



***Family Voices of Illinois***  
***The Arc of Illinois***  
***Family to Family Health Information Center***

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**Family Manual Fact Sheet –Transition Basics for Youth with Special Needs and Their Families**

1. When an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) indicates that a student will exit school on the day before the 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, school ends on that date no matter where it falls within the school calendar. Services provided through the school district will end on that date and cannot be extended until the close of the semester or school year.
2. It is very important to complete the PUNS (Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services) interview as soon as a need is anticipated – no matter the age of the child. However, there is no guarantee that a young adult needing service in transition will be selected for funding. The waiting list is long, but it is not possible to be selected if your name is not on the list AND if a PUNS update is not completed every year.
3. If you will need government help to pay for adult services and supports in the future, plan to apply for Medicaid at age 18, even if you have private insurance. This is important unless you plan to pay privately for any needed services.
4. Currently, if you have a disability but are not pregnant/parenting, you can only apply for Medicaid if you apply for SSI first to confirm your “disabled” eligibility status.
5. In 2014, Health Care Reform changes will allow people with special needs who do not qualify for SSI (as well as low-income people who do not have special needs) to apply for Medicaid solely based on their income.
6. Illinois’ All Kids Medicaid program does not look at a child’s immigration status until the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Some youth may lose coverage at this time. The only options for insurance coverage may be getting a job that offers insurance or being covered as a dependent on a parent’s private insurance (until age 26) or a spouse’s private insurance. This also means that you may not be able to participate in adult services and supports that require Medicaid enrollment unless you pay privately.
7. Families must work together to develop a plan for post-transition life as there is no guarantee that funding will be available.
8. Family members may need to change their daily schedules when a young adult with special needs exits school. This may mean changing work schedules, arranging travel, planning activities and scheduling care-giving responsibilities for your young adult.
9. Remember that transition is a process. Circumstances change and plans must be altered. Be flexible, creative, and willing to think outside the box.