



**Who we are**

**what we do**

*a brighter future for children with disabilities*

[www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)

June 2021

# ★ STEP: Who We Are & What We Do

Support and Training for Exceptional Parents, Inc. (STEP) is a statewide not-for-profit established in 1989 serving Tennessee families.

We are Tennessee's PTI - Parent Training and Information Center.

## WHO do we help?

Families or caregivers in Tennessee with children and youth, birth to 26, with a diagnosed or suspected disability or special healthcare/mental health needs. STEP believes parents and caregivers are a child's best advocate.

## HOW do we help?

- ★ Navigating special education laws
- ★ IEP or 504 Plan review and assistance
- ★ Virtual and in-person workshops and training
- ★ Referrals to other agencies
- ★ Life after high school planning
- ★ Training videos and webinars
- ★ Collaboration and communication
- ★ Special education updates

Services are **FREE** for Tennessee families

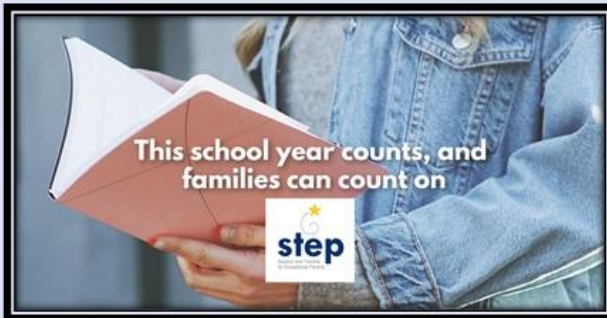


# Transition to Adulthood Resources

*a brighter future for children with disabilities*

[www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)

# 5 Things You Can Count on



**Being Informed +  
Student Self-Advocacy =  
A STEP in the  
Right Direction**

<http://bit.ly/Transition-to-Adulthood-Sped-Video>

*Please COUNT on STEP for help!*

*Contact us at 423.639.0125 or  
information@tnstep.org*

## Transition to Adulthood

### 5 things you can COUNT on:

1

Knowing the Roles in Transition Planning.

2

Actively Participating in IEP Transition Planning - Youth and Family!

3

Being Informed about Diploma Options.

4

Accessing Adult Services When Needed.

5

Building Skills for Adulthood.



# STEP YouTube Training Series

## FREE "On Demand" STEP YouTube Training: Planning for Life After High School



- ★ Learn when you are ready and at your own pace
- ★ View on your computer, smartphone or tablet
- ★ Receive a "Certificate of Completion" for each series you finish!



**Planning for  
Success After  
High School**

### Log On and Learn:

Training by Joey Ellis and the STEP Transition Team  
Informative 4 Part Series

- ★ Living the American Dream
- ★ Transition Tools
- ★ Diploma Paths
- ★ Writing the Transition Plan

<https://bit.ly/Planning-for-Life-After-HS-Video>

For more information about STEP services visit [www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)



<https://bit.ly/Planning-for-Life-After-HS-Video>



# Transition to Adulthood Guides

**step**  
Support and Training  
for Exceptional Parents

## Transition to Adulthood Guides

Self Advocacy | Self Directed IEP's | Further Education  
College | Job Seeking | Employment  
Dropout Prevention | Parent's Role | Community | Decision Making

Follow this link to view all ten Transition to Adulthood Guides  
<http://bit.ly/transition-guides-complete-set>

SCAN ME

TN Department of Education

A collaborative project with the Tennessee Department of Education and their family partner Support & Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP, Inc.).  
STEP, Inc. (Support and Training for Exceptional Parents) Special Education assistance for Tennessee Families  
(800) 280-7837 • Español at (800) 975-2919 • [www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org) • [information@tnstep.org](mailto:information@tnstep.org)  
May 2021

Transition Guide: Self-Advocacy  
Transition Guide: College  
Transition Guide: Dropout Prevention  
Transition Guide: Parents' Role  
Transition Guide: Job Seeking  
Transition Guide: Further Education  
Transition Guide: Employment  
Transition Guide: Self-Directed IEP  
Transition Guide: Decision Making  
Transition Guide: Community

