



# '09 Response to School Leavers with a Disability

## Planning

*People who have a disability and their families are in the best position to determine their own needs and goals, and to plan for the future*  
(Future Directions: Strategic Directions 3.1).

### Introduction

Disability ACT has offered support to school leavers since 2000. During this time we have met with many young people and their families. Our experience has shown that positive outcomes for students with disabilities can be enhanced when planning has occurred prior to the end of the young persons' last year in school.

The end of formal education brings opportunities, challenges, and stressors for all young people. Planning can help individuals and families to take stock, to prepare for what lies ahead, and to start taking actions that will help them shape their future.

Disability ACT encourages all students leaving school to start planning early.

### A simple Planning processes

Some of the things people have found useful to think about when planning:

1. develop a vision for the future: what will that look like in 5 years  
(describe)
2. what strengths and skills and assets do you already have?  
(describe)
3. identify what other skills and resources you might need.  
(describe)
4. who can assist you  
(describe)
5. what are the first steps you need to take  
(describe)
6. how will you measure your success  
(describe)





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## Planning resources

The Future Pathways Guide: Is a list of many services and supports available to you in the ACT that maybe of assistance to you in the implementation of your plan. Speak to you school advisor about access to a copy of the Future Pathways Guide.

Negotiating the maze: These case studies were developed by the Ministry of Education, British Columbia, Canada. They illustrate how Individual Learning Plans (called Individual Education Plans in British Columbia) have been developed to meet the needs of two very different students. This document can be downloaded from the Disability Coordination Office website at [www.disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au](http://www.disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au)

Some other useful resources for individuals with disabilities and families are the books written by Al Etmanski and others from Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN). These books are:

- *A Good Life* and
- *Safe and Secure*.

Each book provides a step-by-step guide (including worksheets) to work through planning for the future with a person with a disability. Further information on these books can be found on the PLAN website [www.plan.ca](http://www.plan.ca). They are also available through Planned Individual Networks (PIN), a Western Australian organisation developed along similar lines to PLAN. PIN is currently producing a West Australian edition of *Safe and Secure* and this will be available in the near future. PIN also provides program and services to families of people with disabilities. PIN's website is [www.pin.org.au](http://www.pin.org.au)

Other resources that provide practical information on planning the transition to independent living, particularly for young people moving out of home for the first time, are: *All in a Life's Design and Spread Your Wings*. Both of these books can be located through the Disability Services Commission's website [www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au).

The book, *The Homes West Experience. Steps to Independent Living for Adults with a Disability*, is a resource that describes the journey of a small group of Queensland families who joined together to create a non-traditional independent living service for their family members. This book available from the Curriculum Resource Unit (CRU) website [www.cru.org.au](http://www.cru.org.au) or can be obtained from CRU publications in Queensland.

## Planning Advice

- Planning tools and services can assist you... but they can't plan for you
- Services and funding can provide effective assistance, but only if you are clear what you want from them
- Disability ACT cannot make the plan on behalf of your family or the school leaver
- Funding or *a place in a service* is not a plan
- Planning will alleviate some of the anxiety that arises during this important period of transition

