

Transition in the Time of COVID

We are experiencing a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic as COVID continues to affect every part of our lives. And as we deal with this new normal, our children keep growing and transitioning. So, we decided that this is a good time to refresh everyone on the different parts of transition to adulthood and how we can prepare our children.

Transition to Adulthood

Transition involves many parts of a young person's life. Learning and skill building in the areas of living, employment, health and education can lead to better outcomes for your child and you.

COVID may be putting some barriers in the way but, as families, we need to look at the things we can do to help our children with this process.

Living Skills

If your teen or young adult is home more than usual due to virtual learning, now is a good time to work on living skills in the home like doing laundry, making beds or cooking meals. Work together with your child on a schedule of tasks that needs to be done each day and try giving him/her more time alone to complete them.

Employment

If a job or volunteer position in the community isn't a safe choice right now, think about a job in your neighborhood or with extended family or friends. Skills your child can work on at home can translate to a job in the future. Some jobs, like those in a small office setting or positions with little public contact, might be a good fit for this school year. Your school or the [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (DVR) staff can help you brainstorm ideas.

Health

Now is the time to emphasize the importance of staying healthy by eating right, exercising and avoiding germs. Families have a role in this learning by discussing ways to stay [safe from COVID](#). Young adults can also start to take some control over their daily medications and help you call in refills.

Education

School may look different depending on where you live. For children in virtual learning, there are some benefits like letting your child try new classes more easily or finding a new area of interest. There is also a wealth of online transition trainings. One example is [Employment Resources Inc.](#) that has materials on interviewing skills and many other employment-related learning opportunities.

For Parents & Caregivers

It's a good time to learn about transition with some online trainings. For example, watch our Family Voices [What's After High School?](#) training or take part in a [Parents in Partnership or YIPPE](#) training.

Use this time of disruption from COVID to reflect on what's most important for your young adult and your entire family. We need to look at the positives in this situation every day and know that the pandemic will not last forever. Start by asking yourself and your child:

- Do we really need all the programming we had before COVID?
- How is my young adult adjusting to being home more or not having a day packed with activities?
- Has my child discovered new interests or talents during this time?
- How has our family become stronger during this time?
- Did we find new strengths and skills as a family that will support our child in the future?

Want to Learn More?

See our

[What's After High School? resource list](#)
for information and ideas about transition.



Did You Know? Now You Know!

Preparing for IEP Meetings During COVID

This year every school in Wisconsin is looking a lot different. For your child this might mean new tools, modifications or additional services to be able to take part in virtual learning and make academic progress. All of these changes make **now** a good time to talk with your child's special education teacher to set an IEP team meeting. [Wisconsin FACETS](#) (WI FACETS) has developed a [Back to School Prep Sheet for Parents](#) (also available in **Spanish**) to highlight some areas to think about as a team because of all of the changes in the school day. This tool also helps families and educators learn more about hosting and participating in virtual or hybrid IEPs.

WI FACETS offers supports to families who have children with special education needs. They can help you work with your child's school and they have staff available to virtually participate in IEP meetings. If you have questions about your child's IEP, contact WI FACETS at **414.374.4645** or **877.374.0511**.

The Department of Public Instruction's [Special Education and COVID](#) website is another good resource to help answer the questions families have about school-based services.

Is It Time to Have Your Child's Caregivers Return?

Is now the right time to bring respite, or other non-family members, back into your home? A new [Family Decision Guide](#), developed by ARCH National Respite Network, can help families struggling with this decision.

You're One Click Away from COVID Resources

Family Voices has updated our helpful list of COVID resources for families. From back-to-school information, to flu and COVID vaccine and social and emotional health, our list can get you where you need to go!

familyvoiceswi.org



How is Telehealth Working for Your Family?

As part of a national telehealth initiative Family Voices wants to know how the adjustment to telehealth has been for your family. We'll be rolling out a new training and tools to help families who have children with disabilities be better at using telehealth to connect with providers. To start, we need your input to help inform our training so please take the short survey below.

English Survey: surveymonkeys.com/r/FamilyReadiness

Encuesta en español: surveymonkeys.com/r/FamilyReadiness-ES



**Children and Youth with
Special Health Care Needs**

Northeast Region
Children's Hospital
of Wisconsin
Fox Valley
877.568.5205

Northern Region
Marathon County
Health Dept.
Wausau
866.640.4106

Southeast Region
Children's Hospital
Milwaukee
800.234.5437

Southern Region
Waisman Center
Madison
800.532.3321

Western Region
Chippewa County
Dept of Public Health
Chippewa Falls
800.400.3678

Policy/Budget Update

COVID-Related Medicaid Updates

Remote or In Person? The Decision is Up to YOU! The Department of Health Services (DHS) has made it clear that our children will continue to get needed services and families will lead the decision on how supports will be provided. Families can choose to receive services face-to-face or continue to use telehealth.

DHS has stated that, “Families and support and service coordinators (SSCs) will work together to find the **best ways to connect** during this time and determine the types of contact that work best for the family. Families can work with SSCs to get the technology they need to continue to receive supports and services.”

Keeping Your Medicaid: The [Families First COVID Act](#) requires states not terminate, or end, any Medicaid benefits during the pandemic. This means that if you or a family member was enrolled in Medicaid or a Medicaid-waiver program, like the Children’s Long-Term Supports or Katie Beckett Program, as of March 18, 2020, you will continue to be enrolled. Even if a child ages out of a program, like turning 19 for Katie Beckett, he or she may be able to continue coverage during the pandemic.

For families with transition age children, counties **can** still move children from children’s services to adult long-term support programs if they qualify.

Program Eligibility: Counties will continue to work with families to evaluate and enroll children who may qualify for services. COVID should not delay this process. Counties can set phone or virtual meetings, rather than face-to-face, to connect with families and gather information.

