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## Birth-Age 3

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

**Legend:** C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed

Choice Making & Decision Making	Goal Setting & Independence	Self-Management & Self-Awareness	Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy
C P N indicate preferred toys through gesture, gaze, or voice.  C P N demonstrate beginning choice-making ability.  Make choices without complaining when they do not get their way.	Child can: assist with putting items away (e.g., dirty clothes and toys).  CPN wash and dry hands with visuals or prompts.  CPN demonstrate independence (e.g., I can do it myself).  CPN put on pants and shoes with minimal assistance.  CPN share a desire to accomplish a task (e.g., build tower, make simple snack).  CPN ask for help when needed.  CPN use words or gesture to meet needs.  CPN express the need to use the restroom and gain independence in toileting.	Child can: express likes and dislikes for toys and food.  C P N follow simple routines (e.g., bedtime, bathtime).  express frustration and disappointment.  demonstrate object permanence (i.e., understand things they cannot see still exist).	Child can: communicate want and needs using words, gestures, or voice in a variety of settings (e.g., with peers, with adults, in large and small groups).  engage in back and forth conversations (can include babbling).  Continue to the next page.





## Birth–Age 3

## Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

## **Important Action Steps for Families**

- Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified. Call 1-877-438-5658 for more information. If your child is already on the interest lists for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit <a href="https://www.211.org">www.211.org</a> to find out what is available in your community.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies



#### Choice Making & Decision Making

- Establish predictable routines.
- Limit choices to reduce frustration.
- Offer choices given two options.
- Create an organized play area to reduce over-stimulation.
- Acknowledge child's choice when using their style of communication (e.g., eye gaze, gestures, voice).



### Goal Setting & Independence

- Encourage requests for help.
- Break down tasks into small steps to build independence.
- Encourage expression of preferences and desires.
- Model how to accomplish goals.
- Encourage independence by allowing mistakes and self-correction.
- Help child set small goals (e.g., put a puzzle together, build a tower with blocks).
- Encourage attempting unfamiliar tasks.



### Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Encourage trying different activities, foods, toys, etc.
- Teach calming and breathing strategies.
- Encourage expressing emotions appropriately.
- Reward/reinforce desired behaviors.
- Acknowledge feelings and emotions (e.g., "You're feeling sad/happy/excited right now.")
- Encourage independent expression of likes and dislikes.



### Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Allow child to try and solve problems independently (e.g., building blocks, playing with toys).
- Place toys slightly out of reach to promote independence.





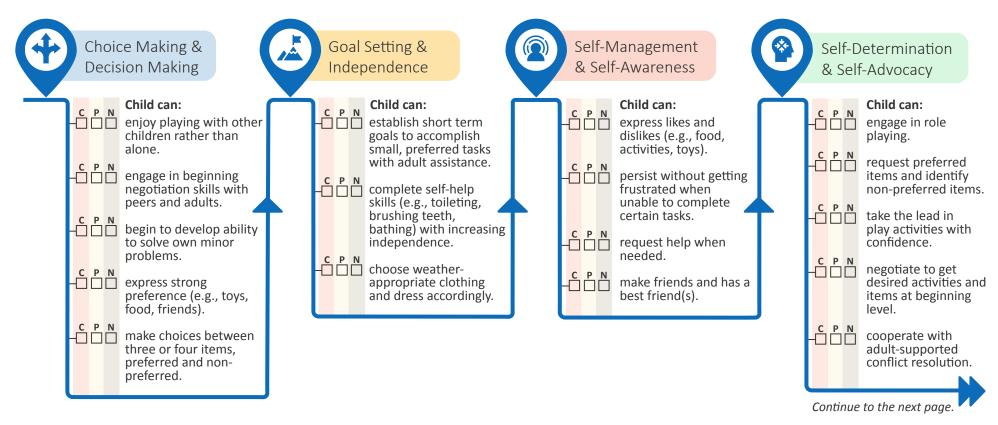
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## Age 3–5 (Inc. Kindergarten)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

**Legend:** C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed







## Age 3–5 (Inc. Kindergarten)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

### **Important Action Steps for Families**

- Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified. Call 1-877-438-5658 for more information. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit <a href="https://www.211.org">www.211.org</a> to find out what is available in your community.

