



Staff Assistant Experience

By Ramapo for Children

“Transitions” for Young Adults

Guiding the Journey to Independence, Skills, and Community

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Understanding the Transition to Young Adulthood

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a multidimensional process involving **significant changes in behavior, attitude, and autonomy.**

This journey, often occurring between the late teens and mid-twenties, involves **moving from a dependent state to one of self-sufficiency.**

(Google)

Change: Behaviors, Settings, & Skills

Shift: Attitude, Settings, & Family Involvement

Passage: Settings, Autonomy, Social Circles, & Caregiver

Development: Skills, Confidence, & Adulthood

Evolution: Are You Ready?

How Do We Prepare to Navigate Transition?

Give yourself grace as you navigate this next chapter.

Transition brings change, uncertainty, and ups and downs. Stay focused on your goals and your desire to support your young adult.

Set realistic expectations.

Be open to what's possible without over- or underestimating.

Acknowledge the unknown.

You're moving from a familiar education system into a new chapter with many options and uncertainties.

Become informed and build support.

Gather resources, connect with others, and learn together.

Review finances and resources.

Preparing Young Adults for Transition

Preparation doesn't start at the moment of transition.

It's not a launch—it's a process.

Be transparent and collaborative.

Ongoing conversations matter. This should be a partnership. Your young adult will have their own goals and ideas, and alignment is key.

Build independence early.

Create opportunities to practice independence in current settings. Gradually fade prompts and allow space for skill mastery.

Celebrate growth and “adulting.”

Acknowledge progress and offer your vote of confidence. Attitude and perspective matter.

Plan for discomfort and setbacks.

Feeling uncomfortable is part of growth—and doesn't always mean something is unsafe.

Creating Practice Opportunities: Teach → Support → Step Back → Observe

Daily Independence: Wake up with an alarm; choose appropriate clothing for weather and occasion

Life Skills: Travel, self-care, self-regulation, money management

Routines & Hygiene: Use visuals and checklists (teeth, hair, face); model, prompt, then observe

Independence Practice: Opportunities to sleep away from home

Home Expectations: Meal planning, cooking, chores, laundry, room care

Social Independence: Engage with peers and adults without managing interactions

Sources

Youth in Transition: Independent Living

Learn how these young people prepared for independent living — the skills they practiced, the routines they built, and the supports they used to gain confidence and independence.



STAFF ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE (SAE)



SAE Program Overview

What We Are

SAE is a transitional program for neurodivergent young adults

Supports those with social, emotional, or learning challenges with individualized, person-centered programming

Provides opportunities to practice vocational and life skills in an inclusive, communal setting

Includes typically developing peers as co-workers and role models

Who We Serve

Young adults ages 17–26

Individuals diagnosed with ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or learning differences

Young Adults Building Independence and Career Skills

Where We Are

Located on Ramapo's 240-acre campus in Rhinebeck, NY (Hudson Valley)

3 miles from the Village of Rhinebeck

Inclusive community with supportive staff and programs

SAE Program Options

Year-Round Residential

- Full-time residential program providing structured support and daily living skills.

SAE Summer Program

- Four summer sessions focused on skill-building, recreation, and community connection.

Personalized Pathways (Non-Residential)

- Vocational training, evening recreation, and workshops tailored to individual goals.

Weekend Connections

- Monthly “CONNECT!” events to practice social, recreational, and life skills in a supportive setting.

SAE Program Structure



Goal-Oriented Skill Development

- Focus on social/emotional learning, vocational skills, and daily living skills
- Aim: prepare participants for 20 hrs/week of employment or post-secondary education

Daily and Ongoing Support

- Check-ins to support morning/evening routines
- Goal meetings for observations, reflection, and progress tracking

Individualized Learning

- One-on-one support during year-round programming
- Small-group facilitation during summer sessions

Workshops & Practical Activities

- Life skills: stress management, wellness, communication, relationships, budgeting
- Weekly “Deep Room Cleans” to build living skills and responsibility

Progress Monitoring

- SAE staff complete comprehensive skills assessments and progress reports
- Ensures ongoing growth toward individual goals

Vocational & Job Skills



On-Campus Work Areas (Vocational)

- Adaptive Design- Cardboard Carpentry
- Animal Care & Farm Operations
- Ramashop / Ramacafé
- Dining Hall
- Housekeeping
- Maintenance
- Child Care
- Sustainable Gardening & Farming
- Administrative (Main Office)
- Online Thrift Store
- Summer-Specific: Blue Path Dogs

Job Skills and Employment Counseling

- **Employment Counseling:** One-on-one meetings with an Employment Specialist for personalized guidance.
- **Workshops:** Small group sessions addressing essential workplace skills.
- **On-Site Job Coaching:** Hands-on coaching to teach and reinforce specific skills.
- **Performance Reviews:** Focused on skills practiced in vocational programming.
- **Curriculum Design:** Structured to highlight learning objectives across the variety of work functions available.

