

# What Parents and Caregivers NEED TO KNOW:

## What is healthcare transition?

Healthcare transition is about your child taking responsibility for their own health needs, and not depending on others to do it for them. Health plays an important role in your child's development. It has a direct effect on their goals for learning, working and living safely in the community. This is a complex process that involves you and others, and may seem overwhelming. With information and preparation, you can help your child.

## Tell me more about it.

Healthcare transition is a natural part of growing up. Part of adolescence is becoming independent and finding a place within the adult community. Healthcare transition includes:

- ▶ understanding any health conditions
- ▶ talking about plans for the future and setting goals for achieving them
- ▶ becoming responsible for daily tasks such as homework, chores, and medications
- ▶ being actively involved in doctor appointments, IEPs, 504, or any meetings about their care
- ▶ learning how to communicate effectively and engage in healthy relationships

## Adolescence can be a challenging time.

Prepare yourself and your child for changes during adolescence. Some of these changes include:

- ▶ development of sexual characteristics
- ▶ move from middle school to high school
- ▶ need to belong to a peer group
- ▶ evolution of relationships: dating, sexual intimacy, and sexual preference
- ▶ emergence of personal values, morals, and life goals
- ▶ desire for autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality

**Every child  
will transition at  
their own pace.**

## How can parents and caregivers help?

Transition may be difficult for you as a parent or caregiver. You may feel talking with your child is a challenge. You may be unsure about how to prepare for the transition and where to begin. These issues can be even more difficult if your child has special healthcare needs or a disability.

By taking this transition step-by-step you can help your child become an adult.

The Rhode Island Department of Health has resources to help you and your child complete a healthcare transition plan. The back cover of this brochure has a list of resources.



**Help your child  
recognize they are  
individuals with unique  
strengths and challenges.**

## Things to consider about your child's healthcare transition:

- ▶ Health insurance eligibility after age 18 may change.
- ▶ Your child must transfer to the adult healthcare system by age 21.
- ▶ Your child will need to understand and manage any health conditions to be successful at school or at work.
- ▶ School systems are required to begin transition planning at age 14 with any student who receives special education services.
- ▶ At age 18 your child can legally make his/her own decisions about healthcare.

Your ability to recognize, understand, and accept the changes your child is experiencing (and having a healthcare transition plan) will help you provide guidance and support to your child throughout the healthcare transition process.

**“As I got older, when I heard my parents worried about my health, it was a wake up call. This is actually MY thing.”**

## For more information:

Rhode Island Department of Health  
Office of Special Needs

[www.health.ri.gov/specialneeds](http://www.health.ri.gov/specialneeds)

Got Transition.org  
[www.gottransition.org](http://www.gottransition.org)

The Rhode Island Parent  
Information Network (RIPIN)  
[www.RIPIN.org](http://www.RIPIN.org)



For information on healthcare  
transition, call the  
Health Information Line:  
401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711

# HOW HEALTHCARE TRANSITION WORKS



a guide for  
**PARENTS &  
CAREGIVERS**