

Introduction

The future can often seem unsure for a youth with a disability. It may be hard for you to think about waking up one day and not going to school. Many youth and families find the thought of leaving high school to be very hard. You don't know what comes next.

Your parents may have spent years working on getting your IEP set up. That was to help you do and be your best during your school years. If you are still in school, you can work on many of the skills you need. One day you could live on your own with careful planning and hard work now.

This toolkit was built using guiding principles from **Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans (FHF)** and **Louisiana Parent Training and Information Center (LaPTIC)**.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- People with disabilities can be active and thrive with others in their area. They can go to work and school. They can get around, do fun things, and live in their own home.
 - People with disabilities will be treated nicely and fairly. They will be treated like they know things.
 - Parents of people with disabilities will be able to find tips on helping their children. They will have other parents to help them help their children.
 - FHF will teach people everywhere about the great things people with disabilities can do. They will help people with disabilities live and work as others do. They can get around and have fun, too.
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This toolkit was created by FHF of GNO and LaPTIC. Parent centers from six states worked on it together. People from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas worked on it. The toolkit was made for a lot of reasons. These reasons include:

- To see if students with disabilities were ready to live on their own.
- To give students and their families ideas to get them ready to live on their own.

This toolkit was made for young people with disabilities who want to learn to live on their own. It was also made for their family members who want to help. It is also a good tool for adults with disabilities who want to live on their own. It is good for people who want to be better at taking care of themselves with less help. The tips are meant for anyone, but some of the checklists may not apply to every person.

Planning to live on your own means knowing what your own needs are. Every person is different and needs help in different ways. It is important for you and your family to figure out what you need to live on your own. Family should help but not take over for you when you plan your life and how you will live.

The toolkit is set up to go over these 13 big skill areas:

1. Making Choices
2. Knowing Who You Are and What You Need
3. Keeping a Healthy Body
4. My Healthcare
5. Cooking & Eating Healthy
6. Helpful Tech
7. Being Safe
8. Building Good Relationships
9. Moving Out
10. A Clean and Happy Home
11. Getting Around
12. Money Matters
13. Being a Part of Your World

The toolkit also has worksheets for you. They will help you plan to live on your own.

You become an adult at 18 years old in our state. At that time, the law says you can manage your own life. That includes where you will live and what you will do.

Living on your own uses many skills. You have to know how to take care of your body and keep it clean. You have to know how to stay safe at home and when you go out. These are skills most of us learn over time at home and at school. They give us the core of what it takes to live on your own.

For young people with disabilities, daily living skills can be a challenge. That's why it's important for you to start early working on these skills. It's really never too early to start. After all, there is no such thing as too much practice!

It is a good idea to start with the checklists in the Decision Making and Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy sections. These chapters cover the basics you need for success.

Being a success at living on your own happens when you have a team of people helping you to live your dream!