## Teaching and Learning Strategies



#### Choice Making & Decision Making

- Provide choices in food, materials, and activities.
- Use visuals to support choice-making.
- Model how to make choices by providing a variety of learning centers and activities.
- Discuss how to make appropriate decisions when given options.
- Model and role-play how to ask for help.
- Discuss the positive and negative consequences of making decisions.
- Provide opportunities for independence (e.g., encourage and support child to do for themself some of the tasks you are currently doing for them).



### Goal Setting & Independence

- Use a daily schedule and mark off items as they are completed.
- Break down activities into smaller steps and check off steps as they are completed.
- Support child in becoming independent with self-care activities at school and home.
- Provide visuals to encourage independent clean up after play.
- Model how to accomplish goals.



### Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Discuss individual strengths and weaknesses, focusing on abilities.
- Provide opportunities to focus on individual strengths.
- Teach strategies to help child manage their own feelings and behavior.



### Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Assist child with expressing preferences and ordering their own meals.
- Allow child to lead activities (e.g., modeling, role playing, play activities).
- Give child responsibilities (e.g., taking care of a pet, cleaning, classroom jobs).
- Reward and reinforce desired behaviors.
- Use books, social stories, and narratives to teach about emotions.





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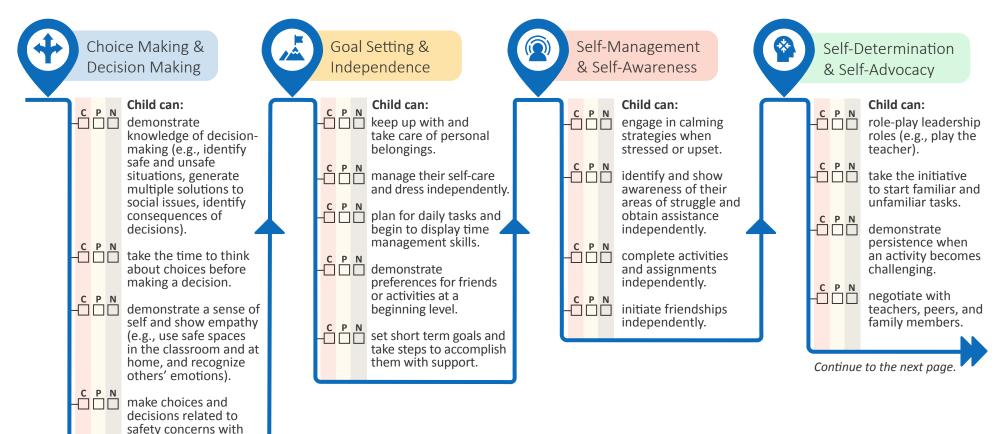


## Elementary School (Grades 1–5)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

**Legend: C**=Complete; **P**=In Progress; **N**=Not Needed

**Directions:** The Next Steps checklist lets educators, families, and students monitor continued progress on skills needed for future success. The legend indicates three levels (complete, in progress, and not needed). The reviewer will mark the box indicating the child's current performance level. Notice the two important resources on the second page. Educators and families can support children with **Teaching and Learning Strategies** in all four categories under the corresponding area. Also, complete the **Important Action Steps for Families** as appropriate.





guidance.



## Elementary School (Grades 1–5)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

### **Important Action Steps for Families**

- Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified by calling 1-877-438-5658. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit <a href="https://www.211.org">www.211.org</a> to find out what is available in your community.
- Collaborate with your child's teacher to develop the individualized education program (IEP). Communicate your child's strengths and interests.
- Begin talking with your child's teacher and your child about them participating in their admission, review and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting. Resources for elementary students and families can be found at imdetermined.org.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies



### Choice Making & Decision Making

- Create boundaries for choice making and decision making.
- Use a daily schedule and mark off items as they are completed.
- Model and role-play decision-making, including consequences.
- Explore and discuss potential career choices.
- Use career terminology for helper charts in the classroom and home setting.



