

# **YOUR GUIDE TO TRANSITION AND LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## **Introduction**

INCLUDEnyc	1
INCLUDEnyc Youth Services	2
Transition	3

## **Part I: Diploma and Credential Options**

NYC High School Diplomas and Credentials	5
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## **Part II: Beginning to Plan for Transition**

High School Transition Plan	11
Accumulating Resume and Work Experience	12

## **Part III: Your Options During Transition**

Vocational Programs	14
College Access	15
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)	16
Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)	19
Other Supportive Agencies	21
Wrap Up	22



## WHO WE ARE

For 31 years, INCLUDEnyc has worked on behalf of young people with disabilities and their families to have equal opportunity and access to schools, the workforce, and cultural life in New York City.

We give families with children and young people from birth to 26 with any disability the knowledge, confidence, and skills they need to make informed decisions, effectively access and navigate systems and services, and the ability to advocate for themselves and other young people.

## WHAT WE DO

Our **Help Line** specialists provide in-depth, one-to-one help and referral information to parents in English and Spanish, with translations to 200 additional languages available.

We provide **on-site help** to parents through our many partnerships, in locations throughout the five boroughs, so that families can get assistance in their own community.

Our expert staff **teach workshops** at schools and neighborhood organizations citywide. The workshops cover a wide range of disability topics and are designed specifically to meet parents' most pressing needs.

## WHY WE DO IT

- 350,000 young people in NYC have disabilities
- 1 in 3 live in poverty
- 59% do not graduate from high school
- 4 in 5 are unemployed
- 2X more likely to be a victim of a violent crime

## CONTACT OUR FREE HELP LINE

CALL US  TEXT US  
212•677•4660 646•693•3175

VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
[INCLUDENYC.ORG](http://INCLUDENYC.ORG)

ACCESS FREE  
RESOURCES  
ONLINE



ATTEND A  
FREE WORKSHOP  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

# INCLUDEnyc YOUTH SERVICES

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## HIGH SCHOOL LAUNCH

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High School Launch is a self-advocacy program that is implemented in ten schools in the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE). The goal of the program is to create higher levels of engagement by and participation from students at their Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, as well as build students' self-advocacy skills.

High School Launch consists of five workshops:

1. Breaking the stigma of disabilities and understanding various disabilities
2. Looking critically at students' IEPs
3. Examining learning styles and accommodations and modifications that students need
4. Setting academic, transitional, and personal goals
5. Conducting mock IEP meetings

## PROJECT POSSIBILITY

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Project Possibility is one-to-one intensive case management for young people with disabilities who are transitioning in and out of public systems.

**Criteria:**

- For students ages 16-26
- Must have an IEP (or a suspected disability)
- Must have an educational or vocational goal

**Provides support for:**

- Navigating college, independent living, adult systems, special education, and benefits

# TRANSITION

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The purpose of this guide is to provide information and guidance on transition for students with disabilities. It includes a timeline for transition planning, as well as supportive resources and services for you or your child during transition.

## WHAT IS TRANSITION?

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In the special education world, the term transition applies to students who are preparing to leave high school and enter a post-secondary system, with the goal of successful and meaningful functioning in adult life.

- Post-secondary Systems:
  - College
  - Job/vocational training
  - Housing/independent living
  - Access to health care and additional health services
- Depending on each individual, transition begins approximately at the age of 12. Students must be invited to attend their Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at the age of 15. Transition can continue into a young person's mid to late 20s.
- The earlier you, your young person, and the professionals working with the young person begin working on a transition plan, the smoother the transition.

**PART I:**  
**DIPLOMA AND CREDENTIAL OPTIONS**

# NYC HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CREDENTIALS



- Your child has the right to attend school until the end of the school year in which s/he turns 21 or obtains a high school diploma.
- Your child can stay in school even if s/he receives a credential.
- Schools have compulsory attendance. Students must attend until the end of the school year in which the student turns 17.

