

The Halton Catholic District School Board's Family Transition Guide

Navigating the journey for students with a Developmental Disability



Achieving Believing Belonging



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Transitions: What do we know?

Transitions: What do we know?

There are several key transition times in the educational journey from kindergarten to a post-secondary pathway. Transitions are often a time of excitement, anticipation, and in many times feelings of anxiety. Planning for transitions is essential. It is important that it be part of an ongoing process built upon positive, collaborative and honest relationships between a family, the school and community partners.

Together, this team identifies a young person's strengths, needs, interests and talents. Using this information, they create a vision for the future and work together to create a plan, outlining proposed actions and the supports needed along the way. This resource provides a guide to the processes and partnerships involved in successful transition planning.

Families at Home

Families at Home

The desired outcome for all young people is success in realizing their hopes and dreams for the future. For students with developmental disabilities, the **functional skills** they have developed, and their overall **level of independence** determine the outcome of the journey, which typically involves one or more of the following pathways:



On the home front, it is very important to help your child develop and work on goals that build independent living skills and encourage involvement in the community. Opportunities for skill building and fostering independence include:

- Clubs and sports
- School and community events
- Volunteerism
- In-school jobs or co-op placements
- Community groups
- Practicing introductions and greetings
- Working on hygiene skills

- Helping with table setting, meal/snack preparation, and packing a lunch
- Assisting with laundry, cleaning, garbage, and dishes
- Having a bank account and learning how to budget money
- Making appointments
- Learning to take public transportation
- Making plans to go to the movies or shopping
- Navigating the neighborhood independently
- Practicing communication skills
- Expressing wants and needs

Your child's level of **skills development** and **independence** will help determine the number of post-secondary options available to your child as they transition to adulthood. Therefore, facilitating as many of these activities as possible will help you to assess what future destinations are most appropriate for your child. Please see [Post-Secondary Pathways for Students with Developmental Disabilities \(Appendix F\)](#) to learn more about these pathways.

It is important to know that you are not in this alone! Please remember that community agencies and your child's school play an important role in assisting with your child's transition to adulthood. Working together leads to the highest level of success.

Community Partners

Community Partners

There are several community agencies that offer support to individuals with a developmental disability and their families. Local agencies that support children with a diagnosis are active partners in the transition planning process. While your child is in elementary school, and as you are starting to consider the transition to high school, it is helpful to connect with these agencies to determine services and supports they may provide. Note: If you have not yet received services from any of these agencies, you can contact them at any time for support moving forward!

Halton Support Services (HSS):



Halton Support Services is a community service for people with developmental disabilities who live in the Halton Region. Funded by the *Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services*, it offers the following services to families with children under the age of 18:

- 1) **Coordinated Intake for Children with Developmental Disabilities in Halton**
 - Initial contact point for children up to the age of 18 years and their families who are interested in accessing services, resources and support from the children's developmental services sector in Halton.

- 2) **Children's Service Coordination**
 - Assist families who have a child with a developmental disability.
 - Assist with coordination of services and future planning.
 - Provide information and education on support services within the community.

- 3) **Transfer Payment Agency for the *Special Services at Home Program***
 - Administer funds authorized by the *Special Services at Home Program* for children.
 - Provide families and/or caregivers the option to have funds paid to either the worker or the family.
 - Assist in the delivery of the *Special Services at Home Program*. For more information, please contact:

[Halton Support Services](#)

53 Bond Street, Oakville, ON L6K 1L8

P: (905) 844-7864

T: 1-800-600-2013



Community Living Organizations:

Community Living Organizations provide a wide range of support services to children, youth, and adults who have developmental disabilities. For more information, you may contact the Community Living Organization in your region:



3057 Mainway Drive
Burlington, ON L7M 1A1
(905) 336-2225
<https://www.clburlington.ca>



917-B Nipissing Road
Milton, ON L9T 5E3
(905) 878-2337
<https://clnh.on.ca/>



301 Wyecroft Road
Oakville, ON L6K 2H2
(905) 844-0146
<https://oakcl.org/>

School Years

School Years

Entry into Kindergarten

The start of school is an exciting time for every family. Our *Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB)* schools offer a full-day, 2-year Kindergarten program, engaging early learners through various types of play that help children learn how to reason and problem-solve as they interact with one another. Learn more about the Kindergarten Program in Ontario by visiting the [Ministry of Education's](#) website.

