It's My Choice...

Minnesota
Governor's Council on
Developmental Disabilities

It's My Choice

by

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Preface

It is hoped that the information in this guide is written in a way that is easy to understand. This was done for several reasons:

- so that people with developmental disabilities who read, can read it and use it;
- so that people who advocate for those who cannot read can explain it more easily;
- so that we can all understand.

The activities and checklists contained in this guide have been used in a variety of ways. Any of the materials can be copied or changed to meet the needs of people in your area.

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Hard choices, big decisions.

Are these the things I want to learn?

Is this the kind of work I want to do? Is this where I want to live?

How should I spend my money? Should I get married?

Have a family? What will I do when I retire?

These are some of the big decisions that all of us must make at different times in our lives.

Then, there are those nagging little ones that become a part of our everyday life.

Should I sleep for 10 more minutes? What should I wear?

Should I drive to work or carpool?

Should I drink another cup of coffee?

How about dessert? What's on TV?

As hard as it may seem, none of us would give up the freedom to make decisions in our everyday lives.

The first step

Family members, friends, social workers, service coordinators, service providers and advocates can help people with developmental disabilities get the services and supports they need to:

- lead the lifestyles they prefer;
- be more independent; and
- be active members of the community.

They can do this by supporting people in their freedom of choice.

This resource guide will look at ways that you can help support freedom of choice for people with developmental disabilities:

- Looking at individual needs
- Planning for services
- Evaluating services
- Making things more understandable
- Supporting self advocacy

An example One of the first checklists you will find is the Individual Program Planning Guide. If you decide to use it, the agenda you would follow for the individual annual planning meeting might look like this:

- **Introductions** Everyone who is attending the meeting states who they are and how they can help support the individual.

- **Purpose of the meeting** It is explained that the purpose of the meeting is to share information about strengths, needs, hopes and dreams and to come up with some plans that will help the individual move towards a preferred lifestyle now and in the future.
- **Sharing information** This is a chance for the individual, family and friends, and those who work with him or her to talk about what is important to the individual and what it takes to successfully support him or her at home, at work and in the community. This is a time to review something like the Individual Program Planning Guide or Listen to Me, a PATH, or an Essential Lifestyle Plan, etc. In addition, the individual may have made an audio or videotape of his or her ideas about the future.
- **Making plans** This is the time to develop plans for the next year which will help the individual move towards his or her preferred lifestyle at home, at work and in the community. Everyone must agree on them and the individual has the last word.

Other considerations It is hoped that you decide to use these checklists and activities in your work. There are a few additional things to remember when adapting them to the needs of people with developmental disabilities in your area:

- **Language differences** You might want to have the materials translated into different languages.
- **Ethnic-cultural differences** You might want to consider where to hold the home interview, planning conference, etc. based on personal preferences.
- **Procedural differences** Agencies have different procedures regarding planning and evaluating services, etc. These materials can be cut and pasted to work around those differences.

Individual Assessment

What is person-centered planning?

Person-centered planning isn't so new and it isn't hard to do. It's really as easy as listening to people with developmental disabilities (or their families if someone is very young) about things like:

- where to live;
- how to spend time each day;
- who to spend time with; and,
- hopes and dreams for the future.

It's also about supporting people in the choices they make about their life. That can be the hard part!

More about person-centered planning

Planning ahead

We all have hopes and dreams for the future. Some we can work for on our own, many take support from others. Some will happen, some will not.

Person-centered planning is one way of figuring out where someone is going (*life goals*) and what kinds of support they need to get there. Part of it is asking the person, their family, friends and people who work with him or her about the things she or he likes to do (*preferences*) and can do well (*strengths and capabilities*). It is also finding out what things get in the way (*barriers*) of doing the things people like to do. If people can't talk for themselves, then it's important to spend time with them and to ask others who know them well. Important things to remember about person-centered planning are:

- people with developmental disabilities (or their families and friends if they can't speak for themselves) are in the driver's seat; and,
- it's about *supporting the many different ways that people choose to live.*

What is this workbook about?

In this workbook, you will have a chance to think about your life and the kinds of things that are important to you. When you're done, you will have finished Listen to Me! This information can be used to help build your Individual Program Plan (IPP). On each page you will find a question and some words about what it means. It's best to do this workbook with people who know and care about you. Remember, this is just one way to start the person-centered planning process.

Listen to Me!

This workbook belongs to:

_____

_____

Do you have a photograph of yourself? Put it in the frame!

Who is a part of your life?

Who are the people you are close to? people in your family? people at work or school? neighbors and friends? Who are the people you do things with? talk to? turn to for help?

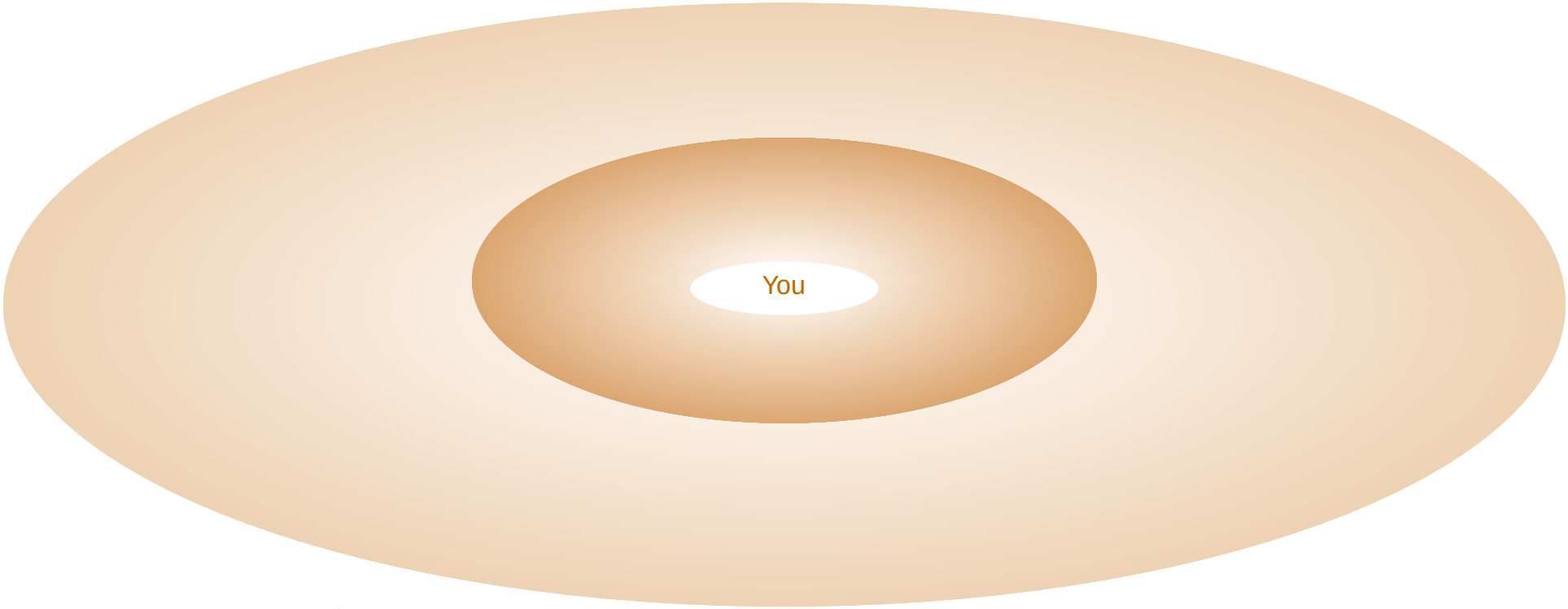
Who do you spend the most time with? Who are the people who know you best? Who are the people who are most important to you?

These are people who you might want to invite to your person-centered planning meeting. Or, they might be able to support you in your plans for the future.

Think about who they are and write their names in these circles. Some people write the names of people who are closest to them in the middle, but you can do it any way you want.

