

Next Steps:

An Introduction to Transition Planning for Guardians



DDRC

Developmental Disabilities
Resource Centre of Calgary

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Introduction

Guiding someone from childhood to adulthood can be a daunting task for any guardian—especially for those caring for a young adult with a developmental disability as they transition from Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) to Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD).

This resource is intended to help make transition planning during this period as stress-free as possible.

Please note: For the purposes of this resource, the term “guardian” is used to cover any legal guardian: parent, family member, foster parent, or any other individual who has been legally appointed. The terms “youth” or “individual” refer to the person who will be transitioning from FSCD support to PDD support.

What is transition planning?

Transition planning is a period of preparation for an individual who will be moving from FSCD support to PDD support. This change takes place when the individual enters adulthood, or at 18 years of age. Guardians work with the youth and a representative from PDD to determine what supports, services, and funding the youth will require in order to be successful as an adult.¹

Who is eligible for PDD funding?

In order to qualify for funding through PDD, an individual must have been diagnosed with a developmental or intellectual disability before the age of 18,² they must be a citizen or permanent resident of Alberta, and they must be 18 or older.³

¹ Human Services Alberta, *Transition Planning: Supporting Youth with Disabilities in Transitioning to Adulthood*, accessed July 17, 2015, <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/transition-planning-brochure.pdf>.

² Persons with Developmental Disabilities – Central Region Community Board, *Transition Planning: A Parent’s Guide*, last modified May 2012, <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/pdd/pdd-central-transition-planning-parents-guide.pdf>, 6.

³ Human Services, Transition Planning, 20.

Those designated as status Indians who ordinarily live on reserve are not eligible for PDD funding. An individual in this case would qualify for federal funding, distributed by individual bands through the band office.⁴

When should transition planning begin?

In most cases, transition planning should begin around a youth's 16th birthday. There are some instances where planning should start earlier, but this would be determined between the family and an FSCD worker.⁵

Whom do I contact to begin transition planning?

A regional PDD Community Support Coordinator will need to be contacted to begin the transition process. Community Support Coordinators for the Calgary area can be reached by calling 403.297.5011, or by emailing HS.PDDCalgary@gov.ab.ca.⁶

What does a Community Support Coordinator do?

A Community Support Coordinator assists families to identify resources and support options, determines eligibility for PDD support, finds available funding sources, acts as a liaison between families and service providers, and identifies the changing needs of the individual receiving support.⁷

What is Person-Centred Planning?

Person-Centred Planning is a personalised roadmap for an individual with a developmental disability. A plan is developed, with input from the individual and their family, by discussing what

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Human Services, *Transition Planning*, 6.

⁶ Human Services Alberta, "Regional Staff – Calgary Region," last modified May 6, 2015, <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/pdd-calgary-contacts.html>.

⁷ Human Services, *Transition Planning*, 7.

their strengths, preferences, needs, and goals are. This plan will help to guide the support, service, and funding each individual receives.⁸ Completing a Person-Centred Plan is not a requirement of transition planning; rather, it is an extra resource for families to consider.⁹

What is the Supports Intensity Scale, and when does the interview occur?

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) is the tool used by PDD to measure the support needs of an individual with a developmental disability. A certified SIS interviewer will complete an interview with the individual, their friends, family, and support workers (if applicable).¹⁰ The interviewer will ask questions to determine what level of support an individual requires in order to accomplish their goals. SIS interviews are completed during the transition process, before the individual turns 18.

The SIS was developed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), and has been used by PDD since 2009. It determines the type, frequency, and length of supports an individual needs to be successful in 57 aspects of life, and includes 23 major behavioural and medical support needs.¹¹

What sort of supports does PDD fund?

PDD funds three different types of services:¹²

- Home Living and Respite Supports;
- Community Access Supports; and
- Employment Supports.

⁸ Human Services, *Transition Planning*, 12-13.

⁹ Human Services, *Transition Planning*, 15.

¹⁰ Human Services, *Transition Planning*, 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Human Services Alberta, "Planning Supports for Your Family Member," last modified July 19, 2013, <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/pdd-fms-planning-supports.html>.

What is the difference between funding through Family Managed Services and funding through a Service Provider Agreement?

Family Managed Service means that the family of an individual with a developmental disability hires support staff and seeks out services for them without using PDD as an intermediary. While many families prefer this option for the flexibility and control it provides, it also means much more work and responsibility for the family.

The guardian becomes a Funds Administrator, which means they are responsible for employing staff in accordance with the *Employment Standards Code* and the *Workers' Compensation Act*, monitoring support, managing pay, submitting invoices for reimbursement, and keeping detailed records.¹³

With a Service Provider Agreement, PDD employees and approved service providers take care of all administrative tasks, and work with families to ensure satisfactory service is provided to the individual with a developmental disability.

Can I use an approved service provider if I choose Family Managed Services?

Yes, in some cases. Some service providers may opt to enter into a service agreement directly with a family, while others will only accept referrals through PDD. The DDRC only accepts new client referrals through PDD with a Service Provider Agreement for Employment Supports, Community Access Supports, or non-respite Home Based Services Supports. Respite services are still available through the DDRC for those who have chosen Family Managed Services. Those who use Family Managed Services can opt to transfer some of their funds to a Service Provider Agreement if they so choose.

¹³ Human Services Alberta, "Is Family Managed Services (FMS) Right for You?" Last modified September 27, 2012, <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/pdd-fms-right-for-you.html>.