If your child is entering Kindergarten for the first time, you can begin the process by registering online. Visit: [Register Your Child](#) for more details. If you have a child with special education needs, it is important to share this information during the registration process. You will then receive a *Special Needs Registration Package*. Once completed, the school team will work with you to ensure a positive transition that is personalized to meet your child's unique strengths and needs. Important steps include:

- Attending the *HCDSB Parent Information Meeting for Students with Special Needs Entering the Kindergarten Program*.
- Sharing information about your child's strengths, interests and needs.
- Facilitating **observation visits**.
- Attending **case conferences**.
- Creating an **entry plan**.

The following is a list of sample questions to guide you in conversations with the school team:

Are there any support materials that would help my child get ready for the entry to Kindergarten?

What types of orientation activities are available to support my child?

Will the structure and/or length of my child's school day need to be adjusted to support their special needs?

Will the play-based programming be adjusted as needed to meet my child's special needs?

Who will support my child's learning?

Will transportation be provided for my child?

Is there a before and after school program available for my child?

How do outside agencies such as Community Living, Halton Support Services, and Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), etc. work with the school team and family?

Please see [Questions to Support the Transition to Kindergarten \(Appendix A\)](#) to access a printable version of this for use at meetings.

During Elementary School

At HCDSB, students with a developmental disability typically transition over time to an *Individual Education Plan (IEP)* with alternative programming in these areas:

- Communication: **Literacy**
- Communication: **Numeracy**
- **Daily Living** (or Daily Living and Employability)
- **Social Skills**

A customized program focused on developing a child's skills and level of independence will influence the number of opportunities available at the post-secondary level. For more information about the *IEP* and all other special education services, you may contact your child's school or visit [HCDSB Special Education](#) online.

The beginning of a new school year, along with consistent reporting periods provide opportunities for a family, school personnel and community partners to review programming, progress and updates for your child's learning plans. The information compiled by home and school staff also enables you to assess what future pathways are most appropriate for your child.

Important steps during elementary school years include:

- Participating in the **IEP consultation process**.
- Sharing any new information about your child's strengths, interests and needs as they arise.
- Attending interviews, reviewing progress at reporting periods and participating in goal setting for each new term.
- Providing input and supporting a transition plan to facilitate your child's transition to the next grade.

The following is a list of possible questions to guide you in conversations with the school during grade-to-grade transitions and at reporting times.

*Could you tell me about my child's day so I can understand what it looks like?
Are any changes expected during the course of this year? What will it look like next year?*



What programming goals has my child achieved to this point? Are there any goals being worked on at home or in the community that can be shared with the school to inform IEP programming?

Who currently supports my child? What is the plan for moving forward?

Are there any new assessment results that can be considered for potential inclusion on the most current IEP? Possibilities include medical/health assessments (vision, hearing and physical); speech/language assessments; occupational therapy/physiotherapy assessments; and behavioural or psychological assessments.

What pathway is envisioned for my child based on their abilities?

Are there any updates from community partners that should be shared?

Considering the information being discussed, what updates are required on my child's IEP transition plan in terms of changes needed to the recording of "action items", "responsibility of", and "timeline for completion"?

What can I do at home to support the IEP goals?

Please see [Questions to Support Elementary Grade-to-Grade Transitions \(Appendix B\)](#) to access a printable version of this for use at meetings.

Transitioning to Secondary School

You may begin to ask yourself, *when is the right time to start considering the transition to high school?* It is important to start discussing future programming and potential pathways once your child reaches the junior division and in both Grades 7 and 8.

At this time, integrated transition planning is initiated, which identifies all the important steps along the way that will support your child's transitions through secondary school and out into the community. The [HCDSB Integrated Transition Planning Checklist for Students with Developmental Disabilities \(Appendix C\)](#) is provided to support and document this process.

