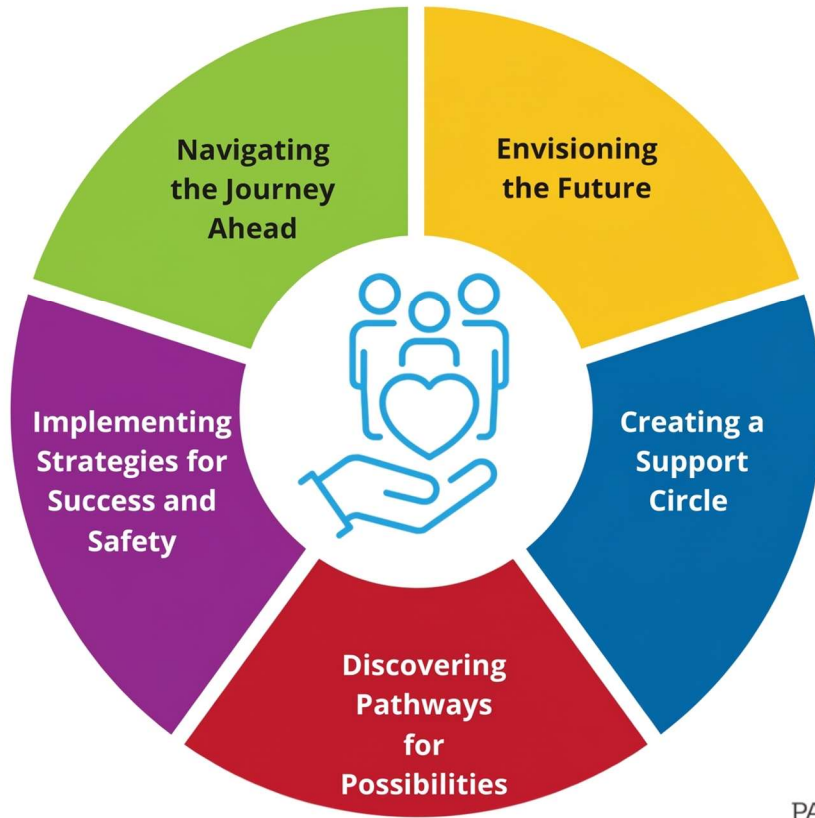


# Pathways to Possibilities: Families Leading the Way

A resource to support people with disabilities to explore  
employment and life in the community



**Developed by families, for families**

## Implementing Strategies for Success and Safety



### Using These Guides Together: A Note to Families and Family Members

“Implementing Strategies for Success and Safety” is the fourth of five guides in the series “Pathways to Possibilities.” This guide helps you and your family take meaningful steps toward employment and self-sufficiency as you plan for the future. This series includes:

1. **Envisioning the Future** - Set high expectations and explore possibilities.
2. **Creating a Support Circle** - Build a team of people who can provide support.
3. **Discovering Pathways for Possibilities** - Find strengths and skills at any age.
4. **Implementing Strategies for Success and Safety** - Identify and nurture daily living and vocational skills from early years through adulthood.
5. **Navigate the Journey Ahead** - Understand services and programs that can provide support.

**For Parents and Caregivers:** You help your family member with a disability grow and learn new skills every day. This guide suggests strategies to support them while they explore options.

**For Your Family Members with a Disability:** Your dreams and ideas are important! You can dream big and ask for help when you need it.

At the end of this guide, you'll find a worksheet called "[Moving Forward](#)." This worksheet has questions for both the individual with a disability and their family members. We suggest you:

- **Take turns filling out your answers.**
- **Share what you wrote with each other.**
- **Talk about where your ideas are the same or different.**
- **Use your answers to make a plan together.**

Let's plan for a great future together!

## Why This Matters

Planning for success also means planning for safety, whether that involves navigating transportation, recognizing unsafe situations, or communicating needs clearly. This guide helps families support their family member with a disability to build skills and strategies that lead to thriving at work and in the community.

A well-thought-out plan for support, communication, and safety helps your family member with a disability feel confident and be successful wherever they are. Preparing for success also builds independence and resilience.

## Key Ideas to Remember: Steps for Success and Safety

1. **Apply What You Know:** Use your family member's communication, work, learning, and support preferences to shape strategies that promote their success, confidence, and safety.
2. **Plan for Safety:** Talk openly about transportation needs, emergency contacts, health history, and action plans for when something goes wrong.
3. **Support Independence and the Dignity of Risk:** Support your family member as they build daily routines, manage stress, prepare for the unexpected, communicate needs and preferences, and ask for help. Consider using augmentative communication or assistive technology if needed to help them stay connected to support. Remember that people learn from mistakes and problem-solving, and that dignity and confidence grow when they are trusted to figure things out.
4. **Support Well-Being:** Teach, reinforce, and/or connect your family member to support for their physical and mental health, which in turn supports their growth, independence, and long-term success.