Here are some things to think about when you're working on <u>Listen to Me:</u>

- Pick a place to work where you are comfortable;
- Invite people who know and care about you (your friends, relatives, neighbors, service coordinator, service provider) to meet with you and help you fill out the workbook; and
- When you get together, make sure everyone knows each other and that they're there to support you;



Here are some things to think about when you're working on Listen to Me:

- Someone should lead the meeting and someone should write down what you and your team say in the workbook;
- The person who leads the meeting should make sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that people listen;
- Have a good time, be positive; and,
- Ask the person who was writing things down to go over them with you to make sure everything is just like you want it.

What are some great things about you?

What are some great things about you? What do you like about you? What are some things you're good at? proud of? What are some nice things that people say about you? What do people thank you for? This is sometimes hard for people to answer, so you might want to start by asking a friend or relative.

These are important things to think about when you are figuring out the kinds of services and supports you need and want. List them here:

What things do you like to do?

List your favorite things . . .

To help you get started on your lists, ask yourself and people who know you:

What things do you like to do? at home? at work? at program? at college? for fun? around town? on vacation?

What kind of music do you like?

What kind of movies do you like?

What kind of food do you like?

Do you have any hobbies?

Do you collect things? What are the things you don't like or don't like to do?

Did you do something before that you liked to do (like a class or a job)?

What things don’t you like to do?

List things you don’t like or don’t like to do . . .

The week day

What do you do when you first get up?

What does your Monday through Friday morning look like right now? What do you eat for breakfast? When do you leave for work? Next, what would be your best Monday through Friday morning? If you could be doing anything, what would it be? Finally, what would be your worst Monday through Friday morning? What kinds of things make you mad, sad, frustrated in the morning? What kinds of things bug you when you first get up?

What do you do when you first get to work or program or school?

What kinds of work or activities do you do now? Next, what would be your best Monday through Friday? If you could be doing anything, what would it be? What kinds of activities make you happy? Who would you do them with? Finally, what would be your worst Monday through Friday? What kinds of things make you mad, sad, frustrated during the day? What places (or people) would you like to stay away from?

What do you do when you first get home?

What do you have for dinner? What kinds of activities do you do now? Next, what would be your best Monday through Friday night? If you could be doing anything, what would it be? What kinds of activities make you happy? Who would you do them with? Finally, what would be your worst Monday through Friday night? What kinds of things make you mad, sad, frustrated during the evening?

The best week day would be...

Your week day right now...

The worst week day would be...

What is different about the weekend?

First, what does your Saturday and Sunday morning look like right now?
Is there anything different about the weekend during the morning, in the afternoon, evening?

Next, what would be your best Saturday and Sunday? If you could be doing anything, what would it be?

Finally, what would be your worst Saturday and Sunday?

The best weekend day would be...

Your weekend day right now...

The worst weekend day would be...

What is most important to you?

Look back at the things you wrote down or said when we talked about who is in your life. What are the great things about you? What are the things you like to do, and what are your best and worst week day and weekend?

What is most important for us to remember? What things do you want to make sure are in your life every day (like a cup of coffee in the morning or a favorite friend)? What things do you want to make sure are not in your life every day (like a certain kind of music or some food you can't stand)?

How can we successfully support you with those things that are most important? At work? At program? Around town? For fun? On the weekends?

What can we do to successfully support you?

What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

What would be your best future?

What do you want to do? What do you want in life? Remember, there are no right or wrong answers! Just take a few minutes and think about what could be and don't worry about things that might get in the way. Where would you live? by yourself? with others? What kind of job would you have? What would you do for fun?

Where do you live, work, play and who is part of your life?

A Game Plan for You

Your Game Plan Instruction Book

This is a way for you to put your thoughts and ideas about the future into one place, a game plan for you. The best way to complete it is to sit down with your family and friends and work through the questions together.

When you meet together:

- Keeps things positive
- Take turns talking
- Respect everyone's right to choose not to talk
- Listen to one another, and ask questions only to clarify
- Be respectful of each other's ideas and information
- Support one another
- If someone becomes uncomfortable or upset, offer to meet again at a later time
- Set a date and time to talk again about how the plan is working and how it might need to be changed
- End the meeting with a positive summary of what you talked about

Who's on your team?

Who are the people that you count on for support when you need it?
Who are the people you are close to? in your family? at work? neighbors and friends? These will be people you can talk to along the way, people who can provide support to you when you need it.

Where have you been?

What are some of the things that have happened in your life that really made a difference? Things that you really remember like they were yesterday. Some of the good times and the bad times. Your list could include: things about your family; a favorite teacher or a favorite time in school; friends and relatives who are important to you; or learning about something new.

Where are you now?

What are some of the words that describe your life right now? Fun? Hard work? Happy? Where are you living? Where are you working? What do you do for fun? What kinds of support do you need each day? Who helps support you?

Where are you going?

Where do you see yourself in the next 3-5 years? Where will you be living? What will you be doing for school, work or training? What will you do for fun? What kinds of support will you need?

What would help most right now?

Looking at the *Where you are going?* section, what kind of information or support do you need to move towards your future. What do you need to do or know more about in order for your plan to be successful?

What might get in the way?

It's important to try to figure out some of the things that might get in the way of your plan. If you catch them fast enough, you can get rid of them before they create a mess. This list might be about money, or more information that you need, or someone who is not on your team. After working on this part, you might think of other things to put on your list of *What would help most right now?*

What are some first actions?

What could you do to get the most help right now, to move towards where you want to go and get rid of what might be in the way?

Do you need to make an appointment with your service coordinator, look at local work services, find a new place to live?

Who could help?

Are there people who are not on your team who could help support your game plan? These might be people with information you need or people in the community who can help you make new connections. List them here!

How will you know if you've been successful?

In three to five years, what are some signs that you've been successful in meeting the goals of your game plan? Are you living in a place of your own? Do you have a new job? Have you joined a new club? List some other ideas that will mean success for you!

Put it all together! It's your game plan!

Individual Plans

There are several ways to find out what services are wanted and needed by people with developmental disabilities:

- ask and listen;
- observe; and
- ask others.

Choosing the kinds of services that people want is one of the most important choices.

Individual Program Planning Guide

The IPP guide was written so that people with developmental disabilities can become more involved in writing their own service plans.

Provide it to the individual 6-8 weeks before the planning meeting.
This allows for time to complete it with or without support from someone else.
It could be placed on an audiotape for those who do not read.

An audiotape of the individual's ideas for the service plan could be made for those who are nervous about speaking to a group.

Remember to include time to talk about what the individual has written in the guide during the service plan meeting.

Ideas on how to use your IPP:

ASK, OBSERVE, ASK OTHERS

First, try asking people who can read or understand words or sign to complete the planning activities on their own or with help.

Second, observe people who do not read or understand words or sign very well and act as their advocate (or choose someone else) in completing the planning activities.

Third, ask others who know the person well (like a friend or relative or service coordinator) to help complete the planning activities.

For people who want to help write their own IPP

This workbook was written to help people get ready for their Individual Program Plan (IPP) meeting. The IPP is your map to the future. Just like a map, it can tell you the right direction to go. To make sure that this map or plan gets written in the best way, you need to help work on it. One way to do that is to sit down and decide what you can do, and would like to do now and in the future. This workbook will help you think about those things.

Some words and terms you should know

Future: One to five years from today.

Goal: This tells the general direction a person is going in, like "living in an apartment or working for money."

Individual Program Plan: This is a written plan which tells a person's strengths and needs. It also lists goals and objectives for things that a person wants to learn or do now and in the future.

Need: This tells what a person wants to learn or do, like "use the bus, or read a book, or join a club."

Now: Six months to one year from today.

Objective: This tells how and when a goal will be reached, like "learn to use the bus to go to work by June of 200X."

Strength: This tells what a person can do or likes to do, like "go out to eat or get to work on time or read or go to the movies."

