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The purpose of our NewsBlast is to provide information to youth ages 14 1/2 to 22, parents, and professionals who serve youth with disabilities in planning for, and achieving, a successful transition into high school, through high school, and into needed adult services.

This monthly “news blast” highlights a youth story of the month, a service provider of the month, a link to an article about transition or self-advocacy, and links to service organizations and agencies that provide services to youth with disabilities as they transition out of school services.

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The contents of this NewsBlast were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M200072. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer David Emenheiser.
Youth Story of the Month

Kyra Mars is a Freshman at Shelbyville High School.

This past summer, with the help of her teacher Robyn, Family Matters, and Central Illinois Public Transit, Kyra chose to work hard on her job and social and vocational skills. Her first pick and best choice was Jim Beam’s Corner Cattery. She volunteered two days a week to help at the rescue center. Kyra has hopes of one day becoming a veterinary assistant.

Working with cats helps with Kyra's anxiety and the structured routine helped keep her on track and focused. Kyra loved her volunteer position.
Service Provider of the Month

Illinois Assistive Technology Project
www.iltech.org

Mission: To provide Illinoisans of all ages with disabilities and health conditions greater access to assistive technology devices and services so that they may enhance their independence and participation in all aspects of life.

Contact IATP:
800-852-5110
1020 S. Spring St.
Springfield, IL  62704

Featured Services for Transition-Age Youth and Their Parents

* Assistance in the workplace, home or school to help persons meet vocational or independent living goals (in collaboration with DRS-Division of Rehabilitation Services)
* Assistive Technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication evaluations (free for students and schools)
* Assistive technology training (free for students and schools)
* Loans of assistive technology devices
* Provision of used assistive technology/equipment
* Financial loans for purchasing assistive technology and home modifications

The Demonstration Center includes items related to:
* General aids for daily living
* Vision
* Communication
* Hearing
* Mobility, seating, and positioning
* Computer access
* Learning and cognition
* Vehicle modifications
* Sensory input

IATP provides WIPA (Work Incentives Planning and Assistance) services for 67 counties of Illinois. This program helps those receiving SSI/SSDI to make informed choices about employment.
The transition to adulthood is a significant and exciting time in a person’s life. For youth with special healthcare needs and their families, this journey is no less rewarding, but requires careful planning and knowledge of valuable resources to assist in the transition. The University of Illinois at Chicago’s Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) is one resource that can assist families through the transition process. UIC has created a very helpful Transition Toolkit that will help families navigate the transition process.


Transition Service Providers:

(Click on the logos to be taken to the websites)

Social Security Administration

SSA provides government benefits to eligible individuals including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Search the website for “disability benefits”. Search “ticket to work” to learn about working while receiving benefits.

Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living

CILs exist to help people with disabilities achieve maximum independence in work, school, housing and every other part of life. They offer peer support, information and referral, individual and systems advocacy, independent living skills training, and transition support to bridge high school to college and/or work.
IDES administers employment services in Illinois. Search “Employment First” on the website to learn how Illinois law promotes community-based, integrated employment as the first option for employment-related services for individuals with disabilities.

Community Residential Services Authority

CRSA provides technical assistance to families, service providers, educators and other professionals to help plan for and implement appropriate, effective services for children with severe emotional disturbances and behavior disorders in Illinois. This includes youth in high school.

Illinois Department of Human Services
Division of Rehabilitation Services – DRS

DRS assists people with disabilities in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities. They provide personal attendants through their Home Services Program.

PAS agencies conduct and arrange for assessment of individuals with developmental disabilities who are in need of active treatment. ISCs assist in setting up services and registering individuals for the PUNS database of persons in need of services and funding.
The Autism Program of Illinois

The Autism Program of Illinois serves and support persons with autism spectrum disorder and their families through a coordinated network of providers, parents, and university programs. They provide evidence-based services for individuals including youth of transition age. They connect youth through programs such as virtual support groups and social skills groups.

UIC Specialized Care for Children

UIC-SCC partners with families and children and youth (to age 18) with special healthcare needs. Care coordinators work with families to put together a transition plan that identifies clear goals for adulthood and the strategies, services and resources necessary to achieve them.

Illinois Assistive Technology Project

IATP provides free information and assistance on assistive technology and other related disability topics. They can provide assistive technology evaluations and devices, including those to support community living, education, and employment. IATP provides WIPA (Work Incentives Planning and Assistance) services for 67 counties of Illinois. This program helps those receiving SSI/SSDI to make informed choices about employment.

Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center

FMPTIC provides individual support to youth with disabilities and their parents related to educational services and provides training on transition-related topics. Staff work with youth on self-advocacy skills and teach them about their special education rights and responsibilities.

Please let us know of other organizations that serve youth statewide to add to this list.

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