, taking out the garbage, etc.
- Search for affordable housing options and add your name to open wait lists! Finding affordable housing can take up to 3 years in some cases. Discuss the possibility of roommates, what qualities your child would like in a roommate, what can they afford, and in what location are they open to looking?
- Help your child take responsibility for managing their own medications (with your oversight if you are concerned). Encourage your child to call in refills and pick up prescriptions; help your child understand side effects, dosage instructions, why are they taking this medication, and when they will be out of the medication.
- Encourage your child to find healthy outlets! Volunteer opportunities, internships, jobs, attending a community college class, day programs, and other social activities and groups are beneficial to maximize your child's independence and foster positive self-esteem! Look at local city and organizations' websites for activities that may be offered in your community.
- Practice safety drills routinely, such as what to do if there were a fire, hurricane, break in, or other crisis or disaster situation. Teach your child when to call 9-1-1 and how to remain calm during an emergency. Create a family disaster plan!
- Speak with your child's Transition teachers and local Case Managers to learn about independent living services and determine whether independent living fits your child's needs.