If there are other words or terms that you want to ask someone about, just write them down:

Word or Term	What it Means

Some things to think about

- People learn things best in the places where they happen – like buying things at a store or shaving in the bathroom.
- People learn things best when they use the real item – like using real money when learning how to count.
- People learn things best when they do them at the time they are usually done like brushing teeth after a meal or before going to bed.
- People learn best from other people like learning how to work in places where other people work.
- People learn best when the things that they learn are useful – like using the telephone or taking the bus or writing a check.
- It is important to think about things to learn that will help you become more independent where you live and work right now and where you will live and work in the future.
- The IPP must list things that will help someone move toward his or her goals for the future – like "John wants to get a job or learn to use the bus."

Things about you

Home

Where do you live now?

☐ in the city ☐ in the country

Where do you want to live?

☐ in the city ☐ in the country

How do you live now?

☐ with other people ☐ on my own

How do you want to live?

☐ with other people ☐ on my own

What kinds of help do you need?

☐ none
☐ help with getting dressed
☐ help with keeping up the house
☐ help with eating
☐ help with taking care of myself
☐ help with getting places

Work

What kinds of work do you do now?

_____

_____

What kinds of work do you want to do?

_____

_____

Volunteering

What kinds of volunteer activities do you do now?

What kinds of volunteer activities would you like to do?

Community

What kinds of places do you go after work or school and on the weekends?

How will you get to and from work or school to where you live?

Recreation

What kinds of things do you do for fun?

Knowing your strengths and needs

Take a few moments to think about your strengths (like cooking or going to the movies) and needs (like learning how to call the taxi) and then write them down. Get someone to help you with this, if you need it.

Strengths (What you can and like to do)	**Needs** (What helps you do things on your own)
At home:	At home:
At work:	At work:
In the community:	In the community:
For fun:	For fun:

Deciding what to work on

Now it's time to start thinking about what things should be written into your IPP. The best way to do this is to think about what will help you do the things you like to do and need to do. Your social worker or service coordinator can help you with this, but you need to decide what you want help with now and later. Look back at your strengths and needs list and place each need that you wrote down on one of the lists below:

Things I need help with right now (six months to 1 year from now)	**Things I need help with later (1 to 5 years from now)**
	Example: Using money
	Example: A new place to live

Getting ready for the IPP meeting

Here are some things to do before the meeting:

- Review what you have written in this workbook.
- Review your IPP from last year.
- Write down any questions you want to ask.
- Ask who else will attend the meeting and make sure that no one is left out.
- If you want help from someone else during the meeting, then ask for an advocate.

Here are some things to do at the meeting:

- Show people this workbook and talk about the things you want help with right now.
- Be positive.
- Ask questions.
- Take notes or bring a tape recorder.
- Remind people that it's their job to help you get the things you need to be more independent at home, at work and in the community.
- Ask for a fair hearing if you do not agree with the things that are written in your IPP.

How to tell if the IPP is working

About every six months, you should look at your IPP to see if things are going the way they were written. You should ask yourself the following questions:

	YES	NO
1. Are you learning to do things on your own?	☐	☐
2. Are you learning to work and live with people who are not disabled?	☐	☐
3. Are you working where you want to?	☐	☐
4. Are you living where you want to?	☐	☐
5. Do you get to see your friends?	☐	☐

Are there things that could be going better?

_____

_____

_____

If there are a lot of “no” answers to these questions or if things could be going better, you should talk with the person who can work with you to make things right for you!

Individual Transition Planning (ITP) Guide

The ITP guide was written so that people with developmental disabilities and their parents can become more involved in writing their own transition plan.

Find out about the transition plan process in the local school district and get involved.

This ITP guide will be useful even if there is no formal process. Information developed in this workbook can be written into the IEP if there is no Individual Transition Plan.

An audiotape of the individual or parent ideas for the ITP could be made for those who are nervous about speaking to a group. Include time to review the guide during the ITP meeting.

The ITP Planning Guide

The ITP planning guide is designed to help students and their families in planning for the future. It should be used to help you get ready for your transition plan meeting.

The language of this guide is meant to encourage:

- people with disabilities to fill it out on their own;
- families and advocates to explain it to people with disabilities who cannot fill it out on their own.

Each activity is an important step in preparing for the ITP meeting. Families, advocates and students should work together when filling it out. It will help:

- identify personal strengths and interests
- identify goals for the future

Ideas on how to use your ITP

ASK, OBSERVE, ASK OTHERS

First, try asking people who can read or understand words or sign to complete the transition activities on their own or with help.

Second, observe people who do not read or understand words or sign very well and act as their advocate (or choose someone else) in completing the transition activities.

Third, ask others who know the person well (like a friend or relative or service coordinator) to help complete the transition activities.

What is an Individual Transition Plan?

The Individual Transition Plan is a written plan which outlines what a student will need to live, work and play as an adult. It should be written at least four years before someone is leaving school. The ITP is written with the help of the student, parent, teacher, social worker or service coordinator and adult service provider. It spells out what everyone needs to do in order to provide the training and services needed for a smooth 'transition' from school. It is a bridge between the Individual Education Program and other plans – like the Individual Program Plan.

Some words and terms you should know

Goal: This tells the general direction a person is going in, like "living in an apartment or working in the community or attending classes at the community college."

Individual Education Program: The IEP is written for students who receive special education services. This is a written plan which tells a student's present strengths as well as educational goals and objectives for the school year. It contains specific plans for teaching skills that will help people be more independent.

Individual Program Plan: The IPP is a written plan which provides general goals in areas other than education like work and recreation/leisure.

Special Education: Services for students who are not succeeding in regular education and need additional educational experiences in order to become independent and productive adults.

Transition: A carefully planned process which help students move from school to adult life in the community.

If there are other words or terms that you want to ask someone about, just write them down:

Word or term	What it means

Your interests, likes and dislikes

Take a few moments to think about the things that you like to do best (like swimming or listening to music) and things you don't like to do. Get someone to help you with this, if you need it.

What do you like to do best?

At home:

At school:

At work:

In the community:

For fun on your own:

For fun with others:

Are there things you don't like to do?

At home:

At school:

At work:

In the community:

Thinking about the future

Name: _____

Date: _____

When do you plan to graduate?

_____

Employment and education: A place to work and train after graduation

1. Where do you work or go to school now?

_____

2. Where do you want to work or go to school after you leave high school?

_____

Living arrangements: A place to live

1. Where do you live now?

☐ at home ☐ on my own ☐ with a roommate

☐ other: _____

2. Where do you want to live after you leave school?

☐ at home ☐ on my own ☐ with a roommate

☐ other: _____

Community recreation and leisure activities: Things for fun

1. What kinds of things do you do for fun at home, in the neighborhood, community?

2. What kinds of things would you like to do for fun at home, in the neighborhood, community after you leave school?

Now it's time to start thinking about what things should be written into your transition plan. The best way to do this is to think about what will help you most to live and work where you want to and to enjoy your free time.

Your family, teacher and social worker can help you with this, but you need to look at the following list below and place an "X" next to the 3 things that you want to talk about the most at your transition meeting. If you want to talk about more things, then just say so at the meeting.

Employment and education: A place to work and train after graduation

- What kinds of jobs would you like?
- Would you like to work on your own or with others?
- Are there training services that would help you after high school, such as the community college or adult education?
- How will you get to and from work or school?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want):
  - ☐ supported work
  - ☐ competitive employment
  - ☐ community colleges
  - ☐ community based education and training
- What kinds of help do you need from others?

Living arrangements: A place to live

- Where do you want to live (in the city, in the country)?
- How do you want to live (with other people, on your own)?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want):
  - ☐ home of your own
  - ☐ adult foster care
  - ☐ supported living
- What kinds of help do you need (none or do you need help with cooking and cleaning) from others?

Community recreation and leisure activities: Things for fun

- What kinds of things will you do for fun at home, in the neighborhood, community?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want)
  - ☐ parks and recreation
  - ☐ community center
  - ☐ hobby clubs
  - ☐ sport or social clubs
- What kinds of help do you need from others?

Personal management: Other things to learn

- Taking the bus?
- Doing the laundry?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want)
  - ☐ social skills
  - ☐ money management
  - ☐ personal care
  - ☐ household management
- What kinds of help do you need from others?