For more details on these topics and answers to many other questions, see [COVID-19: CLTS Program Operations Questions and Answers](#).

Want to Learn More?



For more information on these articles visit these websites:

Family Voices of Wisconsin
familyvoiceswi.org

National Family Voices
familyvoices.org

COVID-19 Special Education Resources
dpi.wi.gov/sped/covid-19-sped-updates-and-resources

WI DHS Youth in Transition
dhs.wisconsin.gov/clts/waiver/transition/transitiontoadult.htm

COVID-19 CLTS Updates
dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/clts.htm

Family Voices Trainings

Family Voices and the Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs are hosting **virtual trainings** this fall. Learn about programs and services for your child without leaving home! See our website for times and registration details familyvoiceswi.org/events/month.

October 1: Did You Know? Now You Know!

October 6: Medicaid Made Easy

October 20: Did You Know? Now You Know!

October 22: What’s After High School?

October 28: What’s After High School?

December 1: What’s After High School?

View these trainings any time at familyvoiceswi.org/learn.



[What’s After High School?](#)

Learn about the transition to adult life for youth with disabilities and special health care needs.



[Medicaid Made Easy](#)

Gives you a solid understanding of Wisconsin’s Medicaid programs for children and how they’re funded.



[Did You Know? Now You Know!](#)

Explains all the resources and services for children with disabilities and special health care needs from birth through young adulthood.



[Coordinating Your Child’s Health Care](#)

This training was created to help you partner with your child’s care team.



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We're learning that life goes on. It feels like the world has stopped yet our kids continue to grow. As parents and caregivers, we're supposed to pave the way as they transition to new stages but having our children close has made it harder for us to recognize that they're changing. So, we thought our Fall Newsletter should focus on **transition** and all the things that come along with it. There are still a lot of resources to help with this process, so reach out while staying in!

Thank you!



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for their financial support for this Family Voices of Wisconsin publication!

About Family Voices

If you have a child with a disability or special health care need, you've come to the right place! We're here to help you **navigate** the services available to your family. It's a complicated system and our goal is to provide you and your family with some tools. **Connect** with other families, learn how to **advocate** for your child, and discover how you can be a voice for all children with special needs.

If you, or your adult child, is new to the adult long-term support system, you may not be familiar with **Fiscal Employer Agents** (FEA). This fact sheet will help you understand the important role a fiscal employer agent plays as you create a system of supports that allows you to live a full life.

In this document “**you**” means the IRIS or Family Care **participant**. We know many parents, family members or caregivers also participate in guiding and supporting adults with disabilities to make decisions.



GETTING STARTED

[Aging and Disability Resource Centers \(ADRCs\)](#)

are the doorway into Wisconsin’s long-term support system. Once you are found eligible by your ADRC, you will be asked to choose from one of these three long-term care programs:

1. Family Care, dhs.wisconsin.gov/familycare
2. Family Care Partnership, dhs.wisconsin.gov/familycare/fcp-index.htm
3. IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct), dhs.wisconsin.gov/iris



CHOOSING A FISCAL EMPLOYER AGENT

If you enroll in the IRIS Program, you will need to choose from one of Wisconsin’s four FEAs. Your IRIS consultant can assist you with this process and answer your questions about the role of the FEA. Check this list to find an IRIS contact dhs.wisconsin.gov/iris/directory.htm.

If you enroll in Family Care, a fiscal employer agent may be needed if you decide to self-direct your supports.



WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY FISCAL EMPLOYER AGENT?

Your FEA supports you as you hire and maintain direct care workers. They are the **fiscal intermediary**, or go-between, for you and your caregivers. Your FEA is responsible for:

- Completing background checks for the workers you hire.
- Processing payroll for all of your direct care workers.
- Managing the amount of federal and state taxes to take out of your workers’ checks.
- Helping you with other employer tasks.
- Processing any cost share you may owe as part of your care plan.
- Paying vendors for services provided, the IRIS or Family Care enrollee.
- Reimbursing you, or your family, for goods or supplies included and authorized in your care plan.

WHICH FISCAL EMPLOYER AGENTS WORK WITH THE IRIS PROGRAM?

Currently, if you are enrolled in Wisconsin's IRIS Program, you can choose from four FEAs. All of these FEAs can assist participants living in **any** Wisconsin county. The agencies are:

1. **GT Independence**, web: gtindependence.com,
phone: 877.659.4500, email: customerservice@gtindependence.com
2. **iLife**, web: lifefinancialmanagement.com,
phone: 888.800.5599, email: Info@iLIFEfms.com
3. **Outreach Health Services**, web: outreachhealth.com/wi,
phone: 715.494.9440, email: wisconsin@outreachhealth.com
4. **Premier Financial Management Services**, web: premier-fms.com,
phone: 855.224.5810, email: IRIS@premier-fms.com

ARE THERE FISCAL EMPLOYER AGENTS FOR FAMILY CARE?

Family Care Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) work with a limited number of FEAs. Unless you will be hiring your own direct care workers, you likely will not need a FEA. Your MCO will take care of paying your workers and doing background checks. When you create your plan, your care manager will let you know if a FEA is needed and help you find FEAs in your area.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

To get more information about FEAs, go to dhs.wisconsin.gov/iris/fea.htm or contact your FEA's customer services department.

If you are enrolled in IRIS, contact your IRIS consultant or the **IRIS Call Center** at **888.515.4747**. Your county's ADRC is also a good source of information about programs and services for adults with disabilities in your community.

The Family Care and IRIS programs are built on the principles of increasing independence and self-direction. This means that you will have the freedom to decide how you want to live your life and what supports are most important to you!

Thank you!



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Each family has a voice • Together, our voices will be heard
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