Community Integration: Vocational & Educational

We partner with **35 local businesses and organizations** to provide paid and volunteer opportunities that build real-world skills.

Examples of Partner Opportunities:

- Taste Budds ,CVS ,Parkhurst Dining, Red Hook Responds

We partner with **local colleges and programs** to provide courses and certificates that build knowledge and skills for personal and professional growth.

Examples of Educational Opportunities:

- Bard College: Clemente (Humanities Course)
- Dutchess Community College: Think Ahead Program
- Ulster Community College: Manufacturing Certificate



A Day In The Life : Year Round SAE

Morning (7:15 am – 9:30 am)

Wake up and get prepared for the day

Breakfast in the Dining Hall

Morning Check-In

Morning Meeting

Work Experience begins

Afternoon (12:15 pm – 5:45 pm)

Lunch with Group

Independent Living Skills
(e.g., room cleaning)

Workshop

Living Skills / ADL Assessments
(Staff Supported)

Dinner

Evening (6:30 pm – 9:15 pm)

Evening Meeting and Meds

Evening Activity
(Recreation & Social Skills)

Free Time with the Group
(Social Skills)

Nighttime Routine in Room
(Independent Living Skills)



Year Round Community Living:

Living with a neurodiverse roommate promotes independence and problem-solving, while on-site staff provide support as needed.

Summer Housing:

Same-gender bunks with private shower stalls and bathrooms, with staff residing in counselor quarters.

Recreation and Social Skill Building

- Ropes Course
- Lake and Pool
- Boating
- Fishing
- Trail Hikes
- Art Center
- Fitness Center
- Off Campus Trips
- CONNECT Weekends
- Monthly CONNECT Events



Workshops and Experiential Learning

Experiential Skill Development

Community classes and workshops cover topics such as self-esteem, coping with change, managing conflict, understanding disabilities, sex and sexuality, and socialization.

Individual Support

Access to one-on-one supportive counseling is available as needed.

Staff Training & Support

Our Direct Support Staff:

- Serve as mentors to staff assistants, meeting individually on a bi-weekly basis
- Act as job coaches during vocational experiences
- Participate in an on-call rotation, with a staff member living on campus available daily from 10 pm – 8 am and on weekends
- Receive individual and group supervision from administrative staff
- Reside in on-campus housing

Ramapo staff receive extensive training and supervision in areas such as human behavior, crisis management, goal setting, boundary setting, motivational interviewing, job coaching, and inclusion and diversity.



Why SAE Stands Out

Inclusive Community – Neurodiverse peers and staff foster belonging, independence, and problem-solving.

Individualized Programming – Personalized guidance in work, education, and daily living skills.

Our Campus – Safe, supportive on-campus housing with shared and private spaces.

Caregiver Supports – Resources and communication to keep families informed and engaged.

Skills Assessment & Experiential Learning – Opportunities to practice, learn, and grow through hands-on experiences.



Is SAE a Good Fit for Your Young Adult?

Ages 17–26, neurodivergent (ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, learning differences)

Motivated to gain independence and practice employment/life skills

Open to structured support, feedback, and skill-building opportunities

Ready to engage with peers and staff in a communal, inclusive setting

Would benefit from individualized, person-centered programming

Admissions Process and Next Steps

Virtual Meeting – A meeting with caregivers and the young adult to discuss the program and individual needs.

Campus Visit & Tour – Families and prospective participants explore the campus, meet staff and current participants, and begin the assessment process to determine program fit.

Overnight Trial – All participants interested in year-round programming attend a 5-day overnight trial, engaging in typical programming while staff conduct skills assessments.

Gathering Collateral Information – Communication with providers (psychiatrists, therapists) and previous educational settings is required. Updated neuropsych evaluations and IEPs are also requested to support collaborative decision-making.

Team Meeting – SAE staff review the overnight trial and all application materials to determine program appropriateness.

Rolling Admissions – We actively recruit for openings throughout the year.

Q & A



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