### Goal Setting & Independence

- Use a daily schedule and mark off items as they are completed.
- Assist with creating weekly goals and tracking progress toward completion.
- Allow child to vote on home activities and recreational trips.
- Encourage child to make choices throughout the day.



### Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Reward/reinforce desired behaviors.
- Teach strategies to help child manage their own feelings and behavior.
- Use self-evaluation checklists and forms to help child self-reflect.
- Teach time-management strategies.
- Role-play coping strategies paired with different emotions.
- Create connections between scenarios and different ways to feel.
- Model appropriate emotions for different situations.



### Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Engage in volunteer activities together.
- Encourage ordering their own food at a restaurant.
- Start a savings account and teach them about money.
- Have child participate in their ARD committee meeting, as appropriate.
- Assist child in identifying and expressing their needed academic supports.





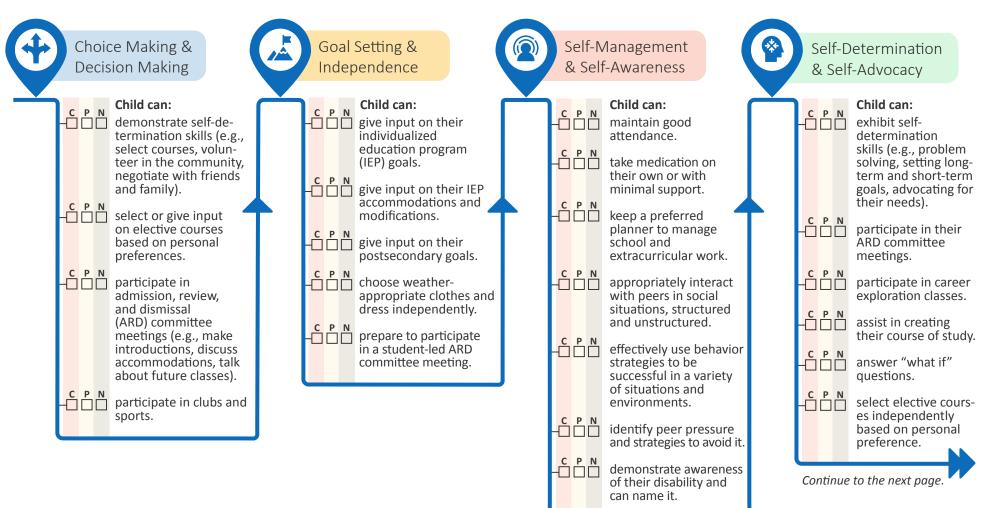
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## Middle School (Grades 6-8)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

**Legend: C**=Complete; **P**=In Progress; **N**=Not Needed







## Middle School (Grades 6–8)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

## Important Action Steps for Families Collaborate with your child's teacher to develop the IEP. Communicate your child's strengths and interests. Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified by calling 1-877-438-5658. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this). Support your child in participating in their ARD committee discussions about planning for the future and consider the link to transition planning (e.g., introduction, sharing about themself, reviewing transition and postsecondary goals). Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org to find out what is available in your community.

Note for middle school students & families: See the <u>Texas Transition and Employment Guide</u> for more detailed information on transition.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies



#### Choice Making & Decision Making

- Assist child with choosing elective courses.
- Provide child with opportunities to choose accommodations for classes.
- Provide child with a list of chores to do at home.
- Support child in describing their accommodations.
- Assist child in explaining how their accommodations support their learning.



### Goal Setting & Independence

- Support child in the use of checklists to monitor self-help skills.
- Encourage child to participate in developing their IEP goals.
- Develop and track weekly or monthly classroom or home goals with child.
- Encourage child to attend and actively participate in their ARD committee meetings.
- Teach child what to do in an emergency (e.g. fire, accident, bad weather) and practice these routines until the child can respond to emergencies independently.



### Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Encourage child to use a planner or calendar.
- Help child prepare to participate in their ARD committee meeting.
- Help child articulate how medication makes their body and emotions feel.
- Encourage child to consider others' points of view.
- Prepare child to provide information about how they learn best at their ARD committee meeting.



### Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Assist child with asking for help.
- Encourage child to ask questions when they don't understand.
- Help child develop different techniques to ask for help.
- Help child discover and articulate their disability-related strengths and weaknesses.
- Teach child how to describe their disability.





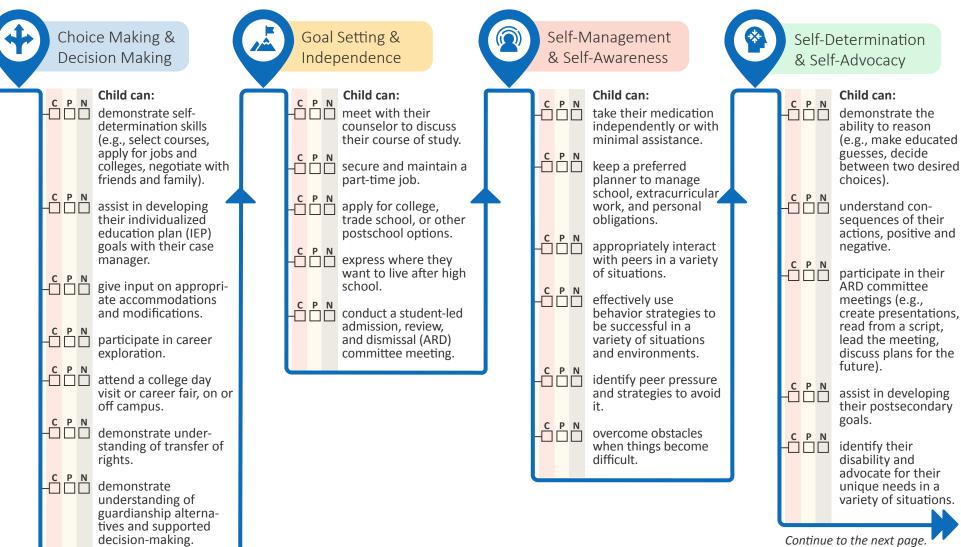
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# High School (Grades 9–12)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

**Legend: C**=Complete; **P**=In Progress; **N**=Not Needed







## High School (Grades 9–12)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

### Important Action Steps for Families Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified by calling 1-877-438-5658. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this). Talk with your child's doctors, insurance company, and/or benefits provider about what will change when your child turns 18. Before graduation, work with your child's teachers to develop the Summary of Performance (SOP). Ask your child's Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (TVRC) or your child's ARD committee about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) opportunities. Have your child reapply or apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at 18 based on their income, not the family's income. If your child is receiving SSI, ask your child's TVRC about work incentive programs to ensure they keep their benefits while earning income. Assist your child in researching entrance requirements and cost for any postsecondary education programs they may be interested in. Prior to your child turning age 17, review the information the school shares about the transfer of rights at age 18. Your child's graduating year, complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) with help from the school counselor, or sign an opt-out form if you choose not to complete or submit these applications. Work with your child's academic counselor to request needed accommodations on college entrance exams. Help your child contact the disability services office at college of interest to find out about supports they offer. Before your child's 18th birthday, decide what, if any, supports your child will need to make legal, financial, and medical decisions.

## Teaching and Learning Strategies



### Choice Making & Decision Making

- Assist with choosing elective courses and the program of study for graduation.
- Provide opportunities to choose accommodations and supports for each class.
- Provide a list of clubs or activities for child to participate in before or after school.
- Encourage child to provide information at their IEP meeting regarding how they learn best, and their likes dislikes, and dreams.
- Support the student-led IEP, with the child as an active member of the ARD committee.



#### Goal Setting & Independence

- Talk about the transfer of rights.
- Encourage child to create academic and personal goals.
- Develop and track weekly or monthly classroom or home goals with child.



### Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Encourage child to use a planner or calendar.
- Help child develop strategies to handle emotions.
- Help child articulate how medication makes their body and emotions feel.
- Help child define what success means to to them.



### Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Assist child with asking for help.
- Encourage child to ask questions when they don't understand.
- Help child develop different techniques to ask for help.
- Help child discover and articulate their disability-related strengths and weaknesses.
- Support the student-led IEP, with the child as an active member of the ARD committee.

Note for high school students & families:
See the <u>Texas Transition and Employment Guide</u>
for more detailed information on transition.





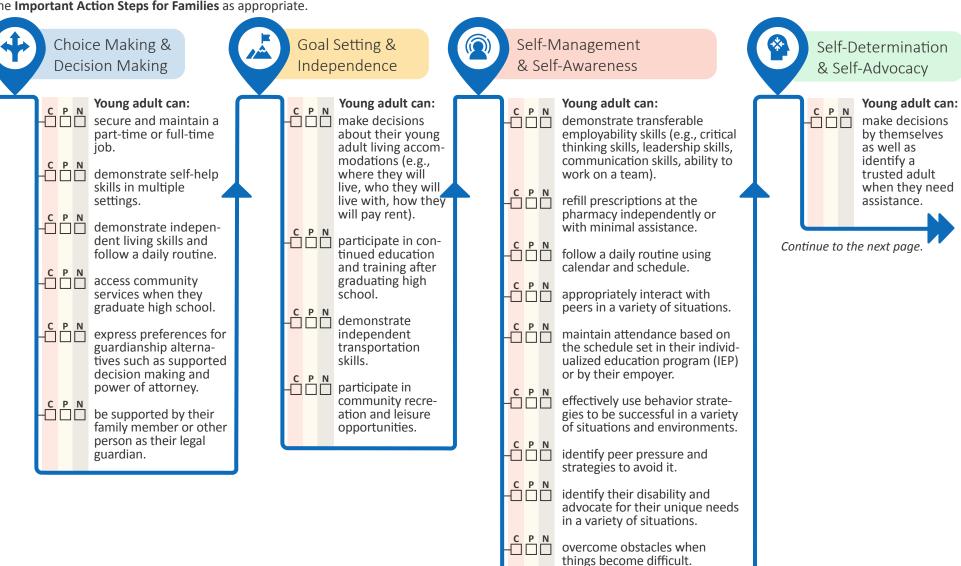
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## 18+ (Ages 18–22)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

**Legend: C**=Complete; **P**=In Progress; **N**=Not Needed







## 18+ (Ages 18–22)

# Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

## **Important Action Steps for Families** If your young adult is on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, assist them in checking their status each year by calling 1-877-438-5658 (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this). Ensure that your young adult is participating in their ARD committee discussions about futures planning. Work with your young adult's teachers to develop the Summary of Performance (SOP) prior to graduation. When your young adult turns 18, assist them in registering to vote if they want to participate in elections. If your young adult is male, you may also assist them in registering for a Selective Service (there are limited exemptions for men who meet the criteria for some medical conditions). Make sure your young adult is a registered consumer with any appropriate outside or state agency (e.g., Texas Workforce Commission-VR).

Note for young adults age 18 and over and families: See the <u>Texas Transition and Employment Guide</u> for more detailed information on transition.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies



### Choice Making & Decision Making

- Provide opportunities to choose accommodations and supports for program activities.
- Provide a list of transition-related community activities for the young adult to participate in outside of school.
- Support the student-led IEP with the young adult as an active member of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee.



### Goal Setting & Independence

- Encourage the young adult to create academic and personal goals.
- Develop and track weekly or monthly school or home goals with the young adult.
- Help the young adult understand adult rights and responsibilities.



#### Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Encourage the young adult to use a planner or calendar.
- Help the young adult develop strategies to handle emotions.
- Help the young adult articulate how medication makes their body and emotions feel.
- Support the young adult in assuming adult rights and responsibilities.



### Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Assist the young adult with asking for help.
- Encourage the young adult to ask questions when they don't understand.
- Help the young adult develop different techniques to ask for help.
- Help the young adult discover and articulate their disability-related strengths and weaknesses.
- Support the student-led IEP with the young adult as an active member of the ARD committee.