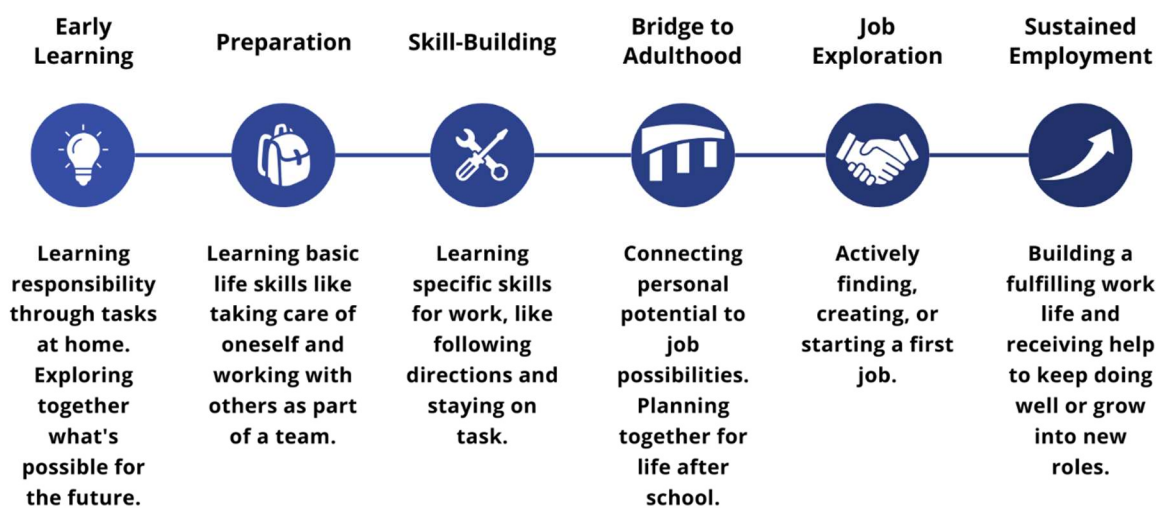
## Try this at Home: Families Can Help

- Role-play in different work or community situations to build confidence. You can create mock work or interview situations to practice these skills.
- Create a safety plan together for travel and emergencies. Make sure that your family member with a disability has access to emergency contact information. Practice different situations with them using their phone or the information they carry in a wallet or backpack
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- Talk about and practice ways to handle stress or unexpected situations. Explore coping strategies with your family member and share them with members of your family member's support circle and, with their permission, others in their life.

## Resources and Connections

Note: Some of the resources for this guide were also shared in other Pathways to Possibilities guides because they apply to more than one area of exploration.

### Implementing Strategies for Success and Safety



#### Early Learning

Your family member is starting to build responsibility through daily tasks at home, and together you are beginning to explore the skills and supports they'll need to stay safe and succeed in future work and community settings.

- [Basic Life Skills for Adults with Disabilities - UDS](#): This site explains essential life skills for adults with disabilities and provides helpful suggestions for building those skills.
- [Employment Checklist for Students with Disabilities](#): When engaging in a job search, it is essential to ensure that students are acquainted with a variety of job search-related activities/experiences. The *Employment Readiness Checklist for Students with Disabilities Exiting High Schools* is a self-assessment tool that can be used as a guide for further employment

preparation, identifying the experiences and skills they have developed as well as those yet to be achieved.

- **[Future Planning: A Roadmap of Our Future Wishes](#)**: Future planning is an important yet difficult process that involves gathering information, looking at options, making decisions that may change, creating back-up plans, asking for help, and a lot of self-reflection. This Roadmap guides that process with the individual with a disability as the central person, reflecting his or her own hopes and dreams.



## Preparation

Your family member is developing essential life skills, like self-care, teamwork, and following routines, which will help them stay safe, confident, and capable in work and community settings. While some of these resources are youth-focused, they could also be useful for adults with disabilities in preparing for employment.

- **[Parent Center Hub](#)**: This site connects families to free resources, tools, and local Parent Centers. The site explains systems like education, health, and disability services to help you support your family member's growth and independence.
- **[Explore Your Future Transition Workbook](#)** (*developed by the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation*): This interactive workbook helps youth with disabilities explore their goals for life after high school, including education, employment, and independent living. It offers guided questions, planning tools, and resources to support successful transitions.
- **[Preparing for College | Think College](#)**: There are many things that students can and should do, with the support of their family and teachers, to get ready for the transition from high school to college. These resources include strategies for creating a strong IEP, guidance on making decisions such as guardianship, information about how college differs from high school, and tools for employment planning.
- **[Got Transition® - Youth & Young Adults - Health Care Transition Quiz](#)**: Are you ready for health care transition? Take this quiz. Health and health care are essential in promoting success and safety.



## Skill-Building

Your family member is building targeted skills, like following directions, staying focused, and problem-solving, which will support their independence, safety, and success at work and in daily life.

