

## Transition to adulthood

When an individual turns 18, he or she becomes a legal adult regardless of disability. Here are some changes to be aware of:

1. **Legal** – Depending on the support needs of the person on the autism spectrum, the parents or guardians may need to obtain legal instruments regarding their adult child such as guardianship, conservatorship and/or powers of attorney. These take time and can be expensive to implement, so start to research these instruments well before your adult child turns 18.
2. **Medical** – At age 18, and sometimes earlier, the disabled person controls access to his or her medical records. To access your adult child's medical records after age 18, parents will need the written consent of their adult child, or a separate legal right to access those records.
3. **Social Security** – At age 18, income and asset eligibility will be based on only the disabled person's income and assets, not the family's income and assets. A parent can be designated as the representative payee although that does not confer separate legal rights such as guardianship. A person receiving SSI or other Social Security program can be employed in specific circumstances. Please contact SSA for more information as there are several programs and the requirements can be complex. For more information on Social Security disability programs, see: <https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi/>
4. **Support services for adults** - At age 18, the person on the autism spectrum transitions into adult support services, which can continue to be through the county Developmental Disability (DD) services or be provided through brokerage support services. These services are designed to help a person with a developmental disability live in their own home or with family or friends and fully participate in community life, including work.
  - a. To be eligible, the person must have a confirmed DD diagnosis, not be receiving comprehensive services, and be eligible for DD Services. For a list of local DD program offices go to: [www.oregon.gov/DHS/dd/county/county\\_programs.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/dd/county/county_programs.shtml) or call your local County DD Program Office, or call



**1-800-282-8096.** If the disabled person does not already have DD Services, try to apply before his or her 22nd birthday, as it's much easier.

- b. Comprehensive Services such as residential services, group homes, and foster homes are different as they provide 24 hour supports. Enrolling in Support Services for Adults will not hurt the chances of accessing Comprehensive Services or any other service a person with ASD may need in the future.
- c. Your adult child can receive services through either the county DD Services or through a Support Brokerage. This is a change from years past when services for adults were only through the Support Brokerages. The person receiving services can chose to move from county services to Brokerage services (and back) at any time, although some Brokerages have waitlists.
- d. Services through a brokerage are provided by your Personal Agent (PA). Services through the county are provided by your Service Coordinator (SC). Services are provided based on need as determined by an Adult Needs Assessment. From there, an Individual Support Plan (ISP) will be prepared to help the person function as independently as possible at home and in the community. The person receiving services can change their PA or SC at any time.
- e. An adult can hire his or her parents as Personal Support Workers, but NOT if the parent is the legal guardian of the disabled person because it's a conflict of interest. Instead, a third party would need to be appointed to make that decision.

- 5. Education** – If the person on the autism spectrum graduates with a regular high school diploma, they are no more educational services available. However, graduation with a modified diploma means the person is eligible for transition services until the end of the school year when they turn 21 years old.