Working with school administrators, your child's teacher and the special education staff at the elementary school will be integral in guiding your child's transition to secondary school. The steps to this process will involve the following:

- **Transition meeting(s)** attended by you, elementary and secondary staff, administration, board staff and any involved community partners.
- **Orientation visits** for your child at their secondary school.



- **Information sessions** or **open houses** hosted by the secondary school.
- An **Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting** at the end of your child's Grade 8 year to change your child's placement to one that is appropriate for secondary school programming.

This is indeed an important turning point for you and your child. **Do not hesitate to ask questions!** The following is a list of possible questions to guide you in conversations with your child's secondary school.



Questions to Support the Transition to High School

What will the structure of my child's day be like in secondary school? How are classes scheduled/chosen?

What types of courses will my child take? For example: literacy, numeracy, art, gym, culinary, tech classes, and co-op placements?

Will my child be able to earn credits?

Will my child receive an OSSD, an OSSC or Certificate of Accomplishment?

What types of supports will be available in the school setting for my child?

What is the policy regarding transportation?

How many years may my child attend high school?

How do you support me in working with outside agencies such as Community Living, Halton Support Services, LHIN, etc.?

Please see: [Questions to Support the Transition to Secondary School \(Appendix D\)](#) to access a printable version of this for use at meetings.

During Secondary School

At home, you and your child have been busy developing skills and fostering independence. The role of the secondary school is to support this important work through programming based on your **child's strengths, needs, abilities and interests**.

Overtime, consistent reviews of the information collected by home, school and community partners will help determine which future pathway directions are the best fit for your child.

Throughout these busy years, it will be important for the team to:

- Establish and maintain an **ongoing mode of sharing information**.



- Discuss how your child can be part of the “life of the school” as well as the local community. Which activities, programs, teams and clubs are available and appropriate?
- Regularly **discuss, share and update goals** and a **vision** for the future.
- Work in collaboration to discuss alternative vs. credit-earning programming and get clarification on the appropriate option. **Together, develop a plan!**
- Consider programming that is important to post-secondary pathways. Will your child engage in world-of-work activities in class, in-school co-op, or community co-op? How do community agencies assist in facilitating these processes?

Engage in **Individual Education Plan (IEP) development** and ongoing review. Involve your child in these meetings as appropriate.

Questions for you and the team to consider during these conversations may include the following:

Are there any new assessment results that could be considered for potential inclusion on the most current IEP? Possibilities include: medical/health assessments (vision, hearing and physical); speech/language assessments; occupational therapy/physiotherapy assessments; and behavioural or psychological assessments.

What programming goals has my child achieved to this point? Are there any goals being worked on at home or in the community that the school can use to update on IEP programming, considering both classroom and co-op (if applicable) data?

Is my child’s envisioned pathway trajectory on track and appropriate to their abilities or does this require further discussion considering the programming goals and outcomes discussed above?

What is the update from community partners on their current and future role in my child’s transition to adult life?

Considering the information being discussed, what updates are required on the student’s IEP transition plan in terms of changes needed to the recording of “action items”, “responsibility of”, and “timeline for completion”?

Please see [Questions to Support Secondary Grade-to-Grade Transitions \(Appendix E\)](#) to access a printable version of this for use at meetings.

Secondary school is an important time to connect with *Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)* and the *Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)*, which are



two community partners that are critical in supporting your child's transition to adult life.

Contact Developmental Services Ontario



Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) helps adults with developmental disabilities access services and supports in their communities. DSO will make referrals to appropriate adult