## TYPES OF DIPLOMAS



### REGENTS DIPLOMA

- 44 credits\* (see breakdown below)
- Score 65% or higher on five Regents Exams (ELA, Math, Science, Global History, U.S. History)

### ADVANCED REGENTS DIPLOMA

- 44 credits\* (see breakdown below)
- Score 65% or higher on five Regents Exams (ELA, Math, Science, Global History, U.S. History)
- Score 65% or higher on additional Regents Exams (Foreign Language and additional Math and Science)

### LOCAL DIPLOMA

This is only available to students with IEPs and some 504 plans.

- 44 credits\* (see breakdown below)
- Safety net for Regents:
  - Low Pass Option
  - Portfolio Option
  - Compensatory Option
  - 4+1 Option

# NYC HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CREDENTIALS



## LOCAL DIPLOMA (cont.)

### Low Pass Option:

Score 55% or higher on:

- ELA
- Math
- Science
- Global History
- U.S. History

### Compensatory Option:

Score 55% or higher on ELA and Math. Scores between 45% and 54% on other three required regents can be compensated with 65% or higher on another required regents. A score of 65% or higher cannot be used to compensate for more than one exam.

## 44 CREDIT BREAKDOWN\*:

- ELA (8)
- Social Studies (8 total)
  - Global (4)
  - U.S. History (2)
  - Government (1)
  - Economics (1)
- Math (6)
- Science (6)
- Spanish (or a language other than English) (6)
- Physical Education (4)
- Visual Arts, Music, Dance, or Theater (2)
- Electives of your child's choice (3)
- Health (1)

## EXAMPLES OF COMPENSATORY OPTION SCORES

### EXAMPLE 1:

A student has received the following exam scores:

- |                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| • ELA Regents                | 55 |
| • Integrated Algebra Regents | 55 |
| • Global History Regents     | 45 |
| • U.S. History Regents       | 55 |
| • Living Environment Regents | 65 |

← ELA and math must be 55 or higher

### Student qualifies for the local diploma:

- The 45 in Global History is compensated by the 65 in Living Environment.
- All other exams have scores of 55 or higher.

# NYC HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CREDENTIALS



## EXAMPLE 2:

A student has received the following exam scores:

- |                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| • ELA Regents                | 55 |
| • Integrated Algebra Regents | 70 |
| • Global History Regents     | 45 |
| • U.S. History Regents       | 52 |
| • Living Environment Regents | 65 |

ELA and math must be 55 or higher

### Student qualifies for the local diploma:

- The 45 in Global History is compensated by the 65 in Living Environment.
- The 52 in U.S. History is compensated by the 70 in Integrated Algebra.
- All other exams have scores of 55 or higher.

## LOCAL DIPLOMA (cont.)

### Portfolio Option

- Students who have failed one to three of any regents (except for ELA and Math) can apply for this option with a portfolio of class-based work as evidence and proof of content knowledge
- Staff and student put together the portfolio and submit it to the principal or guidance counselor
- Superintendent reviews and accepts or denies
- Student will receive a Local Diploma

### Eligibility for Portfolio Option:

A student with an IEP is eligible if s/he:

- Scored 55% or higher on the ELA and Math regents
- Passed all of the required classes and earned credits
  - This includes the course that aligns with the regents they failed
- Does not meet the low pass or compensatory criteria
- Has attempted regents exams at least once

# NYC HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CREDENTIALS

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## LOCAL DIPLOMA (cont.)

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### 4+1 Option

Students who have passed 44 credits (in specific subjects) and failed one regents exam can apply for the +1 option with:

- A department-approved alternative assessment, in place of the failed regent, such as:
  - SAT Subject Tests
  - IB/AB exams
- An earned New York State (NYS) CDOS Commencement Credential.

### Local Diplomas are accepted at:

- Some private colleges
- Community colleges
- CUNY colleges
- SUNY colleges
- Students who receive a Local Diploma and are admitted to a CUNY or SUNY school will take the placement test to determine academic levels.
- If they fail one or more subjects (math, reading, writing), they will be placed in support-based remedial classes in order to ensure that they are prepared for college level classes.

