

# Welcome to the Transition Roadmap to Housing and Residential Supports!

## In the roadmap you'll find:

- Goals and action steps to help guide your transition to living on your own in independent housing
- Links to extra resources for more information
- Words in blue. These are terms that you may hear often when learning about your choices for housing. If you click on a blue word, you'll see its definition. There's also a complete glossary of all the terms at the end of the Roadmap.

## **Some support**

means that support is not needed for most daily activities.

## **Moderate support**

means daily support is needed for some but not all daily activities.

## **Intensive support**

means that hourly support is needed for most daily activities.

Some Support • Ages 10-14 • Goal:

# Develop Life Skills

## Action step 1.

### Practice life skills at home and in the community.

Learning to do chores at home, like cooking and laundry, can help you get ready to live on your own. At the same time, developing skills, like shopping and managing money, can help you be active in the community.

If you have an [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#), you can ask for a [community skills assessment](#) as part of your [IEP transition plan](#).

### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks IEP Guide](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on life skills and autism](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on teaching important life skills](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on 10 ways to build independence](#)

### Words to know

community skills assessment

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plan





#### Action step 2.

### Develop strategies for independent living.

Keys to living on your own include being able to:

- Plan
- Organize
- Manage your time

Creating and following routines can make it easier to remember and complete tasks. Try different [supports](#) to find out what works best for you, like:

- [Visual prompts](#)
- Color-coded schedule or organizer
- Scheduling or calendar apps

### Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on community-based skills assessment](#)

### Words to know

supports

visual prompts

Some Support • Ages 14-16 • Goal:

# Identify Housing and Funding Options

## Action step 1.

### Think about housing options.

Where and how do you think you'll want to live as an adult?

You may have several housing options, like:

- Living at home with your family
- Living on your own in a house, apartment or [shared living](#)
- College housing
- A [group home](#)

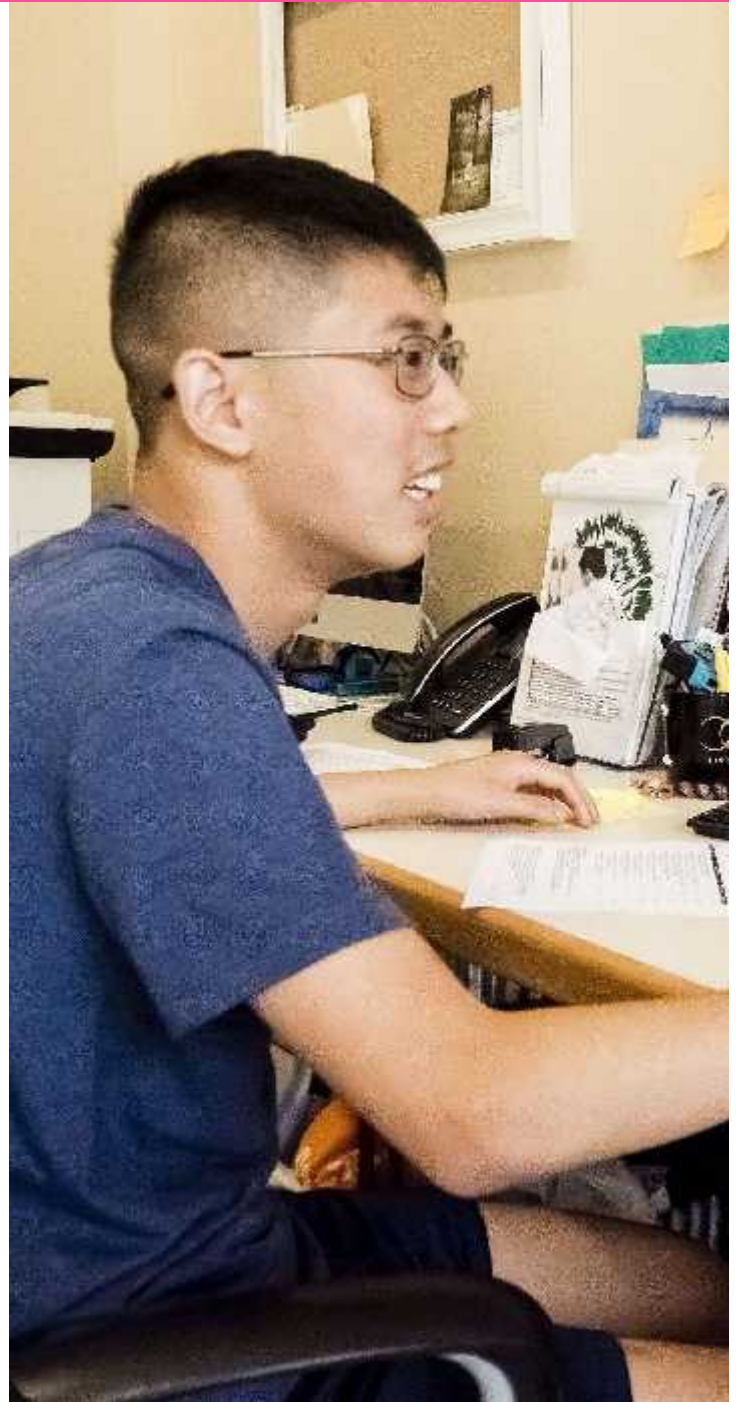
### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From the Urban Land Institute on residential options for people with autism](#)