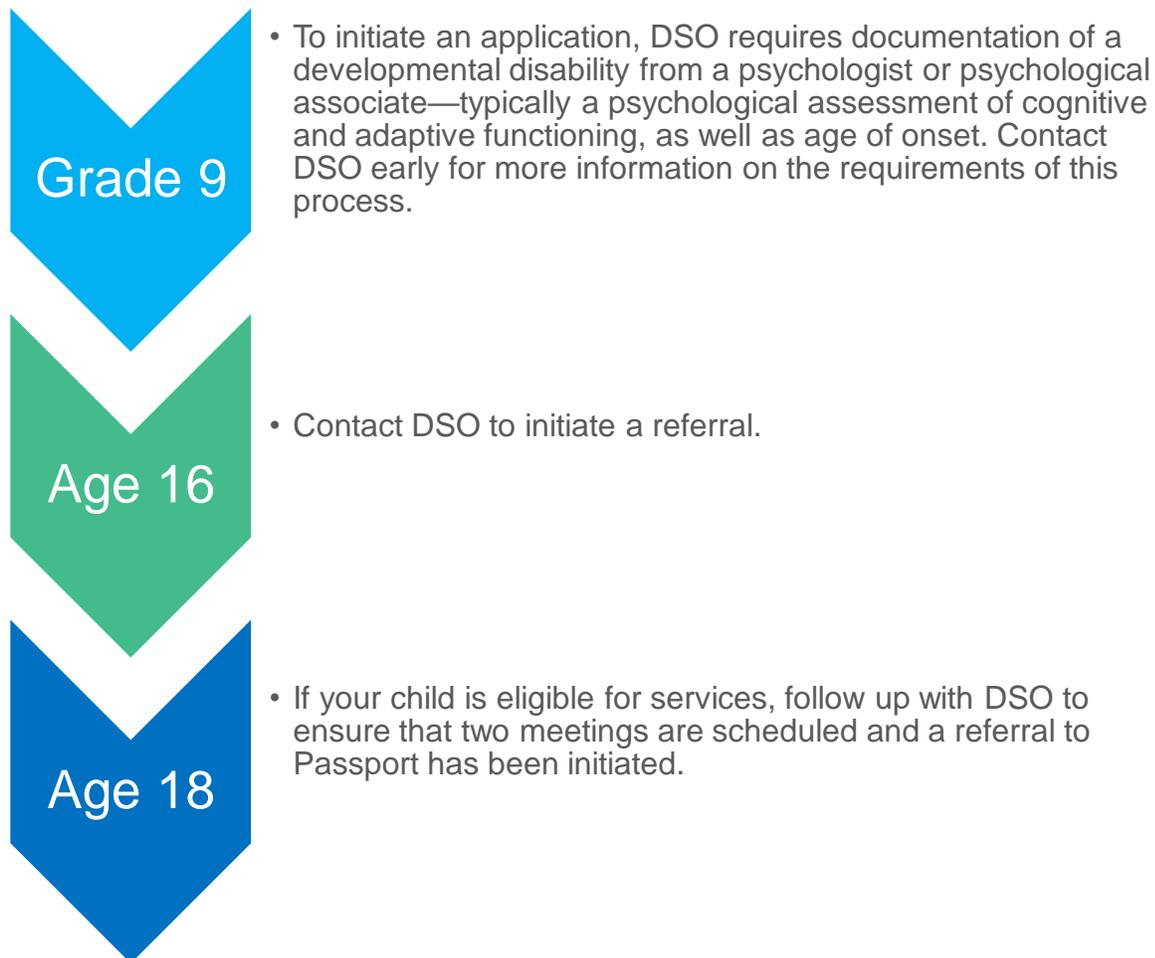
services/agencies on behalf of your child when they are 18 years of age.

Funded by the *Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)*, DSO is a very important resource as it provides support in accessing:

- Residential services;
- Caregiver respite;
- Community participation supports (recreation, volunteering, employment, or in-home supports);
- Professional and specialized services;
- Person-directed planning;
- Passport funding;
- Other supports and services to help people with developmental disabilities become more involved in their communities!

It is important to note that while accessing services through DSO begins at 18 years of age, it involves an **application process** that you are recommended to **begin to prepare for as your child enters secondary school**.

Here are some important components of this journey:



For more information on this important process, contact DSO toll-free at: 1–888–941–1121 or contact the Halton office directly at: 905-876-1373. Visit their online website for the [DSO Central West office](#) for more details.

Apply to The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

ODSP provides a monthly financial income for adults 18+ with disabilities.