Health and medical: Staying healthy

- Do you need special medicines?
- How will you get to the doctor?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want):
  - ☐ dental care
  - ☐ health insurance
- What kinds of help do you need from others?

Financial and income: Money matters

- How much money will you need to live on (for rent, food, fun)?
- What about insurance, benefits, taxes, SSI/SSDI?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want):
  - ☐ other benefits
  - ☐ social security benefits
- What kinds of help do you need from others?

Family life and social relationships:

Doing things with other people

- Where do your friends live?
- Will there be chances for you to have fun with people at work, home, with family and friends?
- Do you need information or training about family life or dating?
- How will you get to see your friends?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want):
  - ☐ personal attendant/assistant
  - ☐ respite service
  - ☐ churches
- What kinds of help do you need from others?

Advocacy, legal and long-term support:

Someone who can be there when you need it

- Do you need an advocate, counselor, support group?
- Things you might want more information about (please check as many as you want):
  - ☐ trusts and wills
  - ☐ conservatorships
  - ☐ legal assistance
- What kinds of help do you need from others?
- Other things that you need to learn about:

Your transition planning meeting

Here are some things to do before the meeting:

- Review what you have written in this workbook.
- Review your plans from last year.
- Talk to your transition plan coordinator (that's probably your teacher) to make sure that you know what will happen at the meeting.
- Write down any questions you want to ask.
- Ask who else will attend the meeting and make sure that no one is left out. Please invite everyone who will be helping you work on this plan – families, brothers and sisters, future service providers, service coordinator and so on.
- If you need special help at the meeting (like an interpreter), then ask for someone to be there.
- If you want help from someone else during the meeting, then ask for it.

Here are some things to do at the meeting:

- Show people this workbook and talk about the things you want to do after you leave high school.
- Be positive, this is your meeting and everyone there wants to help.
- Ask questions.
- Take notes, bring a tape recorder or bring someone to take notes for you.
- Remind people that you're here to write a plan that will help you be more independent at home, at work and in the community.
- Ask for help if you do not agree with the things that are written into your Individual Transition Plan.

How to tell if the planning meeting went well

When your transition plan meeting is over, fill out this worksheet.

	YES	NO
1. Were all of the people that you wanted at the meeting?	☐	☐
2. Did everyone look at the things that you wrote in this workbook?	☐	☐
3. Did you and your family, advocates, friends help decide what was written on the ITP?	☐	☐
4. Did you get information about the kinds of services you might need after graduation?	☐	☐
5. Did you talk about all of the things on – *Your Interests, Likes and Dislikes, Thinking About the Future?*	☐	☐
6. Did you get to ask questions?	☐	☐
7. Did all of your questions get answered?	☐	☐
8. Are there transition goals for everything you marked on *A Checklist for Your Meeting?*	☐	☐

	YES	NO
9. Are there dates for completing your transition goals?	☐	☐

10. What were the best things about the meeting?

11. What could have been better?

If there are a lot of “no” answers to these questions, then you should ask to have another transition planning meeting.

How to tell if the transition plan is working

About every six months, you should look at your Individual Transition Plan to see if things are going the way they were written.

	YES	NO
You should ask, if you have not graduated:		
1. Am I learning to be more independent?	☐	☐
2. Am I learning to work and live with people who are not disabled.	☐	☐
3. Does some of my training take place in the community?	☐	☐
You should ask, if you have graduated:		
1. Am I working where I want to?	☐	☐
2. Am I living where I want to?	☐	☐
3. Do I get to see my friends?	☐	☐
4. Do I need any special help?	☐	☐
Are there things that could be going better?	☐	☐

If there are a lot of “no” answers to these questions or if things could be going better, then you should ask to have another transition planning meeting.

Some things we know about how people learn best

- People learn things best in the places where they happen – like buying things at a store or shaving in the bathroom.
- People learn things best when they use the real item-like using real money when learning how to count.
- People learn things best when they do them at the time they are usually done – like brushing teeth after a meal or before going to bed.
- People learn best from other people-like learning how to work in places where other people work.
- People learn best when the things that they learn are useful-like using the telephone or taking the bus or writing a check.
- It is important to think about things to learn that will help you become more independent where you live and work right now and where you will live and work in the future.

The law

For students who receive special education, the law says that everyone has the right to get the kind of education that they need. If students need training in different types of community work before they graduate, this is something to ask for in the ITP and the IEP meeting. The law also says that all students must have an ITP by the age of 14.

Ideas on how to use the employment plan

ASK, OBSERVE, ASK OTHERS

First, try asking people who can read or understand words or sign to complete the employment planning activities on their own or with help.

Second, observe people who do not read or understand words or sign very well and act as their advocate (or choose someone else) in completing the employment planning activities.

Third, ask others who know the person well (like a friend or relative or service coordinator) to help complete the employment planning

Individual Employment Planning Guidebook

The employment guide was written so that people with developmental disabilities and their advocates or parents can become more involved in writing their own employment plan. Here are some ideas to think about in using it:

- Provide it to the person 4-6 weeks before the supported employment planning meeting.
- It could also be placed on a tape for those who cannot read.
- An audiotape of the individual or parent ideas for the meeting could be made for those who are nervous about speaking to a group.
- Include time to review the guide during the planning meeting.

What this guidebook is all about

There are many more chances for people with developmental disabilities to earn money from a job than there used to be. Lots of people can work if they have the training they need to get a job and the help they need to keep it.

This guidebook will help you think about a lot of the things you will need to have written into your Individual Employment Plan to make sure that it works for you.

Some words and terms you should know

Follow-along: This is what happens after a person is placed on a job. If you need something to help you keep your job, there will be someone who can help you. This is called follow-along.

Job coach: This is the person who will help you get used to your new job. That means helping you learn how to do the job in the way that is best for you.

Placement: When a person starts to work at a new job. It happens by matching what the employer needs with what you have to offer as a worker.

If there are other words or terms that you want to ask someone about, just write them down:

Word or term	What it means

Some things to think about

There are some things that you should think about before you write your **Individual Employment Plan:**

1. What kinds of support will you need to keep a job? For example, will you need help in writing checks or help with how to get along with other workers?

2. Will you need transportation to get to a job? Or do you know how to take a bus on your own?

3. How will working change where you live? Will you have to eat meals at a different time from others who live with you?

4. How will the money that you earn change any benefits that you get?

5. What will you do after work? How will you spend your free time?

6. What about your friends? Will you still be able to see them?

You may not know the answers to all of these questions right now, but you need to think about them. These are the kinds of questions you need to ask those people who help you write your employment plan.

If you have other questions about working, then write them below and talk about them when you have your individual employment plan meeting.

Things about you

Where do you live now?

☐ at home ☐ group home ☐ on my own ☐ with a roommate

☐ other: _____

Where do you want to live in the future?

☐ at home ☐ on my own ☐ with a roommate

☐ other: _____

What kinds of work do you do now?

What kind of work do you want to do in the future?

What type of benefits do you receive, like SSI or Medicaid?

What do you do for fun?

How do you get around the community?

Knowing the things that you can do at work and the things that you need help with...

Take a few moments to think about the things that you know how to do at work and the things that you need help with and then write them down. Get someone to help you with this, if you need it.

Things that you know how to do at work (like use a drill or clean the office)	**Things that you need help with at work** (like using the soft drink machine)

A checklist for future work needs

Here is a list of things which will help you start thinking about the kind of job you might like to find.

What kinds of jobs are there in your community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you want to work:

☐ on your own (individual placement); or

☐ with others (work teams)

How long can you work?

☐ 4-6 hours ☐ 7-8 hours

Do you have any problems with walking?

☐ yes ☐ no

Do you get to work on time?

☐ yes ☐ no

Do you have medical insurance?

☐ yes ☐ no

How do you get to and from a job?

☐ van ☐ take bus ☐ taxi ☐ parent

☐ walk ☐ ride bike

Are there times when you could not work?

