



How will we discuss disability with our child including the transfer of rights at age 18?

Your child's role in education, as in life, will continue to evolve as maturity and growth occur. Self-determination is an important attribute for all people to possess. It is developed by acquiring a set of skills that help a person understand individual Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs (SPIN).

Helping children understand that we all have strengths and that we all have areas where we need help to be successful is a good first step toward disability awareness. Conversations with your child about the diagnosed disability should:

- Be open, without being overly detailed;
- Be accurate and age-appropriate;
- Name the disability;
- Focus on the disability not being shameful or embarrassing;
- Respond to your child's questions and seek answers to questions if needed; and
- Help to find strengths, preferences, and interests.

The [I'm Determined](#) website provides tools and examples to help your child identify strengths, interests, and preferences, as well as information about how others can assist. In addition, there are regional representatives of the program who can talk to you and show you how to navigate the website and use the tools that are available.

Questions to ask the school:

- How can I begin explaining my child's disability and its potential impact?
- How can my child participate in the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to the maximum extent?
- Can my child effectively exercise the right to make educational decisions upon reaching age 18 and whom should I consult for advice in this area if I feel that I still need to be involved in educational decision-making on behalf of my adult child?
- Will I be able to attend IEP meetings after my child's eighteenth birthday?
- Will I be able to assist my child in making informed decisions or serve as my child's advocate after age eighteen?

When to Consider:

As soon as your child is found eligible for special education services.

Transfer of Rights

At age eighteen, education rights transfer to the child. If your child is not able to independently make decisions, you will need to take steps to continue to be involved. If your child will be able to handle this automatic transfer of rights, it will be important to engage in the preparation process for this milestone by increasing responsibility over a period of time. The IEP Team must include a statement in your child's IEP (beginning at least one year before your child turns 18) that you and your child have been advised that the educational rights transfer to the child upon reaching 18. Please refer to [Transfer of Rights for Students with Disabilities Upon Reaching the Age of Majority in Virginia](#) for more information.