

School Toolkit for Parents/Caregivers of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN): Navigating Educational Transitions

Overview: The "School Toolkit for Parents and Caregivers of CYSHCN: Navigating Educational Transitions" is a comprehensive resource designed to support parents and caregivers as they guide their children through the various stages of their education. This toolkit provides essential information, tips, and resources tailored to each transitional stage, empowering parents/caregivers with the knowledge and tools to advocate effectively for their child's education and well-being.

1. Preschool Education (Ages 3-5):

This toolkit section provides parents/caregivers with guidance on preparing their child with special health care needs for a successful start in mainstream school. It covers essential topics such as enrolling in preschool programs and ensuring a positive early learning experience. Parents will find practical advice and resources tailored to this crucial early stage of their child's educational journey.

- [Transition Planning Timeline: Pre-School](#)
- [Navigating Preschool Services](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to Special Education for Children Ages 3-21](#)
- [School Communication log](#)
- [Special Education Quality Assurance Regional Offices](#)

2. Elementary School (Ages 5-12):

This toolkit section offers essential guidance for parents/caregivers during their child's elementary school years. **Topics include** understanding IEPs, effective communication with educators, and supporting their child's overall development, including a timeline to navigate this stage successfully.

- [Transition Planning Timeline: Elementary School](#)
- [Special Education in Plain Language](#)
- [IDEA and 504 Comparison Chart](#)
- [IEP Goal Tracker](#)
- [IEP Timeline Infographic](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to Special Education for Children Ages 3-21](#)

3. Middle School (Ages 12-14):

This toolkit section provides a structured timeline and practical guidance for parents as they prepare their child with special health care needs for the transition to middle school. It includes key milestones, important considerations, and actionable steps to ensure a smooth transition during this educational stage.

- [Transition Planning Timeline: Middle School](#)
- [Information and Referral Disability Related](#)
- [NYS Education Department Transition from School to Post-School](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to Special Education for Children Ages 3-21](#)

4. High School (Ages 14-21):

This toolkit section focuses on aiding parents/caregivers as their child with special health care needs enters high school and approaches adulthood. It offers a Transition Planning Timeline, resources for students with developmental disabilities, federal Transition Services guidelines, and Center for Parent Information & Resources access. Parents will find valuable information and tools to prepare their children for the challenges and opportunities of high school and beyond.

- [Transition Planning Timeline: High School](#)
- [School Transition for Students with Developmental Disabilities OPWDD](#)
- [Sec. 300.43 Transition Services](#)
- [Center for Parent Information & Resources](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to Special Education for Children Ages 3-21](#)

5. Resources for Ages (3-21):

In this section of the toolkit, you will find valuable resources covering all transition stages, including:

- [Special Education in Plain Language](#)
- [IDEA and 504 Comparison Chart](#)
- [IEP Goal Tracker](#)
- [IEP Timeline Infographic](#)
- [NYS PTA](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to Special Education for Children Ages 3-21](#)

6. Other Resources and Support:

This section provides parents and caregivers with vital tools to support their children with special health care needs.

Child Profile- ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) Is an essential tool designed to assist parents and caregivers in providing a concise yet comprehensive summary of their child's medical requirements, capabilities, and unique needs to professionals working with the child.

- [Hi Doc](#)- A pre-folded pocket card containing critical life-saving information for emergencies, including emergency contacts. It's available in multiple languages for accessibility. To access different languages, use this link: <https://www.health.ny.gov/community/specialneeds/>.
- [Discover Agencies in Your Area](#)- The New York State Education Department offers a Community Resource Map connecting families and professionals with local agencies and community resources. These resources address issues from early childhood through the transition to post-school life, ensuring families have the support they need in their local communities.
- [NY Connects](#)- Welcome to NY Connects is your trusted place for free, unbiased information about long-term services and support in New York State for people of all ages or with any disability.
- [HEARS Family Hotline](#)- The HEARS family line (Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure and Support) assists parents and families by providing resources and referrals to various services. Caring representatives guide families to services including food, clothing, housing, medical and behavioral health care services, parenting education, and child care. Representatives can help Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. The line offers messages in 12 languages.

The Regional Support Centers have hosted a collection of webinars addressing diverse transition stages for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. Click the links to view

Educational Webinars: Transitions Series

- [Supporting Youth through Health Care, Recreation, and Employment Transitions](#)
- [What Happens After High School?](#)
- [“Transitions” From Early Intervention to Preschool to School Age](#)
- [Health Care Transitions](#)