Resources for Students With Disabilities and Parents/Caregivers of Diverse Backgrounds

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What is the purpose of this presentation?

This presentation was created to give parents/caregivers and students with disabilities from diverse backgrounds some resources to help with planning for the transition for life after high school.

Topics discussed in this presentation:

- I'm Determined

- Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

- Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

- Virginia Commonwealth University's ACE-It Program

- George Mason University's Learning Into Future Environments (LIFE) Program

I'm Determined

- A project funded by the Virginia Department of Education

- Focuses on building self-determined behavior in students with disabilities

- This project helps youth gain control in their lives instead of letting others make decisions about them for them

I'm Determined: Parent Pathways to Success

- The Pathways to Success tool for parents helps parents learn how to support your student in becoming more self-determined

- You can follow the Parent Path in order or skip to other parts to get the information you need

- Click on the link below to get started!

https://www.imdetermined.org/parents/parent-path-to-success
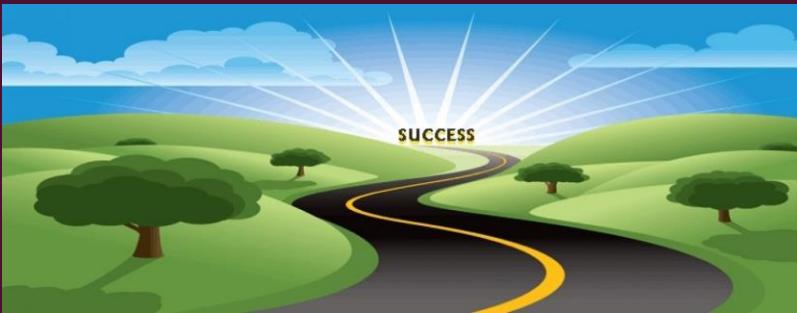
What is DARS?

- The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services works with students, youth, families, schools, and community organizations to provide services that lead to successful transitions from school to adult life and work

- DARS offers two services to help students with disabilities move from school to post-high school life:

  - pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS)

  - vocational rehabilitation (VR) transition services

https://www.vadars.org/drs/transitionservices.htm

DARS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

What are the Pre-ETS and VR programs?

- Starting at age 14, students can connect with Pre-ETS for an early start at career exploration and preparation for adult life. Topics covered include:

    - career exploration, work-based learning experiences, exploration of education and training programs for after high school, workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills, and self-advocacy

- The VR program helps students with disabilities prepare for, find, and keep a job

    - VR services include but are not limited to, vocational counseling, training, and job placement

Applying to DARS

- DARS recommends that students explore VR (vocational rehabilitation) services and meet their VR counselor three years before they plan to graduate high school

  - Early involvement helps students get to know their VR counselor and helps the counselor develop a clear path towards the employment goal

Call **800-552-5019** or contact the DRS office nearest you or to find out which counselor serves the school division in your area.

*With parental consent, other individuals such as family, friends, school personnel or other community based service providers may refer a student to DRS.

https://www.vadars.org/downloads/publications/TransitionServicesGuide.pdf

VDOE (Virginia Department of Education) Transition Services

- VDOE provides information and support to students and families going through transition planning for life after high school

- The website defines transition, why it is important, and provides details on how to make successful transition possible


http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/index.sht
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Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) ACE-IT in College Program

- ACE-IT in College is a two year transition program for youth with disabilities aged 18-26 on the VCU campus

- Students receive individualized support and participate in VCU college classes, campus activities, and work a job

- Contact aceit@vcu.edu to get started

https://aceitincollege.org
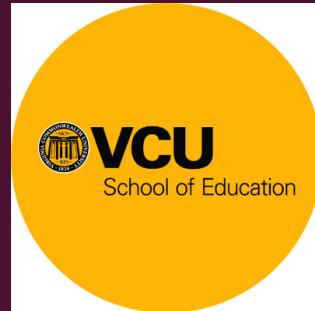
VCU's Ace-It Program

- Students take two to three VCU classes per semester totaling 20+ credits over two years
    - Students take UNIV 101: Introduction to the University, a freshman transition class, in their first semester
    - Students work with an advisor to select other classes based on career and personal interests
- Students receive a VCU School of Education Certificate

VCU's ACE-IT in College Program

- Each student gets help from an education coach

  - Education coaches are trained VCU students who support ACE-IT students in and out of the classroom

- Students are encouraged to participate in the social parts of college as well

  - student organizations, campus activities, and service

- Students participate in work experiences and internships with the help of a job coach

- The ultimate goal of ACE-IT in College is competitive employment in the students' area of interest

George Mason University's Learning Into Future Environments (LIFE) Program

- The Mason LIFE Program is designed for young adults with disabilities to have a four year university experience

- Students take classes and also have the opportunity for an apprenticeship in several positions

- Some key parts of the LIFE program are:

  - Class instructors

  - Resident Advisors if you live on campus

  - Internships and volunteer opportunities

  - Mentors and Best Buddy

https://masonlife.gmu.edu

George Mason University's LIFE Program

- LIFE students take classes in specialty areas like budgeting and independent living and are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities on campus

- Most students participate in the residential housing part of the program, either on campus or off campus

- Students graduate with a George Mason Certificate of Completion

Things to Consider When Choosing a School

- Do you want to live on campus or live at home?

- Are you comfortable with the environment after visiting?

- Do you prefer large classes or small classes?

- Are there activities you like and can be a part of?

- What types of work experiences are you looking for?

Resources

- https://www.imdetermined.org

- https://www.vadars.org/drs/transitionservices.htm

- http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/index.shtm

- https://aceitincollege.org

- https://masonlife.gmu.edu