How does PDD select a service provider? Can I choose a service provider?

Community Support Coordinators work with families to determine the specific needs of each individual with a developmental disability, and then identify a number of service providers that they believe match those needs. A referral for the individual is passed on to these service providers so they can review the individual's file, and assess whether or not they would be able to provide the required support.

While guardians cannot choose a specific service provider, they may certainly suggest service providers for consideration to their Community Support Coordinators.

It is important to understand that a referral does not guarantee service; it only means that the file will be reviewed to see if the intake process can or should begin.

Whom should I contact if I want information about a referral?

It is always best to contact a Community Support Coordinator to learn more about the status of a referral. PDD will have information from all service providers that received the referral, which means they can provide guardians with an in-depth answer.

What can I expect after a referral has been submitted?

The intake process varies from provider to provider. At the DDRC, the method is as follows:

The DDRC will receive a paper or electronic referral from PDD. Our Client Funding Analysts will create a new file for the individual being referred, and will review their Supports Intensity Scale

report and PDD Service Plan for information. The Client Funding Analysts will have a discussion to determine if they believe that we will be able to meet the individual's needs. If at any point in the process it is determined that the DDRC would not be the best fit for the individual and their family, we will provide an update to PDD.

If the Client Funding Analysts believe we would be a good match for the individual, they will contact the family for an initial intake conversation.

After this, there will be an application meeting with the family, individual, DDRC Team Leader(s), and a Client Funding Analyst. This meeting will be an opportunity for the DDRC to hear about the wants and needs, likes and dislikes, and goals of the individual in the person's own words.

Next, the application and notes from the meeting will be reviewed. If it is still believed that the DDRC would be the right fit for the individual, a Service Request form will be completed. This form is then sent to PDD.

Our Application Review Team will go over the details to make sure that the DDRC will be able to meet all of the individual's needs. If the application receives final approval, our Client Funding Analysts will complete the application and submit it to PDD.

Once the application is submitted, there is a waiting period while PDD provides their decision on a funding agreement. Once this is finalized, an Individual Service Agreement (ISA) will be drafted for the individual outlining the service that will be provided by the DDRC; service may begin after it is signed.

What other sources of funding may be available?

Depending on the specific needs of the individual, additional funding may be available through Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), Alberta Works Income Support, or the Alberta Adult Health Benefit.¹⁴

What does it mean to have a public guardian and/or trustee through the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT)?

A public guardian is someone who is appointed to assist an individual considered dependent past the age of 18 with making personal decisions; public guardians do not have the right to handle financial and legal affairs for the individual. A trustee is someone who handles financial and legal affairs on behalf of an individual with a developmental disability, but does not comment on their personal life.¹⁵ Many people with developmental disabilities do not require the assistance of a guardian or trustee, but for some, they are invaluable resources.

What other resources are available to help with the transition from FSCD to PDD?

The Children's Link Society offers assistance to families through their Transitional Support Services.¹⁶ Children's Link can be contacted by calling 403.230.9158 or by emailing them at info@childrenslink.ca.

Vecova has developed an Individual Transition Plan in partnership with William Aberhart High School and the Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies Program at the University of Calgary.¹⁷ This document is available on [Vecova's website](http://vecova.ca/services/areas-of-service/transition-planning).

¹⁴ Human Services Alberta, "Alberta Works," last modified September 11, 2013, <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/financial-support/3171.html>.

¹⁵ Human Services, *Transition Planning*, 32-34.

¹⁶ The Children's Link Society, "Transition to Adult Services," accessed July 20, 2015, <http://216.119.89.76/childrenslink/Default.aspx?cid=303>.

¹⁷ Vecova, "Transition Planning," accessed February 25, 2016, <http://vecova.ca/services/areas-of-service/transition-planning>.

What else can I do to prepare?

There are practical things that guardians can do to help prepare a youth with a developmental disability for the transition to adulthood:¹⁸

- Obtain photo ID such as an Alberta ID card or passport;
- Register the person for a social insurance number;
- Open a bank account for the person;
- Get copies of medical documents and assessments; and
- Get copies of school records.

In addition, make sure that the youth is aware of all options available to them after high school. Find out now if they want to attend college, university or a trade school, or if they are interested in gaining work or volunteer experience to obtain a job.

There is currently one post-secondary program in Calgary designed specifically for individuals with developmental disabilities: the Transitional Vocational Program (TVP) at Mount Royal University.¹⁹ Some people may be interested in improving literacy skills, and may be interested in the Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) programs at Bow Valley College.²⁰ Other youth with developmental disabilities may choose a specific field of study at the University of Calgary, Mount Royal University, SAIT, or Bow Valley College; post-secondary institutions are expected to make reasonable accessibility accommodations to ensure the success of each learner.²¹

Lastly, remember that there are resources available for both guardians and youth. No one has to go through this process alone.

¹⁸ Human Services, Transition Planning, 7.

¹⁹ Mount Royal University, "Transitional Vocational Program," accessed October 13, 2015, <http://mtroyal.ca/ProgramsCourses/ContinuingEducation/tvp/index.htm>.

²⁰ Bow Valley College, "Literacy," accessed October 13, 2015, <http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca/programs-and-courses/academic-upgrading/literacy-numeracy-and-essential-skills/literacy.html>.

²¹ Alberta Human Rights Commission, "Duty to accommodate students with disabilities in post-secondary educational institutions," accessed October 13, 2015, http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/bulletins/duty_to_accommodate_students.asp.

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