ODSP offers two types of support:

1. **Income support:** Financial assistance provided each month to help with the costs of basic needs, such as food, clothing and shelter. Income support also includes benefits such as drug coverage and vision care for clients and their eligible family members.
2. **Employment supports:** Services and supports to help clients with disabilities find and keep a job and advance their careers.

Contact ODSP when your child is 17½ years of age to begin the application for monthly financial income. You may contact [ODSP directly](#) for more information on eligibility and application requirements.

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Ontario Disability Support Program

Income and Employment Supports

2180 Itabashi Way, Unit #1, Building B

Burlington ON L7M 5A5

Tel: (905) 637-4500

Toll Free: 1-800-567-6388

[ODSP Website](#)



Transitioning from Secondary School to Adult Life

The final year of secondary school highlights the start of a new pathway in life. Planning for this pivotal time is an ongoing process built upon collaborative and honest relationships between your child, now a young adult, along with your family, your school and community partners. As a result, a profile of both **skills acquired**, and your child's **level of independence** has developed over the years. In the final year of secondary school, a pathway profile comprised of one or more of the following becomes clear:



There is a lot to consider and regardless of which pathway you and your young adult choose to focus on, you will need to consider these questions:

What qualifications/criteria are required for this destination?

What documentation will be needed to access this option?

What supports and services need to be accessed right now in order to succeed?

What additional ongoing supports will be required for an adult with special needs?

Please visit the *HCDSB Community Pathways* section of [myBlueprint](#) to access a list of websites that can assist you in researching supports and services in your local community for the next phase of your child's journey. For assistance to log in to [myBlueprint](#), please contact your child's teacher directly.

Appendices

Appendix A: Questions to Support the Transition to Kindergarten

Question	Notes
Are there any support materials that would help my child get ready for the entry to Kindergarten?	
What types of orientation activities are available to support my child?	
Will the structure and/or length of my child's school day need to be adjusted to support their special needs?	
Will the play-based programming be adjusted as needed to meet my child's special needs?	
Who will support my child's learning?	
Will transportation be provided for my child?	
Is there a before and after school program available for my child?	
How do outside agencies such as Community Living, Halton Support Services, and Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), etc. work with the school team and family?	

Appendix B: Questions to Support Elementary Grade-to-Grade Transitions

Question	Notes
<p>Could you tell me about my child’s day so I can understand what it looks like? Are any changes expected during the course of this year? What will it look like next year?</p>	
<p>What programming goals has my child achieved to this point? Are there any goals being worked on at home or in the community that can be shared with the school to inform IEP programming?</p>	
<p>Who currently supports my child? What is the plan for moving forward?</p>	
<p>Are there any new assessment results that can be considered for potential inclusion on the most current IEP? Possibilities include: medical/health assessments (vision, hearing and physical); speech/language assessments; occupational therapy/physiotherapy assessments; and behavioural or psychological assessments.</p>	
<p>What pathway trajectory is envisioned for my child based on their abilities?</p>	
<p>Are there any updates from community partners that should be shared?</p>	
<p>Considering the information being discussed, what updates are required on my child’s IEP transition plan in terms of changes needed to the recording of “action items”, “responsibility of”, and “timeline for completion”?</p>	
<p>What can I do at home to support the IEP goals?</p>	

Appendix C: HCDSB Integrated Transition Planning Checklist for Students with Developmental Disabilities