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February 2019

<http://bit.ly/transition-guides-complete-set>

*a brighter future for children with disabilities*

# ★ Getting Help with Making Choices

## Getting Help with Making Choices

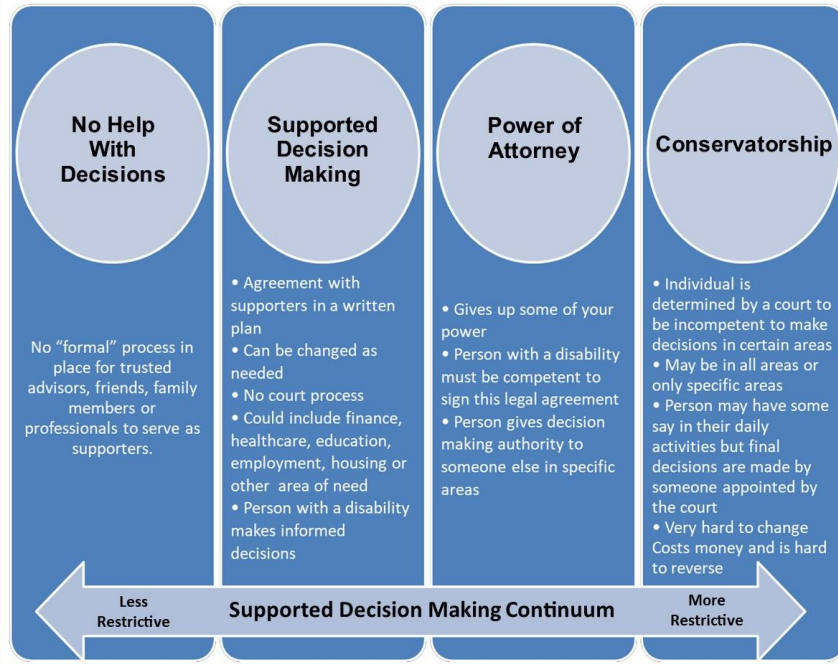
Supported Decision Making (SDM) is a term used to describe a process that allows people with disabilities to retain their decision-making capacity by choosing supporters to help them make choices. A person using SDM selects trusted advisors, such as friends, family members, or professionals to serve as supporters. The supporters agree to help the person with a disability understand, consider, and communicate decisions. This opportunity to make informed decisions is something that is important to every individual, with or without disabilities.

For too long families have been led to believe that the only way to make sure their son or daughter with a disability is "safe" after they turn 18 is to seek conservatorship. Now, people with disabilities and advocacy organizations have been working to ensure that family members, legislators, educators, and community members have accurate information on subjects around this topic.

A new law about decision making was passed in Tennessee this Spring. You can read more about it at the TN Council on Developmental Disabilities' State Legislative Policy Priorities page here: [bit.ly/2K5D6CG](http://bit.ly/2K5D6CG)

Learn more about this concept and how it works with these fantastic resources:

- The TN Council on Developmental Disabilities has a SDM resource page here: [bit.ly/TNCDDSDM](http://bit.ly/TNCDDSDM)
- National Resource Center for SDM: [supporteddecisionmaking.org](http://supporteddecisionmaking.org)
- Parent Guide to Getting Ready for the Age of Majority: [bit.ly/2nssKCX](http://bit.ly/2nssKCX)
- Supported Decision Making — Call to Action Video: [youtu.be/vqF3NiTeWg](https://youtu.be/vqF3NiTeWg)
- Supported Decision Making — Gabby's Story Video: [youtu.be/duyJkZ2mIQ](https://youtu.be/duyJkZ2mIQ)
- STEP's Transition Guide on Decision Making: [bit.ly/STEPTGDM2](http://bit.ly/STEPTGDM2)



# Decision Making 101 Guide

## Decision Making 101

### One Decision Leads to Another

It's never too early or too late to start helping people, at any age, to make their own decisions. And, if you believe—as STEP hopes you do—that people with disabilities should have the same opportunities to important life decisions, then this guide will help make that a reality. Very few of us make decisions by ourselves. We turn to those people in our lives—our parents, siblings, friends, people we know that we trust, to help us consider the pros and consequences of each decision.

### Two Laws that Work Together and Impact Decision Making

#### Least Restrictive Environment

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is most often used when talking about where a child or youth will receive their education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the school team, to consider the general education classroom at the child's zoned school first. The least restrictive environment for each person, in school and in adulthood, is the place the **person chooses** to live, play, work, and learn. Decisions about inclusive education often impact an individual's future independence and opportunities.

#### Supported Decision Making

Supported Decision Making is a way for people to keep the right decisions. The year 2019 that restricts a person's very own decisions.