☐ evenings ☐ weekends

☐ other: _____

Will you need help in:

☐ finding a job

☐ learning a job

☐ keeping a job

Do you have any problems with lifting?

☐ yes ☐ no

Do you have any special physical needs?

☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, what are they:

_____

Do you get social security benefits?

☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, how much per month? _____

Do you need any special training?

☐ money management ☐ taking the bus

☐ other: _____

What kinds of things do you do for fun at home, in the neighborhood, community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You may not know the answers to all of these questions right now, but you need to think about them. These are also the kinds of questions you need to ask those people who help you write your individual employment plan.

Getting ready for your Individual Employment Planning meeting

Here are some things to do before the meeting:

- Review what you have written in this workbook.
- Remember to write down any questions you want to ask.
- Ask who else will attend the meeting and make sure that no one is left out.
- If you want help from someone else during the meeting, then ask for it.

Here are some things to do at the meeting:

- Show people this workbook and talk about the kinds of work you want to do and the kinds of support that will help you keep your job.
- Be positive.
- Ask questions.
- Take notes or bring a tape recorder.
- Remind people that it's their job to help you get the kind of work that will be best for you.
- Ask for another meeting if you do not agree with the things that are written in your Individual Employment Plan.

A checklist for your meeting

Here is a list of things you need to talk about when you meet to write out your employment plan. Just check them off as you talk about them:

Work places

- What kinds of jobs are there for you?
- Will you work on your own (individual placement) or with others (work team)?

The kinds of help that you need

- Help in finding a job, learning the job, keeping the job?

Work strengths and needs

- How long can you work (2 hours, 8 hours)?
- How hard can you work (lifting,walking)?
- Any special physical needs?

Other work strengths and needs

- Do you get to work on time?
- Get along with others?

Money

- What about insurance, benefits, taxes, SSI/SSDI?

Special work needs

- Draft registration, social security number, driver's license, bus pass?

Home and work

- How will you get to and from your job?
- Is your work schedule right for you and the people you live with?
- Are you moving soon?

Other training you might need

- Taking the bus, taking care of money, cooking, cleaning?
- Sex education?

Doing things with other people

- Will there be chances for you to have fun with people at work, with family or with friends?

Things for fun

- What kinds of things will you do for fun at home, in the neighborhood, community?
- Anything else that you want to talk about.

_____

_____

_____

Your Worker's Handbook

There are things that you should know about where you work. If you fill out the list below, it will help you remember these things:

About the job

Name of the place where you work:

_____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

What is your job: _____

_____

Name of your supervisor: _____

_____

What time do you start work? _____

What time are your coffee breaks? _____

_____

When is lunch time? _____

What time is work over? _____

Work Rules

Is it okay to smoke? ☐ yes ☐ no

Other special rules?

Your Pay

How much do you get paid? _____

Do you get paid by the

☐ hour ☐ item ☐ day ☐ week?

When do you get paid?

Your Benefits

Do you get paid holidays? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, when are they?

Do you get vacation days? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, how many days per month?

Do you get paid sick leave? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, how many days per month?

Is there medical insurance? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, who pays for it?

Is there paid dental insurance? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, who pays for it?

Other things you should know

Am I a union member? ☐ yes ☐ no

Can I get training and career planning? ☐ yes ☐ no

What do you do if you get hurt?

What do you do if there is a fire?

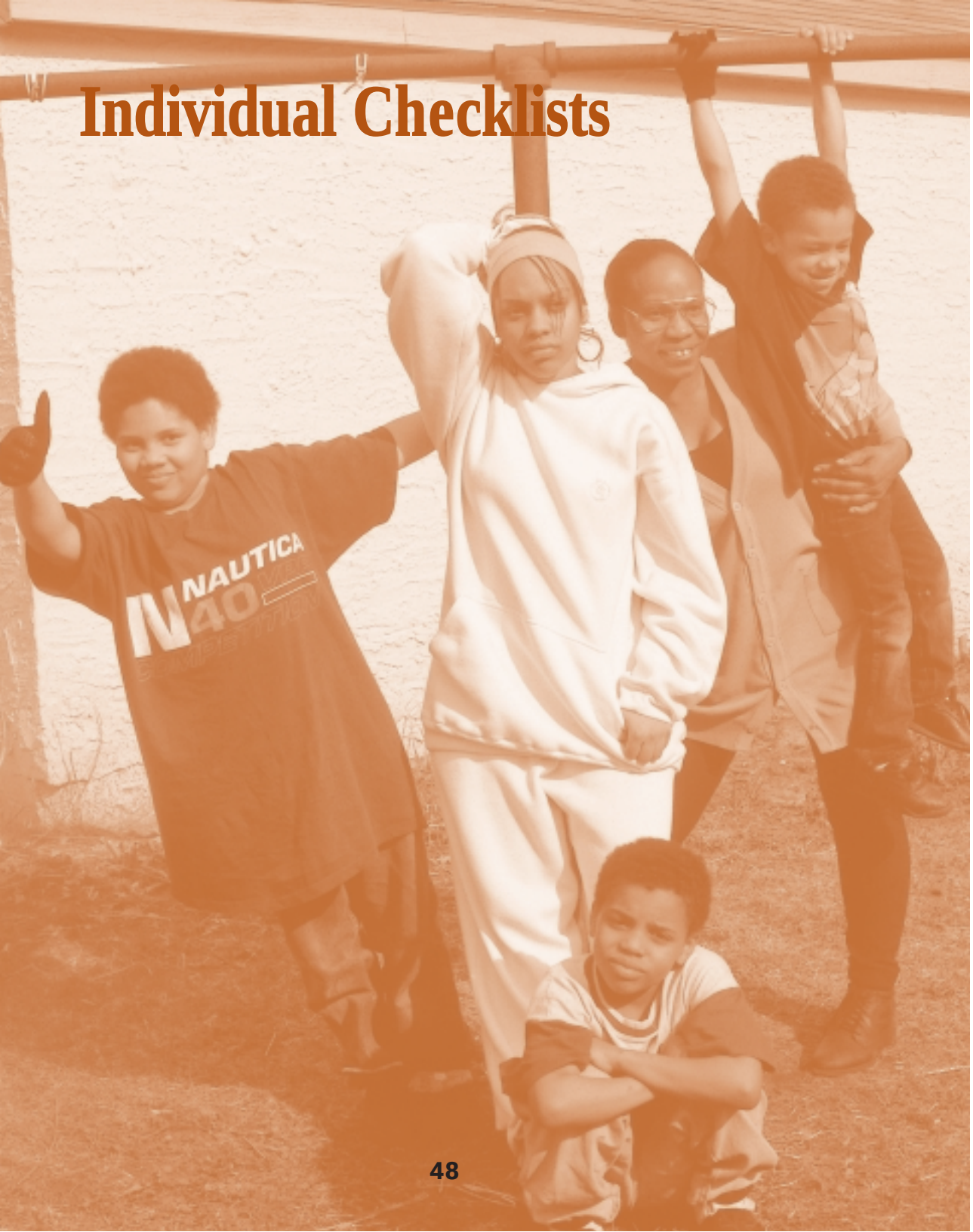
Who do you go to if you have a problem?

What does it take to get a raise?

What does it take to get fired?

What is the grievance procedure?

Individual Checklists



In most service systems, it's the service user that decides what is needed and what is and is not working. Looking at a variety of services or products and deciding which one suits you best is a freedom of choice that we often take for granted. People with developmental disabilities must experience this freedom, for example:

- Choosing where to live;
- Choosing a job;
- Choosing providers;
- Choosing a social worker/service coordinator;
- Evaluating where they live, work or go to school;
- Evaluating the staff who work with them.

Ideas on how to use the checklist

ASK, OBSERVE, ASK OTHERS

First, try asking people who can read or understand words or sign to complete the checklist on their own or with help.

Second, observe people who do not read or understand words or sign very well and act as their advocate (or choose some one else) in completing the checklist.

Third, ask others who know the person well (like a friend or relative or service coordinator) to help complete the checklist.

