

Brief Summary of Services in The United States by Wendy Walsh

Child birth to three years of age

- Check your states Early Intervention Program (EIP). You may check with your child's Pediatrician on who the EIP local services would be and if your child is eligible.

Child three to eighteen years of age

- Apply for Developmental Disabilities Administration in your state (may have a different name depending on where you live). You may find this by contacting your local ARC chapter [ARC Chapter by State](#).
- You may call local school district about six months before your child's third birthday. If your child is eligible for preschool special education services or developmental preschool, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed by the school district before your child's third birthday. Creating a folder before your child turns three which includes birth certificate, immunization record, medical records, photos, evaluations, assessments, medical information and anything else that may be helpful. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public schools to provide your child with free, appropriate public education from age three to 21 years of age. Each school district is responsible for their own special education. The IDEA law indicates transition needs must be identified at age 14 and transition services must be provided at age 16. Students can attend school and receive support through their 21st birthday, if they have not met their graduation requirements for IEP goals. Your school may have a transition program for students 18-21.
- **Transportation:** Public transportation planning and services.
- **Financial planning:** Services and funding vary so having a special needs trust created with an attorney who specializes in the subject.
- **Legal concerns:** For guardianship and estate planning, contact an attorney who has updated knowledge about the Social Security system, special needs trusts and how to write a Will concerning a child with a disability. Sometimes this can be done in only a few appointments.
- **Check off list for students before graduation:** Place to go every day where you enjoy, designated advocate, leisure activities, enough income to enjoy your lifestyle, access to healthcare, effectively communicate needs, skills to take care of yourself, opportunities to learn, access to technology to help improve lifestyle and circle of friends.

Decision to be made at eighteen years of age or older

- **Apply for Federal services;** Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (Medicaid is linked to SSI). You may apply before 18 years of age, but it will be based on parent's income.
- **Housing for Students after they turn 18 and/or graduate High School:** Understand available housing resources and what you qualify for. You may contact your local ARC for detailed information [ARC Chapter by State](#). Some families may choose to have their children live with them after graduation. There are also Adult Family Homes, Assisted Living, Group Homes, independent living through home ownership or renting, and many other options depending many different variables. Each state is different in what they offer, therefore, it's best to check with your local [ARC Chapter by State](#).
- **Check with local state programs.** Some programs may include; vocational rehabilitation, home and community services, work placement and many more. You may check with [ARC Chapter by State](#).