

Transition into Adulthood By Patricia Amos



Transition into adulthood can be a scary, confusing time for many young adults, but it can be especially challenging for young adults who have disabilities and/or special healthcare needs. I am very aware of this stage of life for my 17 year old son, Jonathan. Jonathan has autism, is non-verbal, and has seizures. Every child is different, so what will work for some will not work for all of us. All issues are important to me as Jonathan's mom. Since Jonathan is nearing adulthood, the following important questions weigh heavily on my mind:

... What medical services/programs/doctors will be available for my son?

... What medical services/programs/doctors will accept his insurance?

... What options will I have as his parent?

... Can Jonathan go to an adult day program and, if so, where can he go in our rural community of Terrell County?

... If Jonathan attends a day program, will it be expensive; how will I pay for it?

... Who will care for Jonathan if I go back to work?

... Can he apply for GA Medicaid Programs/Waivers yet still keep his Tricare Insurance?

... How do I apply for SSI on his behalf?

... How do I go about setting up a Will or a Trust? Are there any problems with doing this for Jonathan?

Will there be any penalties?

... Do I need to apply for guardianship of Jonathan? What are the pros and cons of being his guardian?

Is there a fee involved for applying for guardianship, especially attorney fees to set it up?

... What can Vocational Rehabilitation do to help Jonathan?

Jonathan cannot talk or advocate for himself at all. He is totally dependent upon me for his care and well-being. He cannot make his own decisions. I have to make decisions for him. I am not even sure that Jonathan will be able to work or be employed.

I have viewed Parent to Parent of GA webinars and read a lot of the *Transition into Adulthood* materials offered by Parent to Parent of GA on guardianship, wills/trusts, SSI, Voc Rehab, a medical home, and planning transition into adulthood. The P2P of GA information was beneficial to me on finding out what a transition plan is. Our school system does not have a transition coordinator, so the detailed information on transition into adulthood was so good for me to learn about. Jonathan does have a transition plan at school, but information from school is too vague.

Since many schools systems do not have a transition coordinator, I think it would be especially beneficial if certain P2P of GA trainings were mandatory for school systems to have to offer to students and their parents. I especially think the topics of guardianship, SSI, GA Medicaid Waivers/Programs/Services, Wills/Trusts, Adult Healthcare Transitions, transition out of high school, and Voc Rehab should be mandatory trainings offered in schools each year. Even though P2P of GA offers free webinars and trainings, I still think that it should be mandatory for school systems to offer these specific topics I just mentioned. They are such difficult subjects to understand! Live trainings are really great because a person can interact with the speaker and the audience, ask important questions, and understand the topic much better. Life is confusing and hard enough. So, anything that will help to make life more informative and easier when raising a child with disabilities/special healthcare needs is so important!

Parent to Parent of GA is so fortunate to have Patricia Amos as one of our Support Parents!