The Place of My Own Checklist

If you are thinking about finding a place of your own, here is a way to look at a house or apartment where you might want to live. It will help you decide what is good about the place and what could be better. The best way to use this checklist is as follows:

- Make sure you get a chance to see the house or apartment and the immediate neighborhood.
- If you need assistance with the checklist, ask a friend, relative or your service coordinator or someone else you feel comfortable with.
- Write notes about what you find out about the place in the box provided.
- Think about all of these things before you decide if you want to live in the house or apartment.
- You may be looking at several different places – use this checklist to decide which house or apartment is best for you.

☐ **The place is close to stores, banks, places to eat and other places I will need to go.**

☐ **The place is clean inside and outside.**

☐ **The place is in an area of my choice.**

☐ **The place is near and easy to get to the bus.**

☐ **The neighborhood feels safe and I'm comfortable when I leave the house or apartment.**

- [ ] The rooms in the house or apartment are easy to get around in and you can move around in a wheelchair.
- [ ] The place is in good repair.
- [ ] I can afford the deposit that I need to give the landlord.
- [ ] I have read over the rental agreement or had someone help me understand it.
- [ ] The stove is gas or electric and it works well.
- [ ] There is a refrigerator that works well.
- [ ] There is a dishwasher that works well.
- [ ] The heater/air conditioner works well.
- [ ] The neighbors are friendly and supportive.
- [ ] If I am living with roommates, we have talked about our own “house rules.”
- [ ] I have my own bedroom or the place has enough privacy for me.
- [ ] The place has ramps and enough space to get through with a wheelchair.
- [ ] My own question:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Some “ideal” house elements to consider

House layout

- One level or ranch style home
- Can be divided into separate areas with distinct spaces
- Large open spaces that make it easy to navigate
- Open/airy floor plan with spaces that flow into each other

House movement

- Wide hallways, doorways and doors
- Easy to open doors
- Doorways without saddles or sills that interfere with free movement
- Level floors that are easy to roll on
- Tough, durable surfaces that will not get damaged by a power chair

Bathroom

- Large and accessible
- Roll in shower at least 5 feet by 5 feet
- Hand held shower head
- More than one shower
- Bathtub with lift
- Raised or side opening bathtub
- Whirlpool or spa tub
- Accessible toilet with raised seat, armrests and room for a rolling toilet chair, and a lift
- Grab bars
- Bathroom sink with adjustable heights
- Lever/faucets with anti-scald controls
- Space underneath sink for wheelchair
- Pull lever soap dispenser

Kitchen

- Large, open floor plan
- Accessible features: lower sinks, counters and cabinets; sink and counter cut outs or knee openings; drawers and cabinets with accessible hardware
- Ice/water dispenser in the refrigerator door
- Higher or adjustable table

Bedroom

- Accessible closets and other storage
- Room by the bed for transferring safely from a wheelchair

Getting in and out

- Ramps or on grade entries
- Power lifts
- Multiple wheelchair entries
- Fire exits

Garage

- Attached to the house
- Large enough for conversion van and maneuverability
- Equipped with a ramp

The Housing Checklist

The Housing Checklist was written so that people with developmental disabilities can become more involved in looking at the places where they live and find out what they like and what could be better. It can also be used by individuals and parents who are thinking about places to live in the future.

Encourage people to look at the place where they live and complete the checklist on their own or with the help of an advocate or friend.

Give it to individuals and parents who are thinking about living options for the first time.

An audiotape of the checklist could be made for those who do not read. Include time to review the checklist during the annual planning meeting or when talking about new places to live.

Ideas on how to use the housing checklist

ASK, OBSERVE, ASK OTHERS

First, try asking people who can read or understand words or sign to complete the checklist on their own or with help.

Second, observe people who do not read or understand words or sign very well and act as their advocate (or choose someone else) in completing the checklist.

Third, ask others who know the person well (like a friend or relative or service coordinator) to help complete the checklist.

How to use this checklist

For people who want to look at the place where they live now

Here is a way to look at the place where you live. It will tell you things that are good about it and things that could be better. The best way to use this checklist would be:

1. Hold a meeting to tell other people who live in the house what you want to do and see if they will help you.
2. Tell staff who work at the house what you want to do and ask when they can help you with the checklist.
3. Look at each number, read the words and then ask "Is this the house where I live?"
4. Check "yes" or "no."
5. Ask someone to write notes about what you find out in the box next to the words.
6. When you are all done, share the good things with other people and staff.
7. If there are things that could be better, ask staff and others if they will help change them.

For people who are looking at a new place to live

The best way to use this checklist to look at a place where you want to live would be:

1. Make sure you get a chance to visit the house and look around.
2. Ask someone who lives or works at the house if they can help you with the checklist.
3. Look at each number, read the words and then ask "Is this the house where I want to live?"
4. Check "yes" or "no."
5. Ask someone to write notes about what you find out in the box next to the words.
6. When you are all done, share the good things with other people and staff.
7. If there are things that could be better, ask staff and others if they will help change them.
8. Think about all of these things before you decide if you want to live in the house or not.

Here is what two numbers from the checklist might look like when you are done:

	What we know about the house
1. The house is near other houses where people live. ☑ YES ☐ NO	There are houses all around this house. Some have families with children, others have one or two people living in them.
19. There are things to do at the house for fun and exercise. ☑ YES ☐ NO	After dinner I often walk around the block or play cards with my friends. On weekends, I go to the movies, or shopping, ride my bike or swim.

What we know about the house

1. The house is near other houses where people live.

☐ YES ☐ NO

2. The house is close to stores, banks, places to eat and so on.

☐ YES ☐ NO

3. The house is clean inside and outside.

☐ YES ☐ NO

4. There is room to move around in the house without bumping into other people.

☐ YES ☐ NO

5. There is a way to get heat into each bedroom.

☐ YES ☐ NO

6. The bedroom is big enough to have a place to keep things, like a closet and a chest of drawers.

☐ YES ☐ NO

What we know about the house

7. The beds are nice to sleep on and are big enough for each person.

☐ YES ☐ NO

8. The house looks like a place for adults.

☐ YES ☐ NO

9. The bathrooms work well and are easy to get to.

☐ YES ☐ NO

10. You can have friends and family come to the house and you can talk to them privately.

☐ YES ☐ NO

11. There are things to do at the house for fun and exercise.

☐ YES ☐ NO

12. People can do things on their own like cook and wash clothes.

☐ YES ☐ NO

What we know about the house

13. People go to the doctor and the dentist when they need to go.

☐ YES ☐ NO

14. The food tastes good and is good for you.

☐ YES ☐ NO

15. People get to choose things, like what clothes to wear and when to go to bed.

☐ YES ☐ NO

16. People do things in the community, like visit friends, go shopping or to parties.

☐ YES ☐ NO

17. Everyone helps make up the house rules.

☐ YES ☐ NO

18. People who live in the house want to live there.

☐ YES ☐ NO

What we know about the house

19. You can get your own mail and use the telephone.

☐ YES ☐ NO

20. If you don't want to let someone in your room, you don't have to.

☐ YES ☐ NO

If staff are present and/or provide services/support

21. There are staff around when you need help.

☐ YES ☐ NO

22. The staff know how to help when you need it.

☐ YES ☐ NO

23. Staff can understand what you say and you can understand what they say.

☐ YES ☐ NO

24. Staff have a van or car to take you places, like to the store or to the doctor.

☐ YES ☐ NO

If staff are present and/or provide services/support

25. Staff talk to you in a nice way and use your first name.

☐ YES ☐ NO

26. Staff are nice to your friends and family when they visit you.

☐ YES ☐ NO

27. Everyone has a written plan of goals and activities.

☐ YES ☐ NO

28. There is time each day to help you work on your written plan.

☐ YES ☐ NO

29. People know their rights and staff can explain them.

☐ YES ☐ NO

30. If staff help you with your money, they keep records of how it is spent and explain it to you.

☐ YES ☐ NO

Other things you know about the house:

The Workplace Checklist

The Workplace Checklist was written so that people with developmental disabilities can become more involved in looking at the places where they work and finding out what they like and what could be better. It can also be used by individuals and parents who are thinking about places to work in the future.