#### Visual Resource Gallery

- Supported Decision-Making**  
TN Council on DD  
National SGM Center  
National Parent Center
- Education**  
IDEA 45  
STEP Parent Training Center  
Wrightslaw
- Money and Budgeting**  
Plan a Perfect Life Manual  
Youth Financial Management
- Technology**  
DOD Tech Program  
Assistive Tech for Teens  
TN Technology Access Center
- Housing**  
Adult Housing Options  
TN Housing Agency (THDA)  
HUD Fair Housing
- Legal**  
TN DOE Legal Resources  
Office of Civil Rights (OCR)  
Disability Rights TN
- Disability Awareness and Self-Advocacy**  
Youth Self-Advocacy Videos  
Disability Awareness  
Self-Advocacy Best Practices
- Independence**  
Adolescent Autonomy Checklist  
Independence Videos (Youth)  
Skill Building for Youth Videos

- Education**  
IDEA 45  
STEP Parent Training Center  
Wrightslaw
- Money and Budgeting**  
Plan a Perfect Life Manual  
Youth Financial Management
- Safety**  
Teen Emergency Preparedness  
Online Safety for Youth  
TN Comm Aging and Disability
- Medical**  
Youth Health Care Planning  
PACER Health Plan for Youth  
Youth Health Advocacy Videos
- Transportation**  
Special Education Rights  
Assessment Guide  
TN Public Transit Services
- Adult and Community Services**  
TN DHS - Disability Services  
Social Security Administration  
Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

For additional resources visit [www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org) (Supported Decision Making Tab)

## Decision Making 101

### Least Restrictive isn't just about kids in school; it's about people throughout their lives.

The individual's VOICE and CHOICES should increase over time.

	Infant/Toddler Birth - Preschool	Elementary Grades K - 5	Middle School Grades 6 - 8	High School Grades 9 - 12	Beyond High School
<b>Decision Makers and Decision Supporters</b>	Parent/Caregiver Other family members Physicians Service Providers	Parent/caregiver Child Teachers	Parent/caregiver Child Teachers	Young person Parent/caregiver Teachers	Individual/Adult Trusted friends Family/co-workers
<b>Increase the types of decisions or choices the individual can make</b>	Food choices Games/toys Other preferences of what they like or don't like	Bedtime Activities with friends Social media interactions	Classes to take Friends to hang out with Sports/after-school clubs Musical instruments	Career path Romantic partners Transition/IEP planning Post-secondary options	Housing/college Wellness/leisure Social interactions
<b>Places where you receive services and spend time</b>	Daycare Center Preschool Early Learning Early Intervention	School Home Afterschool programs	Classroom Community	At school In the home In the community On the job	On the job In the home/rental College

#### What If Decisions Being Made Put a Person at Risk?

Many families believe that the only way to make sure their son or daughter with a disability is "safe" in school or in the community is to restrict their decision making by taking away their rights. We all make choices that may not be in our best interest. For example: eating pizza and chocolate every night and no vegetables! There are situations where we may feel the need to limit decision making for the individual, such as life-threatening situations which put them or others in danger or at risk of exploitation; decisions about medical procedures or signing financial commitments. These are very tough discussions to have and are perfect examples of why we promote supported decision making. There is a continuum of supported decision-making options that can be explored. They range from no help with decisions to totally taking away a person's rights, with many other options in-between. To learn more about this important topic, contact the STEP offices or your STEP Regional Coordinator.

Allowing a person to participate in **choice and decision making** — at any age — with whatever level of support they need, is the **least restrictive, and most empowering gift** for each individual.



# Reality Check-list

## REALITY CHECK

### An Independence Check-List

Ok, you've decided to live on your own, either by yourself or with a roommate. The chances that your mom or your dad, or your brother or your sister is going to show up every day to do your chores, or to even make sure you've done your chores on your own are small to none. That means you're going to have to be responsible for getting a whole lot of things done by yourself!

So, what exactly are those things, and which of them do you already know how to do?

Task	I do this by myself now	I am working on being able to do this independently	I will need support completing this task
Waking up in the morning.			
Making breakfast.			
Making lunch.			
Cleaning up after my meal/doing dishes.			
Packing lunch.			
Getting to school or work on time.			
Getting home or to work after school.			
Washing my clothes.			
Drying my clothes.			
Folding my clothes.			
Putting my folded clothes away.			
Making dinner.			
Completing other household chores.			
Cleaning up after dinner/doing dishes.			
Showering or bathing without reminders.			
Mentally preparing for the next day.			
Keeping track of my money/keeping receipts.			
Having a bank account.			
Saving money.			
Preparing a grocery and supplies list.			
Shopping for groceries and supplies.			
Paying rent/utilities.			

