



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO INDEPENDENCE

Preparing for the future can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. We're here to help.

After more than 25 years of making independent living possible, here are some things we've learned along the way.

SECURE THEIR FUTURE

Ensuring your child has a developmental disability diagnosis by the age of 22 is paramount to accessing services as an adult. Here are the services we recommend starting with:

- apply for SSI or SSDI
- apply for Medicaid
- apply for food benefits
- connect with Medicaid-funded services like support coordination + vocational assistance
- create a comprehensive long-term financial plan with a financial advisor
- learn about alternative options to guardianship to determine the best fit for your child

BUILD THEIR SKILLS

Consider this five-step process for helping your child learn and sustain independent living skills, like doing laundry and cleaning the bathroom:

1. help your child understand the importance of the skill
2. have your child watch as you complete the skill; create a step-by-step checklist or visual if needed
3. have your child assist you in completing the skill; one step at a time if needed
4. have your child complete the skill on their own while you watch
5. have your child complete the skill on their own without prompting or assistance

Turn this page over to learn about the skills we recommend starting with.



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Having the following skills will give your child a strong foundation for independent living success.

DEVELOP A SOCIAL NETWORK

- send text messages, make phone calls + add contacts to phone
 - reach out to friends to schedule time together
 - hold two-way, reciprocal conversations
 - find at least one non-school activity to engage in
 - understand internet safety + scams
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GROW FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

- open savings + checking accounts
 - know how to count money
 - know how to make a purchase with cash, a debit card + check
 - create + stick to a budget
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LEARN TRANSPORTATION

- walk to local stores to complete errands
- schedule + take Uber/Lyft and the local bus

PREPARE FOR EMPLOYMENT

- create list of strengths, skills + desired jobs
 - create a professional email address + practice sending appropriate emails
 - create a resume
 - complete a job application
 - complete mock job interviews
 - know how to dress appropriately
 - get a part-time job
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DEVELOP INDEPENDENCE

- develop a shared vision for independent living
- stay home alone for a day + night
- arrange a night away from home + family every few months
- manage time + schedule without parent reminders
- complete weekly chores + laundry
- make 3 - 5 meals using the stove, oven or microwave
- manage hygiene + medication
- develop self-regulated coping skills
- communicate needs effectively + without prompting
- understand when + how to contact emergency services