- [\*\*Magic ToDo – Goblin Tools\*\*](#): This free website helps people plan tasks, stay organized, and understand how to say things clearly. It's especially helpful for people who think and learn in different ways.
- [\*\*Home - Digital Skills Library\*\*](#): This is an artificial intelligence (AI) website developed by former teachers and Gen Z'ers to help learners build digital skills and explore new ways to make informed decisions and shape their future.
- [\*\*Level Up Your Social Media Game: Digital Safety Tips for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities - PAVE\*\*](#): Social media has both benefits and disadvantages. To use social media safely and effectively, people with disabilities need to practice digital safety and self-awareness. This guide teaches tips and tools to help you make smart choices and stay in control online.



## Bridge to Adulthood

Your family member is preparing for adult life by building on their strengths, exploring real-world opportunities, and gaining the confidence to handle new responsibilities safely and successfully.

- [\*\*Timeline: What happens to Special Education students after high school? Exceptional Lives\*\*](#): This easy-to-follow timeline helps families understand what steps to take as their child with a disability grows up. It shows what to do at each age to get ready for adult life, like learning new skills, planning for work or college, and finding support.
- [\*\*Developmental Disabilities - Person-Centered Approach to Risk Toolkit Quick Reference Guide\*\*](#) and [\*\*An Intro to Supporting Dignity of Risk & Failure in Adults with Disabilities\*\*](#) – These two plain-language guides provide users with resources and ideas that support the dignity of risk.
- [\*\*Safety-Planning-Guide-from-SAFE-Disability-Services.pdf\*\*](#): A safety plan is an individualized, practical tool used to assist a person with a disability in communicating that they feel unsafe, and to decrease the risk of future harm for people who might be vulnerable to abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- [\*\*Moving Into Adulthood Resource Center\*\*](#): This family friendly hub offers clear, practical support for young adults and others who may be transitioning to new situations and/or services, including people with mental health needs. This site includes Frequently Asked Questions, planning tools, fact

sheets, videos, and links to community and clinical resources to ease the transition into college, work, and independent living.



## Job Exploration

Your family member is beginning to explore work by searching for a job or starting their first one. You are learning how to support their success, build safe routines, and help them grow on the job.

- **[Employment Resources for People with Disabilities and Their Families](#)**— This free online hub provides information to help people with disabilities find and keep jobs. It includes links to programs like Ticket to Work, Job Accommodation Network (JAN), Independent Living Centers, and American Job Centers, giving families tools to support employment success.
- The **[Small Business Hub](#)**: Developed by National Disability Institute, the Small Business Hub provides tools and resources to aspiring entrepreneurs and existing business owners with a disability with support to start, build, and grow their own business.
- **[American Job Centers \(AJCs\) | U.S. Department of Labor](#)**: This website provides information about free one-stop career centers that help people explore jobs, learn new skills, and connect with employers. AJCs can also help with work readiness during and after high school.



## Sustained Employment

Your family member is building a meaningful work life, and you are supporting their continued success by focusing on safety, communication, and the skills needed to grow, stay employed, and thrive on the job.

- **[Your Money, Your Goals | Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#)**: Your Money, Your Goals is a set of financial empowerment materials that help people meet their financial goals by increasing their financial literacy, knowledge, skills, and resources.
- **[Financial Empowerment - National Disability Institute](#)**: This site is dedicated to improving the financial wellness of people across the spectrum of disability. It provides training and technical assistance materials on how to deliver financial education, financial coaching/counseling, and other financial capability strategies customized to meet the needs of the disability community.

- [Toolkit: Sexual Assault Awareness for People with Developmental Disabilities - Elevatus Training](#): People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are sexually assaulted at seven times the rate of people without disabilities. This toolkit is filled with educational articles, resources, and training to promote safety and to support people with disabilities and the people who provide them with support.
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) -- JAN is the leading source of free, expert, confidential guidance on job accommodations and disability employment issues. JAN provides free one-on-one practical guidance and technical assistance on job accommodation solutions.

***Remember:*** Reach out, stay connected, and believe in your strengths.

## Implementing Strategies for Success and Safety



### Moving Forward

#### Safety

**For Parents/Caregivers:** What do you need to work on with your family member to ensure they are safe as they explore employment and independence, while at the same time respecting their choices and the dignity of risk?

**For your family member with a disability:** What steps do I need to take to make sure that I make good decisions and know what to do if something unexpected happens as I pursue employment and community activities?

#### Skills Needed to Be Successful

**For Parents/Caregivers:** What is something you think your family member would like to add to their skill set?

**For your family member with a disability:** What is one skill I want to learn or to practice more at home?

What is a skill that I would like to practice in the community?

### Supports Needed to be Successful

**For Parents/Caregivers:** What type of routine, support, or technology could your family member use to ensure their success?

What does success look like for your family member with a disability?

**For your family member with a disability:** What makes me feel successful? What would make me feel safer and more prepared when I'm in the community or doing things independently?

### **Tips:**

- *Talk about how your answers are the same or different. Use what you learn to plan your next steps together.*
- *Recognize the strengths each support team member brings to the circle and remember that a support circle can change over time.*