

## Preparing Your Young Adults for Independence

### **FOSTER RESPONSIBILITY EARLY**

- Assign meaningful household tasks; shift from “helping” to “owning”:
  - Laundry from start to finish
  - Cleaning bathroom weekly
  - Preparing one family meal per week; includes plan, shop, prepare, serve, clean
  - Managing dishes/trash on a rotating schedule
- Focus on consistency, not perfection
- Gradually shift from reminders to expecting completion

### **TEACH TIME MANAGEMENT**

- Use shared planners or digital calendars, then gradually let your young adult take the lead
- Have them enter assignments, tests, practices, and appointments
- Teach prioritization by planning backward from deadlines; don’t forget transition time (travel, prep, breaks, etc)
- Communication shift:
  - “What’s coming up this week?”
  - “What needs to happen today so Friday isn’t overwhelming?”
  - “How are you planning your time tonight?”

### **ENCOURAGE SELF-ADVOCACY**

- Young adults take increasing responsibility for communicating with teachers, counselors, and administrators
- Have them:
  - Email teachers with questions
  - Request clarification
  - Attend meetings and participate in IEP/504 discussions
  - Explain their learning profile and accommodations
- Coach first, then allow them to lead conversations

### **BUILD FINANCIAL LITERACY**

- Teach budgeting, saving, and tracking expenses
- Discuss needs vs. wants, fixed vs. discretionary costs, and real-life expenses (rent, groceries, transportation, insurance)
- Give real responsibility: gas, groceries, clothing, subscriptions
- Start small, gradually increase responsibility to build awareness and ownership

### **PRACTICE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

- Take trips together via bus, train, subway, or rideshare
- Practice:
  - Planning routes and departure times
  - Buying tickets or using transit cards
  - Problem-solving delays or changes
  - Using GPS and identifying safe alternatives
- Gradually let them lead while you ride along

### **SUPPORT HEALTHY ROUTINES**

- Encourage regular sleep, nutrition, hygiene, and physical activity
- Teach stress management strategies (mindfulness, exercise, breaks)

### **SHIFT FROM MANAGER TO CONSULTANT**

- Move from doing tasks for your young adult to coaching them through tasks
- Ask guiding questions:
  - “What’s your plan?”
  - “How will you remember that?”
  - “What’s your backup plan?”
- Encourage ownership, decision-making, and reflection on outcomes

### **NORMALIZE PRODUCTIVE STRUGGLE**

- Allow natural consequences: forgetting assignments, oversleeping, missed emails
- Encourage problem-solving, reflection, and adjustment
- Builds confidence, resilience, and executive function skills