Timeline	Item	Who is Responsible?	Completed ✓
Age 13	Start documenting your child's acquisition of functional skills, overall levels of independence and personal interests.	Parents and student	
	Create a file for medical, educational, psychological and any other relevant reports.	Parents	
Age 14	Contact <i>Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)</i> regarding documentation required to initiate an application—typically a psychological assessment of cognitive and adaptive functioning, as well as age of onset.	Parents	
	Begin the process of updating assessment if needed.	Parents or in some cases, school or community partners	
	Identify members of current team supporting the student.	Parents, school and community partners	
	Develop an inventory of student's strengths, needs and interests	Student, parents, school and/or community partners	
	Initiate Integrated Transition Planning Process.	Parents choose school or community partner as lead	
	Identify goals for the IEP Transition Plan that are consistent with the student's strengths, needs and projected pathway. Transitions can be either long or short-term and categorized as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry to School 	Parents, student, school and community partners	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class to Class • Grade to Grade • School to School • Elementary to Secondary • School to Community • School to Work • Secondary to Post-Secondary 		
	Become well versed in community agencies and support services in the community.	Parents, school, and community partners	
Age 15	Review Transition Plan goals planned at age 14. Determine any changes required to support the projected pathway.	Parents, student, school and community partners	
	Apply for your child's Social Insurance Number (SIN) to enable future application to the <i>Ontario Disability Support Network (ODSP)</i> .	Parents	
Age 16	Review Transition Plan goals planned at age 15. Determine any changes required to support the projected pathway.	Parents, student, school and community partners	
	Contact <i>Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)</i> to initiate a referral.	Parents	
Age 17	Review Transition Plan goals planned at age 16. Determine any changes required to support the projected pathway.	Parents, student, school and community partners	
	Apply for the <i>Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)</i> at age 17.5	Parents	
Age 18-21	Continue to review and update Transition Plan goals on a yearly basis (or more as required). Utilize the HCDSB School-to-Community Checklist in final year for detailed instructions on the student's final transition into the community	Parents, student, school and community partners	

Appendix D: Questions to Support the Transition to Secondary School

Question	Notes
What will the structure of my child's day be like in secondary school? How are classes scheduled/chosen?	
What types of courses will my child take? For example: literacy, numeracy, art, gym, culinary, tech classes, and co-op placements?	
Will my child be able to earn credits?	
Will my child receive an OSSD, an OSSC or Certificate of Accomplishment?	
What types of supports will be available in the school setting for my child?	
What is the policy regarding transportation?	
How many years may my child attend secondary school?	
How do you support me in working with outside agencies such as Community Living, Halton Support Services, LHIN, etc.?	

Appendix E: Questions to Support Secondary Grade-to-Grade Transitions

Question	Notes
<p>Are there any new assessment results that could be considered for potential inclusion on the most current IEP? Possibilities include medical/health assessments (vision, hearing and physical); speech/language assessments; occupational therapy/physiotherapy assessments; and behavioural or psychological assessments.</p>	
<p>What programming goals has my child achieved to this point? Are there any goals being worked on at home or in the community, that the school can use to update on IEP programming, considering both classroom and co-op (if applicable) data.</p>	
<p>Is my child’s envisioned pathway trajectory on track and appropriate to their abilities or does this require further discussion considering the programming goals outcomes discussed above?</p>	
<p>What is the update from community partners on their current and future roles in my child’s transition to adult life?</p>	
<p>Considering the information being discussed, what updates are required on the student’s IEP transition plan in terms of changes needed to the recording of “action items”, “responsibility of”, and “timeline for completion”?</p>	

Appendix F: Post-Secondary Pathways for Students with Developmental Disabilities

1. Support at Home

Pathway Description:

This pathway is appropriate for individuals with a developmental disability who require an intensive level of support given their complex cognitive and/or medical needs. Typically, individuals with this profile would be supported at home or in a residential setting that provides 24/7 support. Respite and community supports, which may include personal support workers and/or community nursing, are generally required.

Approximate Support Ratio 1:1 – 1:5

Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)

Transition Considerations:

- Discuss the community partners' roles in helping to facilitate the transition from life at school to life at home.
- Discuss any community involvements that may be appropriate for your child and supports that are required.
- Determine if school-provided transition materials or countdown calendars would be helpful in preparation for the transition to life at home.
- Discuss any OT/PT/nursing supports required and process for submission of paperwork required through the *Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)*.

2. Community Involvement

Pathway Description:

Community involvement serves as a distinct pathway if it is the focus of promoting activity outside of the home. This would be the case if volunteering is a desired and appropriate outcome. Community involvement in the form of social groups, community sports, clubs and Special Olympics can also serve as a benefit to young adults at various ages.

Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)

Transition Considerations:

- Provide updates on any current community involvement your child will maintain, and any new ones being pursued. For example, volunteer placements, social groups, community sports, clubs, and/or Special Olympics.
- Discuss the community partners' role in helping to facilitate these goals.
- Review any plans for potential transition visits if community involvements are site specific.

- Determine if school-provided transition materials or countdown calendars would be helpful in preparation for any site-specific locations.

3. Day Programs

Pathway Description:

Level One: This pathway is appropriate for individuals with a developmental disability who have greater success with a moderate level of support. These individuals can complete some tasks independently for short periods of time in a safe, familiar location. They are often dependent on routine, and may require assistance to complete tasks related to self-care and daily living. With support, they can safely and productively join a low-ratio day program on a regular basis.

Approximate Support Ratio 1:5-1:8

Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)

Level Two: This pathway is appropriate for individuals with a developmental disability who have greater success with a minimal level of support. Typically, individuals with this profile would be best suited to an environment that provides support to perform daily living skills such as food preparation and laundry, but also allows for greater independence. These individuals would display the ability to attend a high ratio day program or volunteer with minimal support in the community.

Approximate Support Ratio 1:8 – 1:16

Respite/Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)

Transition Considerations:

- Provide updates on your investigation of potential or confirmed day program placements for next year.
- Discuss the community partners' role in helping to facilitate this day program placement.
- Review any plans for potential transition visits to day program location.
- Determine if school-provided transition materials or countdown calendars would be helpful in preparation for the day program.
- Discuss any OT/PT/nursing supports required and process for submission of paperwork required through the LHIN.

4. Employment

Pathway Description:

This pathway is appropriate for people with a developmental disability who have greater success with a minimal level of support. Typically, individuals with this profile would be best suited to an environment that provides support to perform daily living skills such as grocery shopping, banking and personal health care, but also allows for independence. These individuals would display the ability to work in a supported employment environment facilitated by a job placement coordinator, or to volunteer in the community.

Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)
Employment Supports

Transition Considerations:

- Review employment as the projected pathway for this student considering the IEP programming outcomes discussed above, particularly those related to any co-op placements
- Discuss the status of any potential future employment placements
- Review community partners' roles in assisting with student's goals post-21 in terms of furthering employment readiness skills and job coaching
- Update on the status of tasks related to employment preparation such as development of interview skills, resume preparation, and acquisition of SIN card

5. College and Continuing Education Programs

Pathway Description:

This pathway is appropriate for individuals with a developmental disability who display the ability to be independent. Support is provided on an "as needed" basis. Typically, individuals with this profile would be best suited to an environment that provides support to perform daily living skills such as grocery shopping, banking and personal health care, but also allows for greater independence. Individuals display the ability to work in a competitive employment environment with support of a job placement coordinator. They would be able to travel to and from work independently or to a *Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE)* college program.

Community Participation Supports (Passport funding)
Employment Supports

Transition Considerations:

A. College (CICE Program)

- Review of CICE program as the projected pathway for your child considering the IEP programming outcomes discussed.
- Identification and discussion of local colleges offering CICE programs. For example, Mohawk, Humber, and Conestoga.
- Discussion of plans for you and your child to explore admission requirements for the college of your choice and to take advantage of any campus orientation visits offered.
- Brainstorm as a group about any other services available that cater directly to students with developmental disabilities. This may include individuals such as learning strategists, peer mentors, tutoring services/academic supports and social groups.

B. Thomas Merton Adult and Continuing Education Centre

- Review of Thomas Merton programs as a next step for your child, while considering the IEP programming outcomes discussed. For more information, visit: [Thomas Merton Adult and Continuing Education](#)
- Review Thomas Merton programs available for students with developmental disabilities.
- Review of plans for parents and families to explore admission requirements and to take advantage of any orientation visits offered.
- Review of community partners' roles in assisting young adults 21 years of age or older.
- Brainstorm as a group about any other services available that cater directly to students with developmental disabilities. This may include individuals such as learning strategists, peer mentors, tutoring services/academic supports and social groups.