

Creating a Meaningful Week with Youth with Disabilities: Using Employment and Other Community Supports

For most young adults, a typical week revolves around a work and/or school schedule and is surrounded by time with friends, hobbies, home chores, volunteering, shopping, exercise, faith groups and other personal interests. The same should be true for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) who need supports. Planning a meaningful week with a student with disabilities as he/she prepares to leave high school begins by considering typical activities for young adults and how these fit with the student's goals and preferences first. Necessary services and supports can then be put in place based on the choices the student has made.

As you plan employment, post-secondary education, career development, and other life goals with students with I/DD who need ongoing support, don't limit your thinking to the options that have been available in the past. Increased expectations for community-based services and flexibility are being built into the adult long-term care service system, which will better accommodate the lifestyle choices of individuals with disabilities. This means transition planning can be more flexible too!

Chris's Story

Chris is what some teachers call a 'super-super senior who has an Intellectual Disability. He completed twelfth grade two years ago and has been participating in his local school district's transition program since then. Last year, he took 2 classes per semester at the technical college and worked with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to complete 2 temporary work experiences. This year, Chris decided to continue taking classes in a variety of subjects through the technical college and began working part-time at a grocery store with assistance from a local vocational support agency. Recently, he had his hours at the grocery store increased and reduced the number of hours per week he has job coaching. He would also like to add a second job. Outside of school and work, he enjoys fishing, spending time with his friends and girlfriend, and volunteering at his church. Of course, he has to dedicate some of his time to school work, shopping, cooking, and cleaning. All of these, along with his support needs, will be part of his plan when he exits school services next year. Having work, school, and a number of ongoing activities already in place before school exit makes the transition less stressful and more seamless. On the next page you will examine Chris's weekly schedule and learn about the types of services and supports he receives to engage in activities that are important to him.



Adult Long-Term Care Services

Adult long-term care services provide people with supports to engage in personally meaningful activities. Youth with disabilities can apply for adult long-term care services through the county's [Aging and Disability Resource Center \(ADRC\)](#) starting at age 17 years, 6 months. If found eligible for these

services, youth and their families in most regions of the state can choose to receive adult long-term care services through one of two programs: [Family Care](#) or [IRIS](#).

The Family Care and IRIS programs will then work with the youth and his/her planning team (which includes DVR and school staff) to determine how he/she wants to spend his/her day, what is most important to him/her, the community resources available, the natural support options, and the formal, paid supports that the individual needs to achieve goals, increase independence, maintain optimal health, and expand employment and community involvement. The following list are some Adult Long Term Care services that can be used to support meaningful activities and community involvement.

<p>Individual Supported Employment</p>	<p>These are the supports to help someone find and maintain <i>integrated employment</i>, which includes competitive, customized, or self-employment. Integrated employment means being employed in a typical workplace with co-workers who do not have disabilities, paid directly by the business for which they work (not the employment service provider), and earning at least minimum wage.</p> <p>These services should be <i>individualized</i> and include any combination of the following: vocational/job-related discovery or assessment, person-centered employment planning, job placement, job development, meeting with prospective employers, job analysis, training and systematic instruction, job coaching, job supports, work incentive benefits counseling, training and work planning, transportation and career advancement services. Typically, DVR provides the ‘up-front’ services necessary to obtain employment (including assessment, work incentives benefits counseling, work experience funding, job development and initial job coaching). Once DVR services are complete, ongoing supports are transitioned to the Family Care or IRIS plan.</p>
<p>Small Group Supported Employment</p>	<p>This service provides another option for employment in the community. People are supported to work in small groups, are typically employed by the service provider, and may or may not be paid at least minimum wage. If this service option is used, it should be a stepping stone for getting an integrated job. A person can use Small Group Supported Employment services <u>and</u> Individual Supported Employment services during the week (i.e. working in an integrated job for part of the week and in a group employment arrangement for the other part of the week). This service can also support people in career exploration and other activities that can move them toward integrated employment.</p>
<p>Community-Based Pre-Vocational Services</p>	<p>This is a short-term, time limited service to prepare individuals for integrated employment. Services are provided individually or in small groups and activities take place in the community (not at the employment service provider building). Activities include job shadows, tours, informational interviews, support to attend classes at the Job Center, short-term volunteering, unpaid work experiences, and other kinds of career exploration and soft skill development in community settings. People who get part-time jobs in integrated employment can also use this service to continue volunteering and do other activities outside of their job that help sustain employment (e.g. soft skill classes, job clubs).</p>
<p>Other Types of Services that can Support Community Involvement</p>	<p>These include Daily Living Skills Training, Supportive Home Care, and community-based Day Services. These services have broad definitions that describe how they are intended to be used to support people to build skills in the community and access and connect with community resources. This could include: taking an art, cooking, or dance class at a community college, joining a ski or tennis club, volunteering at the local food pantry, and other ways of engaging in social and recreational opportunities with members of the community who share similar interests. These services can be provided individually or in small groups.</p>

Chris's Weekly Schedule & Supports

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
AM	Church Volunteer at Church	Design Class Study	Speech Class Fitness on campus	Design Class Study	Speech Class Fitness on campus	Volunteer at Church	Relax at home Laundry
PM	Hang out with girlfriend Housework	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Volunteer at animal shelter Shopping
Evening	Study & get things ready for work	Housework Fishing	Dinner at mom & dad's Watch TV	Hang out with girlfriend	Housework Watch TV	Dinner/movie with friends	Hang out with girlfriend

Community Involvement – Chris gets a ride to church from a fellow parishioner. After the service, a Supportive Home Care staff who he has hired using Self-Directed Support (SDS) through the adult long-term care program meets him at church to support him in his volunteer activities. This same staff supports him to volunteer at the Animal Shelter on Saturday's as well.

Technical College Classes – Chris's father drives him to class each morning on his way into work. After class, Chris meets with a tutor available through the technical college to study.

Work - Individual Supported Employment staff meets Chris at the technical college campus to take him to work. The job coach helps Chris get started at work and checks in regularly with his employer. The job coach is available more often when Chris needs to learn new work tasks. Chris gets a ride home from a co-worker or, when one is not available, takes a reduced fair taxi cab, which he pays for out of pocket and claims as an Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) with his Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Errands, Chores and Home Life – Chris uses a combination of Supportive Home Care services and natural supports from his family to engage in housework, laundry, and shopping. He has on-call/video supports for emergencies funded by his long-term care plan.

Fitness and Recreation – Chris receives supports from a Community-Based Day Service agency six hours a week for fitness and recreational activities. He also belongs to an informal local fishing group that meets in the early evening and he has an active social life. Chris's family helps him arrange transportation for these activities and Chris provides funding for mileage reimbursement to these drivers through his long-term care plan.

Additional Resources

New rules have been established for adult long-term care services, which are designed to increase service flexibility and community integration for people with disabilities. You can learn more about these new rules by watching the free webinars listed below.

- [Short Version](#) - focuses on what the rules means for adult long-term care services
- [In-Depth Version](#) - information on how states are required to implement a 5-year transition plan to meet the requirements of the new Home and Community-Based Services Settings Rule