### High School Equivalency Diploma

- Name changed from General Educational Development (GED) to Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC)
- Five subject areas: Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies
- Aligned with Common Core
- Accommodations available
- The TASC test is very challenging. Students are tested on every high school subject in one or two days. To receive accommodations for the exam, students must apply separately. To apply for accommodations, speak with your guidance counselor or call INCLUDEnyc.

# NYC HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS AND CREDENTIALS



## CREDENTIALS

NY State has two credential options for students with disabilities. These credentials were created to replace the Individualized Education Program (IEP) diploma which is **not offered to students anymore**. They are not diplomas and cannot be used to apply to college, the military, and some vocational training programs that require a Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) (formerly GED) or high school diploma.

### Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC)

- Includes student Exit Summary that states the following:
  - Student's skills, strengths, and interests
  - Student's academic levels (alternate assessment scores)
  - Student's level of achievement of the Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS) standards

#### SACC Requirements:

- Students must have attended school for 12 years or until age 21
- Students with alternate assessment on their IEPs

### Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS)

- Indicates career readiness for entry-level jobs
- Career Plan, Employability Profile, and Student Exit Summary
- Can supplement a regents or local diploma

#### CDOS Requirements:

- Students must have attended school for 12 years or until age 21
- 216 hours of Career and Technical Education (CTE) coursework
  - This includes 54 hours of work-based learning
- Maintained the national work readiness credential requirements (assessment-based certification)
- School must have curriculum-based evidence that the student has demonstrated achievement of knowledge of CDOS Learning Standards
  - Career development
  - Integrated learning
  - Universal foundation skills

#### For more information:

- NYSED Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential: <https://goo.gl/Ps5oDX>
- NYSED Career Development & Occupational Studies Commencement Credential: <https://goo.gl/Fiqp2w>
- Contact INCLUDEnyc's Help Line at (212) 677-4660.

## **PART II: BEGINNING TO PLAN FOR TRANSITION**

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# HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PLAN

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## **Schools should:**

- Have a transition coordinator
- Actively involve the student
- Conduct vocational assessments with parents and students
- Expose students to possible colleges, career options, and vocational training programs
- Provide exit summary upon graduation

## **Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings should:**

- Involve the student once s/he is between the ages of 12-14 (though they can be involved earlier)
- Discuss the student's education, employment, and independent living goals
- Discuss which diploma/credential option the student is working towards
- Discuss vocational assessment results
- Create specific goals on the IEP related to the transition plan
- Update the transition plan every year and involve all providers, family, and the student

## **What you can do at home:**

- Help your child develop self-help skills such as:
  - Cooking
  - Cleaning
  - Self-care
  - Traveling
  - Money management (bank account)
- Encourage self-exploration and decision making:
  - Explore your child's career and job interests
  - Encourage summer volunteer and work opportunities
- Collect student records, transcripts, data reports, and any other relevant documents from the school

# ACCUMULATING RESUME AND WORK EXPERIENCE

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## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOL

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### **Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)**

- Department of Education places students in a variety of internships
- Paid summer internship program for six weeks (July - August)
- For students ages 14 to 24
- Provides job coach (special education teacher/provider)

For more information, please visit [goo.gl/m4EUe4](http://goo.gl/m4EUe4).

### **Work, Learn, and Grow Employment Program**

- Department of Education places students in a variety of internships
- Paid year round internships (September - June)
- For students ages 14 to 24
- Must be a SYEP participant

### **Training Opportunities Program (TOP)**

- Administered by the Transition Coordination Center (formerly Placement and Referral Center)
- Paid internships for students with disabilities
- TOP liaisons will identify work locations where students with IEPs will earn minimum wage and can work up to 15 hours per week
- Hours count towards Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS)

### **Ladders for Leaders:**

- Paid summer internships with corporations, nonprofits, and government agencies
- Students receive help with resume, cover letter writing, and interviewing skills
- Internships align with students' career goals and interests
- For students ages 16 to 22
- Minimum GPA of 3.00

## **PART III: YOUR OPTIONS DURING TRANSITION**

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- Vocational Programs through the Department of Education (DOE)
- College
- Job training programs
  - Certificate programs
  - Vocational rehabilitation programs
- Supported employment programs
- Day habilitation programs
- Residential programs

# VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

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## Vocational programs available through the NYC Department of Education (DOE):

**Learning to Work (LTW)** is a career-based curriculum designed to help students graduate high school with job preparation through paid internships, soft skills training, counseling, interviewing skill coaching, and resume development. LTW is located in some transfer schools and all Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs). Students must enroll in either a transfer school with an LTW program or a YABC program in order to participate in an LTW program. For more information, visit [goo.gl/q37m54](http://goo.gl/q37m54).

