

Graduation FAQs

Transitioning from student life into the adult world can be overwhelming. How can you best support your students, and what do you need to know about the process from graduation and beyond? **Explore our FAQs below.**



1 **How can I ensure a smooth transition to adult services?**

You've spent years helping your students thrive. The best way to prepare your students and their families for a smooth transition to adulthood is by starting the conversation as early as possible.

- Encourage families to apply for Medicaid and DDD early.
- Prep your student for the NJCAT.
- Schedule IEP meetings with your student's support coordinator and other transition teams to create a comfortable team experience.

2 **I'm a teacher. How can I utilize class time to help students overcome challenges they may have when transitioning into the adult world?**

If you teach a group of students that are approaching graduation, then you have the perfect opportunity to address any challenges they are facing. As a teacher, you can support students in developing self-determination, leadership and self-advocacy, communication and social skills across a variety of settings.

If possible, take a portion of the day to go over these skills and answer any questions your students have. Take time to incorporate different lessons for each skill so you can assess each student. Then, you can move forward and help students improve these skills or speak to families and support coordinators about any concerns you have.

3 **As a teacher, is there anything I can help my students create that will prepare them for graduation?**

Helping students create resumes and cover letters is always a good activity - it will prepare them for potential employment and get them thinking about what their goals are.

4 I want to help my students prepare for adult services that will foster their dreams and aspirations. What kinds of services will be available for them?

The NJ DDD offers assistive technology, behavioral supports, day programming, employment options, therapies, and transportation services. Support coordinators will work with individuals and their families to create an [individualized service plan](#) (ISP) that outlines the services and supports needed to help them reach their goals. You can help students prepare for this by talking to them about their goals and noting observations you've made about students during their time in school.

5 Some of my students are very hesitant and somewhat discouraged about leaving school and going out into the adult world. How can I help them feel confident and show them this something to be excited about?

Speak positively about this upcoming milestone and pinpoint what specifically is making them feel nervous. You can then present some success stories from other students to show that this transition is going to be an exciting experience. If you know students who have recently graduated and are leading happy lives, feel free to invite them back to the classroom to talk about themselves. Or, you can present some [stories from this booklet](#).

6 My students want help becoming more independent in preparation for the adult world. How can I help?

The NJ DDD has many self-advocacy resources that can help adults lead happy, successful lives after graduation. You can use these resources when speaking with students and their families about this important milestone. Check them out below.

- [New Jersey Self-Advocacy Program](#)
- [People First New Jersey](#)
- [Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered](#)
- [Self-Advocacy Online](#)

About Skylands

Skylands is a trusted and proven support coordination agency in New Jersey. Our support coordinators form lifelong bonds with the families they serve and are dedicated to helping individuals with special needs choose and access the best services to thrive in the adult world.