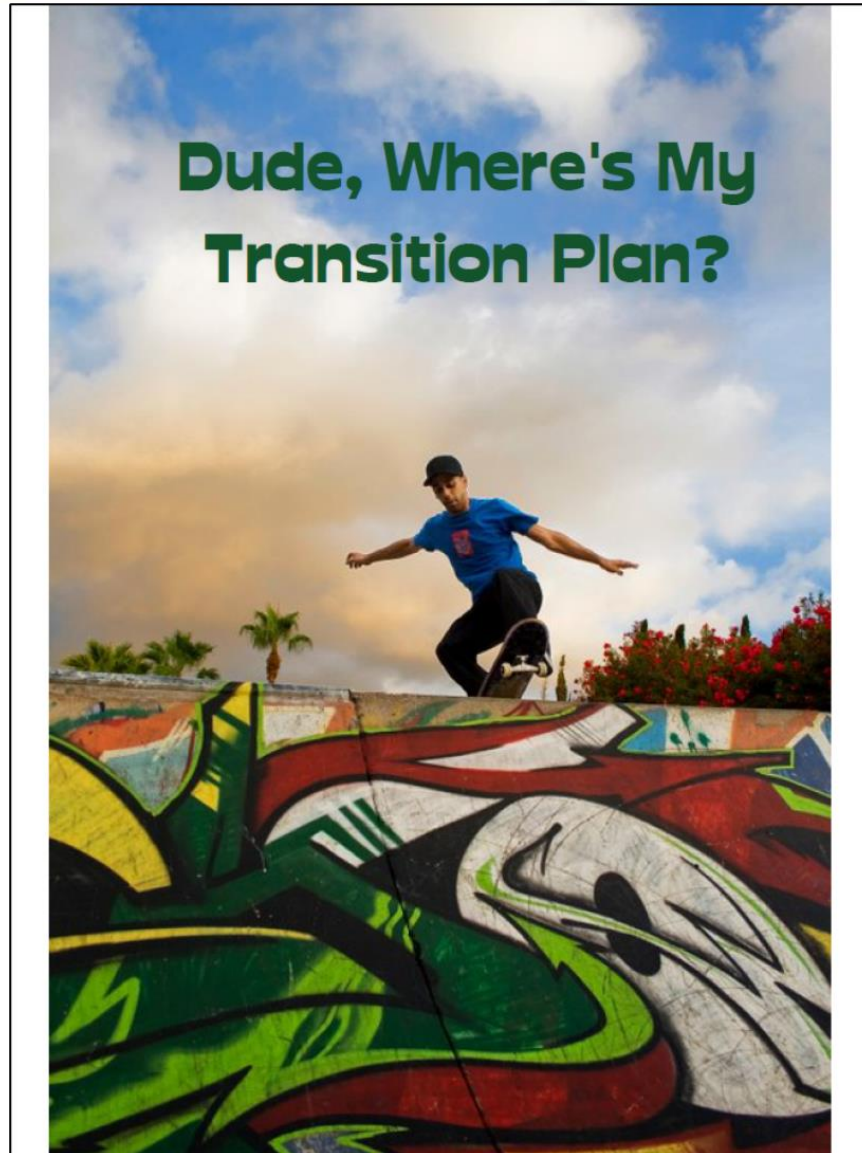
The segment was developed by staff at the TN Council on Developmental Disabilities, who frequently co-facilitate youth trainings. Used with permission by STEP, Inc.



<http://bit.ly/step-reality-checklist>

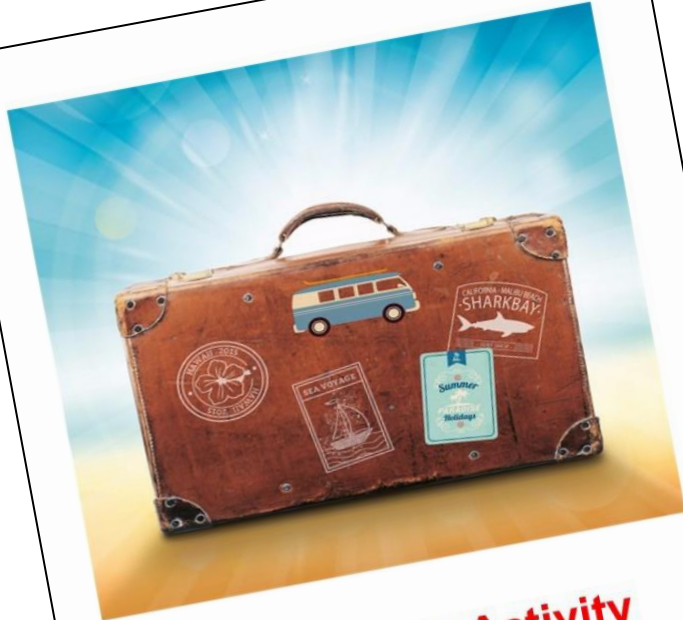


# ★ Dude, Where's My Transition Plan?



<http://bit.ly/step-dude-transition-book>

# Transition Activities



## Dreambuilder Activity



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[www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)



## Show Me The Money Activity



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[www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)

<http://bit.ly/dream-building-activity-cards>

<http://bit.ly/show-me-the-money-activity-cards>

# What's Out There to Help Me



## What's Out There to Help Me – Exploring Your Options

This is a quick reference guide to explore your options while preparing for or navigating life after high school. There are many more, but this will get you started!