**Cooperative Technology High School (Co-op Tech)** is a half-day vocational program that offers students hands-on training in a diverse field of trade areas. Co-op Tech serves students ages 17 to 21. Students enrolled in Co-op Tech will attend their regular DOE high school or high school equivalency program through Pathways to Graduation for half of their day and attend Co-op Tech the other half of their day. Enrollment at Co-op Tech fills up quickly and admission is heavily based on students' prior attendance rates. For more information, visit [www.co-optech.org](http://www.co-optech.org).

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)** programs run within specific DOE high schools. Students participate in a series of work-based learning experiences that include career days, field trips, internships, and other career preparation activities. Students apply to these programs in 8th or 9th grade and must indicate the code for the CTE program on their high school applications. Students graduate with a career and technical endorsement on their diploma. For more information, visit [goo.gl/DvfYvB](http://goo.gl/DvfYvB).

# COLLEGE ACCESS

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## Things to consider:

- Application process should begin junior year of high school
- Must apply for accommodations on SATs/ACTs with your guidance counselor
  - Apply at least two months before the date of the exam
- Consider transportation to college (travel time, attendance, and cost)
- Investigate the level of supports provided by Accessibility Offices in colleges
- Accommodations are available in college
  - Certain documentation required; keep Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and evaluations from high school
- Colleges must provide access, not success (different legal requirements)
  - Extra time must be provided in accordance with the IEP
  - Tutoring is not required
- Self-identifying and self-advocacy are necessary
  - Student must be prepared to identify their disability and explain their needs
  - Services must be requested by student

# ADULT CAREER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (ACCES-VR)



ACCES-VR, which is part of the New York State Education Department, provides job search, educational, and independent living services and supports that help adults with disabilities find employment. ACCES-VR may provide:

- Money for college programs, job training programs, and supported employment programs
- Funds for accommodations and assistive technology related to job
- Assistance with college payments and accommodations
- Employment opportunities/placement
- Up to \$15,000 for a single student

## ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive services, you must work with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) to determine eligibility based on the following criteria:

- Have a disability that interferes with getting or keeping a job
- Be able to benefit from VR services: can align abilities, interests, and career choice
- Require vocational rehabilitation to prepare for and secure employment
- Be able to travel
- Be 16 years old to apply (no age cut off)

You may be eligible for services regardless of whether or not you receive benefits (SSI/SSDI).

**Presumed Eligibility:** If you provide proof that you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) because of your disability, ACCES-VR will assume you are eligible for services.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE

If you meet the eligibility requirements, you will work with ACCES-VR to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE will outline your work goal, the steps involved, and the services you will need to achieve that goal. ACCES-VR can pay for certain services; particularly those that are job training and college/vocational school-related. These may include:

- A physical and/or psychological examination to determine how your disability affects your employment potential
- Career counseling, guidance, planning, and referral

# ADULT CAREER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (ACCES-VR)

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## SERVICES AVAILABLE (CONT.)

- Assistance with the job search process, such as:
  - Application forms
  - Resumes
  - Interviews
- On-the-job training at a community college or vocational school
- Services and supports that will help with training or assessment, such as:
  - Special transportation
  - Attendants, note-takers, and interpreters
  - Books, tools, and equipment
  - Rehabilitative and assistive technology
- Assistance with service costs related to employment, such as:
  - Worksite modification
  - Home, van, or other vehicle modification
- Job placement and retention
- Follow-up by ACCES-VR counselor to assess job satisfaction or additional needs
- Supplemental support in college: book vouchers, assistive technology, and other resources
- Short-term medical intervention not covered by other insurance

## APPLICATION PROCESS

- If possible, start the process when student is two years away from leaving high school
- Every school should have an ACCES-VR liaison
- Persistence and self-advocacy are key. Student must verbally acknowledge that they have a disability
- Process for being placed in a job training program:
  - Compile documents and fill out application
  - Attend an information session
  - Interview with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC)
  - Take Diagnostic Vocational Evaluation (between 5 - 12 days)
  - Program placement
  - Program interview
  - Begin!