Encourage people to look at the place where they work and complete the checklist on their own or with the help of an advocate or friend.

Use parts of the checklist to interview individuals during program evaluations.

Give it to individuals and parents who are thinking about work programs for the first time.
An audiotape of the checklist could be made for those who do not read.

Include time to review the checklist during the annual IPP meeting.

Ideas on how to use the workplace checklist

ASK, OBSERVE, ASK OTHERS

First, try asking people who can read or understand words or sign to complete the checklist on their own or with help.

Second, observe people who do not read or understand words or sign very well and act as their advocate (or choose someone else) in completing the checklist.

Third, ask others who know the person well (like a friend or relative or service coordinator) to help complete the checklist.

Here is a way to look at a training or employment service where you work or might want to work. It will tell you things that are good about a work service and things that could be better.

The best way to use this checklist is:

- Look at each item, and check "yes" or "no."
- Write down notes about what you found out.
- Think about all of the things that you like about the work service.
- If there are things that could be better, ask staff if they will help change them.

If you are thinking about a place where you might work:

- Look at these notes and the notes you have on other work services and then see which one is best for you.
- If you don't like what you see, then you might need to keep looking.

Here is what two numbers from the checklist might look like when you are done:

2. The training service uses stores, banks and other places, to teach things – like how to use money. .

☑ YES ☐ NO

What we learned about the training service

People learn to purchase items at the store. They also use the bank and the library.

13. People get paid for what they do.

☑ YES ☐ NO

People get paid the minimum wage.

What we learned about the training service

For Training Services:

1. The training service is near places – like stores and banks.

☐ YES ☐ NO

2. The training service uses stores, banks and other places to teach things – like how to use money.

☐ YES ☐ NO

3. When you are learning things, you are by yourself or in small groups – like 2 or 3 people.

☐ YES ☐ NO

4. Training will help people be more independent or get a job in the community.

☐ YES ☐ NO

5. The training service teaches things that adults need to know – like using the bus or how to use money.

☐ YES ☐ NO

What we learned about the training service

6. There are chances to be around people who do not have disabilities, other than staff.

☐ YES ☐ NO

7. Staff talk to people at the training service like they talk to other adults.

☐ YES ☐ NO

What we learned about the employment services

8. Jobs are located at community businesses.

☐ YES ☐ NO

9. There is training for people when they first get a job.

☐ YES ☐ NO

10. There is training for people if they need extra help after they get the job, like changes in job duties.

☐ YES ☐ NO

What we learned about the employment services

11. People choose their jobs.

☐ YES ☐ NO

12. People get paid for what they do.

☐ YES ☐ NO

13. There is support for people if they need it, like help with social security.

☐ YES ☐ NO

14. There is an individual employment plan that covers things like transportation,benefits, etc.

☐ YES ☐ NO

15. People get training for job promotion and career development,

☐ YES ☐ NO

Staff Evaluation Form

The Staff Evaluation Form was written so that people with developmental disabilities can become more involved in giving feedback to the people who work with them.

Encourage residential and training or work providers to use it.

Consider using it as a way to ask people to look at how you are doing as their service coordinator.

An audiotape of the checklist could be made for those who do not read.

Name of Individual filling out this form (you don't have to tell us):

_____

Date: _____

We need your help in looking at how _____ works with you.
Name of Staff

Here are some things we want to know:

1. What does do with you? _____

2. Do you see or talk with ? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, how often? ☐ every day ☐ once a week ☐ once a month

3. Can you talk about things with ? ☐ YES ☐ NO

4. Does listen to you? ☐ YES ☐ NO

5. Is doing a good job helping you with the things that you need to do or learn?

☐ YES ☐ NO

6. Does do what he or she says he or she will do? ☐ YES ☐ NO

7. How does treat you? _____

8. What are some things that does well?

_____

9. What are some things that could do better?

_____

Looking at my own life quality

About CHOICE in your life...

Are you able to tell someone about the things you want and need in your life?

Things to think about: Are you able to talk to others about what you like and want? Who listens to you? If there are things you don't like, who do you talk to?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you make big, important decisions for yourself?

Things to think about: Did you choose where you live? Did you choose where you work or go to school? Do you choose how to spend your money?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you make everyday decisions for yourself?

Things to think about: Who decides what you do during the day? Who decides things like what you wear, what you eat, what time you go to bed? Who decides what you do in your free time?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you choose what services you use?

Things to think about: How do you choose what community services (for example: gas station, grocery store, bank) you will use?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you choose when to change your services?

Things to think about: Have you ever changed community services? Why did you change? How did that change work out?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

What are your thoughts about your life quality when it comes to CHOICE?

Who can help you?

When will you do it?

Look back at your answers to these questions. What support will you ask for?

About RELATIONSHIPS in your life

Do you have friends and people who care about you?

Things to think about: Who are your friends? Who do you talk to on the phone? What kinds of things do you and your friends do together? What do you do for vacations? If you have a girlfriend, boyfriend, or are married, are there people around you who support your relationship?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you have friends you can count on?

Things to think about: Where do you meet new people? Have you have had a chance to make friends there? In your neighborhood or when you go out, have you met someone who later became your friend? Do you stay in touch with your friends? If not, why not? Who do you talk to when you're sad, or upset or have a problem?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

What are your thoughts about your life quality when it comes to RELATIONSHIPS?

Who can help you?

When will you do it?

Look back at your answers to these questions. What support will you ask for?

About your LIFESTYLE

Do you feel that you are a part of your community?

Things to think about: What places do you go in your town? Who do you usually go with? How do you get there? How do you find out what is going on in your town?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you do things that are important to you, your family and your heritage?

Things to think about: What are some of the things your family does at holidays or special occasions? Are there people around you who share your language and your culture?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Are you able to do things for yourself as much as you would like to?

Things to think about: What things do you do for yourself? Do you need support to do things for yourself? What kinds of things or equipment would help you get around better or do more on your own?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Are you living where you want to live?

Things to think about: If you wanted to move, what would you do? What are some of the best things about where you live? Do you feel that you can be by yourself when you want to?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

What are your thoughts about your life quality when it comes to LIFESTYLE?

Who can help you?

When will you do it?

Look back at your answers to these questions. What support will you ask for?

About your HEALTH and WELL-BEING?

Do you feel safe?

Things to think about: Do you feel safe at home and in your neighborhood? If something dangerous happened, what would you do? What would you do if there was a fire, earthquake or flood? If somebody tried to hurt you what would you do? Who would you go to for help?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Are you healthy?

Things to think about: What do you do to stay healthy? Do you play sports or exercise? Do you take any medicines? If so, do you take them as directed? Who decides what you eat? If you want information about being healthy or safer, where would you get it?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

What would you do if something happened to you?

Things to think about: Who takes care of you when you get sick? Have you had other things happen to you (like an accident or a crime)? What did you do? Who would you go to if you needed help?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you have a regular doctor or dentist?

Things to think about: Do you have a regular doctor and dentist? How often do you see your doctor or dentist? Does your doctor or dentist talk to you about what's going on with your health? Who else helps when you are sick or need to make medical decisions?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

What are your thoughts about your life quality when it comes to HEALTH and WELL-BEING?

Who can help you?

When will you do it?

Look back at your answers to these questions. What support will you ask for?

About your RIGHTS?

Do you feel free to live your life like others?

Things to think about: What are your rights and responsibilities as a citizen? Does anything stop you from doing things or going places when you want?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you feel afraid of things in your life?

Things to think about: Are there times when you are worried or are afraid of things in your life? When? Do you feel that people take advantage of you or treat you poorly?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do people treat you well?

Things to think about: How do people generally treat you? Are there times when you are not treated well or with respect?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Do you get the kinds of community services that everyone gets?

Things to think about: Are there community services that you would like, but can't get? Why? Are there places in the community that you would like to go, but you can't? Why?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

If you want help getting the things you need, do you know where to get it?