### Employment

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Tennessee's American Job Centers (Career Centers)
- ECF – The Employment and Community First CHOICES Program
- Benefits to Work
- Project SEARCH



### Post-Secondary Education

- Tennessee Universities
- Community Colleges
- Post-Secondary College Programs for students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (and those who graduate without a regular education high school diploma)
- Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna
- Offices of Disability Services on college campuses

### Post-Secondary Training (Trade Schools)

- Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (*formerly the Technology Centers*)

### Independent Living

- Tennessee's Centers for Independent Living
- ECF – The Employment and Community First CHOICES Program

### Other Resources

- Tennessee's Technology Access Centers
- Tennessee Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE TN)
- Social Security Income
- Tennessee Disability Pathfinder

# Transition Resources and Links

## STEP Transition Resources and Links

[www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)



### STEP's 5 Things You Can COUNT On: Transition to Adulthood

- Facebook Video  
<http://bit.ly/Transition-to-Adulthood-5-Things-to-Count-On-Video>
- Handout  
<http://bit.ly/Trans-to-Adulthood-Five-Points>

### STEP Diploma and Postsecondary Options

- <http://bit.ly/diploma-postsecondary-options>

### STEP Dream Building Activity Cards

A fun way to approach transition planning. <https://bit.ly/Dream-Building-Activity>

- An effective tool for students who have fine motor and communication needs.
- Gives students a visual that represents a variety of post-school outcomes and allow them to express what is important to them. Plus, aids in development of long-term goals.

Invite STEP, Inc. to come to your school or facility for an on-site Dream Building session. Email your request for an on-site session to [information@tnstep.org](mailto:information@tnstep.org).

### STEP Dude Where's My Transition Plan booklet

- <http://bit.ly/STEPDudeBook>

### STEP Resources to Help with Transition Planning

- <http://bit.ly/transition-planning-resources>

### STEP Transition to Adult Life Guides

- <http://bit.ly/STEP-Transition-Guides-Complete-Set>

### STEP YouTube Video Series: Planning for Life After High School

- <http://bit.ly/YouTube-Series-Planning-for-Life-After-HS>

### Tennessee Department of Education

Special Education Secondary Transition

- <http://bit.ly/TDOE-Sp-Ed-Secondary-Transition>

### Transition Tennessee

Transition Tennessee is a collaboration between the Tennessee Department of Education, Vanderbilt University's Department of Special Education, and TennesseeWorks.

- <http://transitiontn.org>

### Tennessee Works

Videos and materials <http://www.tennesseeworks.org/>

Want to keep up with all the latest resources, events, and trainings related to helping young people with disabilities thrive in the workplace? Subscribe to the newsletter: <http://www.tennesseeworks.org/subscribe/>

O\*NET OnLine has detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more.

- <https://www.onetonline.org/>

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1113 Tusculum Blvd. #393, Greenville, TN 37745  
Phone: 423.639.0125 FAX: 423.636.8217 Email: [information@tnstep.org](mailto:information@tnstep.org) Website: [www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)

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# More Information



## Website

[www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org)



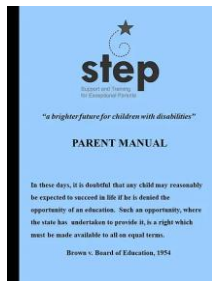
## Events Calendar

<https://tnstep.org/events>



## Archived Webinars & Virtual Trainings

<https://tnstep.org/webinars>



## STEP's Parent Manual

View on home page at [www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org),  
or order disc or hardcopy



[facebook.com/tnstep](https://facebook.com/tnstep)



[youtube.com/user/TNStep](https://youtube.com/user/TNStep)



[twitter.com/tnstep](https://twitter.com/tnstep)

## Training Workshops DVD's

English & Spanish



# Empowering Families to Ensure a Brighter Future for Children with Disabilities

This is a journey, and the STEP staff is available to provide support, information, and training to families and students!

Call 800-280-7837 or your local office

## West Tennessee

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(901) 726-4334

## Middle Tennessee

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(615) 463-2310

## East Tennessee

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