# ADULT CAREER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (ACCES-VR)

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## DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO APPLY

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- State identification (ID)
- Medical insurance card
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Evaluations (psychological, psycho-social)
- Medical documentation
- Copy of high school diploma/credential (if relevant)
- High school transcript
- Resume (if one has been made)
- Copy of social security card
- Proof of address (preferably a bill)
- Proof of income (pay stub, W2)

## NEW YORK CITY OFFICES

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### THE BRONX

1215 Zerega Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10462  
(718) 931-3500

### BROOKLYN

55 Hanson Place  
2nd Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
(718) 722-6701  
TTY (718) 722-6736

### MANHATTAN

116 W 32nd Street  
6th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 630-2300  
TTY (212) 630-2314

### HARLEM

163 W 125th Street  
Room 713  
New York, NY 10027  
(212) 961-4420

### STATEN ISLAND

2071 Clove Road, Suite 302  
Staten Island, NY 10304  
(718) 816-4800  
TTY (718) 556-1752

### QUEENS

11-15 47th Avenue  
Long Island City, NY, 11101  
(347) 510-3100

# OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (OPWDD)

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Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is a state agency that supports people who have:

- Developmental disabilities
- Intellectual disabilities
- Some traumatic brain injuries (TBI)
- Autism
- Down syndrome
- Other disabilities with specific testing scores on IQ / adaptive skills tests

## SERVICES AVAILABLE

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- Medicaid Service Coordination
- Housing
- Employment
- Independent living
- Socialization services
- Residential care
- Self-direction services
- Day programs
- Respite

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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(Note: Application can be long and exhaustive)

- Contact eligibility officer at local Developmental Disabilities Regional Office (DDRO) (one in each borough)
- Sign up for a Front Door orientation session in your borough
- Gather all required documents
  - Save every document they give you!
- Begin looking into Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC) providers

Documents you need:

- A psychological evaluation that includes IQ testing and Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (69 or below; however for individuals with autism, this number can vary.)
- Psycho-social and/or social history report
- Medical physical (the same type of physical you would send to a school)

# OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (OPWDD)

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## Contacts:

Developmental Disabilities Regional Offices (DDROs)

### THE BRONX

2400 Halsey Street  
Bronx, NY 10461  
(718) 430-0757

### BROOKLYN

888 Fountain Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11208  
(718) 642-8576

### MANHATTAN

25 Beaver Street  
4th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
(646) 766-3220

### QUEENS

80-45 Winchester Blvd.  
Queens Village, NY 11427  
(718) 217-6485

### STATEN ISLAND

1150 Forest Hill Road  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
(718) 982-1913

# OTHER SUPPORTIVE AGENCIES

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## Other Supportive Agencies:

- **Independent Living Centers (ILCs):** Organizations in each borough that help people with disabilities learn independent living skills and find jobs, housing, and access benefits
- **Office of Mental Health (OMH):** Provides support and services, including counseling, to people with mental health disabilities  
[www.omh.ny.gov](http://www.omh.ny.gov)
- **AHRC:** Provides supportive employment, housing, school, and in-home services and support

# WRAP UP

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## Remember:

- Know your diploma options.
- Begin communicating with your student about transition as early as possible.
- Work with school and providers to build a transition plan.
- Work on self-advocacy skills with your student.
- If your student goes to college, get to know the accessibility office staff and advocate for accommodations.
- Apply for OPWDD and ACCES-VR as early as possible. They will hold your applications until you're ready for services.
- **Document everything! Keep everything!**

\*If you have any questions, call our Help Line at (212) 677-4660.