Things to think about: If you ever needed something important like medical help, counseling or legal advice, and couldn't get it, what would you do?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

What are your thoughts about your life quality when it comes to your RIGHTS?

Who can help you?

When will you do it?

Look back at your answers to these questions. What support will you ask for?

Your SATISFACTION with your life quality?

Are you happy with what you can do for yourself?

Things to think about: Are there things that you have learned for personal growth or for fun? Are there things that you would like to learn for personal growth or for fun?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Are you happy with your community services?

Things to think about: Are there things you would like to change about the services (for example: bank, grocery store, park) you use in your community? If so, have you ever talked to anyone about it?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

Are you happy with your life now?

Things to think about: What are the good things that are happening in your life today? Could things be better?

☐ Okay at this time ☐ Need some support

What are your thoughts about your SATISFACTION with your life quality?

Who can help you?

When will you do it?

Look back at your answers to these questions. What support will you ask for?

Ideas on making things easier!

Another way to increase participation in the service system is to provide individuals with information that is easy-to-understand. People with developmental disabilities and their friends and advocates should have access to the same information as all others.

Access means understanding written materials:

- so that people with developmental disabilities who read, can read it and use it;
- so that people who advocate for those who cannot read, can explain it more easily;
- so that we can all understand something together.

It's really not difficult to do. Writing in an understandable way is writing in a more conversational style. It's how you would talk to someone who you know and respect.

The following pages contain some examples.

You have many rights:

- You have the right to be by yourself when you want to be.
- You have the right to be treated well by staff.
- You have the right to a safe place to work, where you won't get hurt.
- You have the right to know the rules about working here.
- You need to know what to do when you don't like something.
- You have the right to speak up for yourself.
- You have the right to ask for an advocate, or someone to speak up for you.
- You can ask that a report about how you are doing be given to you, your family or your advocate.
- You have the right to have your questions or concerns answered as soon as possible.
- You have the right to have a place to keep your things.
- You have the right to use a telephone for private calls.
- You have a right to get the training you need to live and work more independently.
- You have the right to see a doctor when you need to and without waiting a long time.

Rights and responsibilities made easy

Rights are the things that the law says you should get, like the training that you need to live and work like everyone else.

People do not have the right to say or do bad things to you or keep you from eating or take your money.

None of your rights can be taken away without a chance for you to tell your side of the story.

Staff cannot do things that might physically hurt you.

Grievance procedure made easy

What to do if I don't like something

If something happens to you in the place where you live or work and you think it takes away one of your rights, then you can start a grievance.

What are your rights?

Rights are the things that laws say you should get, like the training that you need to live and work like everyone else.

What is a grievance?

It is what happens if you think that the program is taking away one of your rights. A grievance gives you a chance to tell your side of the story and to try to get things changed.

What do you do?

1. Tell someone who works with you about the problem. They will help you write it down on a piece of paper.

2. This staff person will try to help you with your problem and tell you an answer to it in words and writing within 7 days.

3. If you don't like the answer, then you can take the problem to the director of the program. The director will then try to help you with your problem and tell you an answer to it in words and writing within 7 days.

4. If you don't like that answer, you can take your problem to your service coordinator. or social worker.

The law made easy

You may know someone who has been locked up or told not to leave their room or house, or even tied to their bed or wheelchair. You may also know someone who has been hit, pushed, burned, or made to be afraid of what people tell them. You might know someone who was given lots of medication to make them quiet or sleep all the time. You might also know someone with a disability who wasn't helped to eat, go to the bathroom or stay clean. THESE ACTIONS ARE WRONG!

The law says you have a right to be safe and treated with dignity.
No one can lawfully:

- Scare you, tie you down or hurt you
- Stop you from taking or going somewhere important
- Refuse to help you when you need it
- Give you a medication you do not need

If you feel you or someone you know are being hurt in any way, tell someone now! Tell a friend, a relative, your service coordinator or anyone who will listen. Keep telling about the wrongful action, until someone listens and stops the action.

Supporting Self Advocacy

All of the information presented in the previous sections is focused on helping people with developmental disabilities become more involved in the decisions which affect their lives. While we can advocate for others through the best of intentions in a individual-oriented service system, the most important method of advocacy is self-advocacy. Self-advocacy is people speaking up for their own rights in their own individual ways.

What is self advocacy?

I am IMPORTANT
I KNOW what I want
I will WORK HARD to get what I want
I am RESPONSIBLE for the choices I make*

This is part of a pledge from a self-advocacy group. A self advocacy group is a group of people with disabilities who get together to help each other figure out ways to live the lives they want. This pledge helps people speak up and do the things that are important in their lives.

*Adapted from a pledge of the Santa Barbara Council for Self Advocacy

Supporting self advocacy through daily activities

We can support people to advocate for themselves through daily lifestyle activities. Training and experience in making choices and decision making can be supported in many ways, depending on the needs and skills of individuals. The desired outcome of all of these activities is to honor individual lifestyle preferences and to support more independence.

Here are some examples:

- Timing of events Choosing when to get up or when to go to bed at night or when to get a haircut or when to eat dinner.
- Personal choices What clothes to wear, what shampoo to buy, which cereal to eat.
- Methods of training Choosing between places where learning will occur or who will provide the support.
- Staff evaluation Through interviews with individuals who are supported by staff or through observations of staff relationships with individuals.
- Hiring of staff Asking individuals to serve on hiring committees.
- Agency board of directors Supporting an individual to serve on the board of an agency that provides services or advocacy to people with developmental disabilities.
- Self advocacy training. Joining a local People First chapter.
- Annual planning meetings. Making sure that individuals with developmental disabilities are present and allowing for time and support to make sure that people understand what is happening.

Supporting the right to vote

Who can vote?

To vote, you must be:

- at least a certain number of years old (usually 18) by the day of the next election in your area;
- a citizen of the United States;
- a resident of your state;
- not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction;
- not declared by a court to be unable to vote; and
- registered (signed up) to vote.

Some people think they cannot vote if they have a conservator. This is often wrong! A court would have to say if you cannot vote. It does not matter if you cannot read or write English or any other language. If you can answer "yes" to those things listed above, you have the right to vote!

How do I sign up or register to vote?

To be able to vote, you have to register or sign up. To register to vote, you need to fill out a card that has a few questions. You will need to write down or have someone help you write down your name, address, birthdate, the state or foreign country where you were born. You need to sign the form.

There is no cost to register to vote. There are many places you can go to register to vote; call and ask someone in your area. Also, you need to register again if you have moved or changed your name since the last election.

Why vote?

When you vote, you are letting your elected representatives know what is important to you and whether or not you think they are doing a good job. The time when you can vote is called an election. Elections are held at least every two years, and sometimes more often.

Excerpts from

More Than a Meeting:

A Pocket Guide to the Person-Centered Individual Program Plan

Developed by Allen, Shea & Associates for the California Department of Developmental Services

Listen to Me

Developed by USARC/PACE and Allen, Shea & Associates in collaboration with
Michael Smull, Steve Sweet, Claudia Bolton and Pam Lopez Greene

A Game Plan for You

Developed by Allen, Shea & Associates for Harbor Regional Center

Reference to

PATHS by Marsha Forrest, Jack Pearpoint and John O'Brien (Inclusion Press)

The Place of My Own Checklist

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Towards Maximum Independence, San Diego

Accessible House or Apartment Checklist

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Towards Maximum Independence, San Diego

Staff Feedback Form

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Becoming Independent, Santa Rosa, CA

IPP Checklist

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by Becoming Independent, Santa Rosa, CA

Looking at My Own Life Quality

Adapted from Work Originally Developed by
Partners in Consulting, Sacramento, CA

The Law Made Easy

From A Consumer's Guide to the Lanterman Act California Department of Developmental Services

What is Self-Advocacy?

From A Consumer's Guide to the Lanterman Act California Department of Developmental Services

Supporting the Right to Vote

Excerpts from Get *Involved!*
Developed by the Area 4 Board on Developmental Disabilities

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