### Words to know

group home

shared living





## Action step 2.

### Apply for Home and Community-based Services.

All states provide [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) to help children and adults with disabilities live at home. Eligibility varies within and across states. Services can include:

- Day or overnight services
- Employment services
- Residential services, including shared living and group homes
- Transportation services

HCBS may have long waiting lists. It's a good idea to apply for services as soon as your child is diagnosed with autism.

### Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on funding for housing](#)
- [From the Autism Housing Network on housing options](#)
- [From the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Center for Autism Research on housing for adults with ASD](#)
- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

### Words to know

[home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#)

### Action step 3.

## Find low-income housing supports.

Contact the local housing authority to make sure you're on the waiting list for rental assistance for:

- [Low-income housing](#)
- [Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers](#)

If you're not already on the list for these programs, ask when you can be added. Even if your family isn't low-income, when you turn 18 you are eligible for services based on your own income.

## Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on funding for housing](#)
- [From usa.gov on finding affordable rental housing](#)

## Words to know

low-income housing

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher



A top-down view of a person's hands working at a wooden desk. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket and a watch. They are using a silver and black Sharp calculator with their right hand, which shows the number 1542 on the display. Their left hand is holding a blue tablet displaying a document. There are also some papers and a pen on the desk.

#### Action step 4.

### Start saving for adult housing.

Contact a [special needs planner](#) to explore saving options, like:

- [Special needs trust](#)
- [Pooled trust](#)
- [Life insurance-funded annuity](#)

Open an [Achieving a Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) account](#). You want to save in accounts that won't be used later to determine your child's eligibility for support programs, like [Social Security](#).

### Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on special needs financial planning](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on ABLE accounts](#)
- [From the ABLE National Resource Center on ABLE accounts](#)
- [From the Academy of Special Needs Planners on special needs planning](#)
- [From the Social Security Administration on Social Security](#)

### Words to know

[Achieving a Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) account](#)

[life insurance-funded annuity](#)

[pooled trust](#)

[Social Security](#)

[special needs planner](#)

[special needs trust](#)

Some Support • Ages 16-18 • Goal:

# Think About Your Housing Options



Action step 1.

## Identify your housing needs.

Your housing choice should be a good fit for your:

- Support needs
- Financial needs
- Personal preferences

If you're not happy with an option, keep looking. Housing can have long waiting lists, so when you find something that meets your needs, put your name on the waiting list. You may need to get an evaluation to be accepted for housing or to get funding.

## Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From the Urban Land Institute on residential options for people with autism](#)



## Action step 2.

### Visit housing options.

Going in person to check out different housing choices can help you decide which is right for you. You can:

- Ask a parent or [guardian](#) to schedule a visit
- Meet in person with the landlord or housing director
- Talk to autistic adults who live there to find out what it's like

### Words to know

[guardian](#)





### Action step 3.

## Get services and supports ready.

Most housing doesn't include services and supports. This is why applying for [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) as early as possible is so important. You want to have services ready. These can include

- Health and mental care
- Employment services
- Money management
- Transportation services

Continue to seek out low-income housing supports and save for adult housing. Make sure you are on the waiting list for rental assistance, if needed.

## Resources

- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

## Words to know

home and community-based services (HCBS)

Action step 4.

**Talk about changes and new responsibility with your family.**

Even if you decide to keep living at home with your family or caregivers, you're still transitioning to adulthood. Talk to your family about changes in expectations and support. For example, when living at home as an adult, you may take on more responsibility for your own:

- Belongings
- Living space
- Time



Some Support • Ages 18-22 • Goal:

# Select a Housing Option



## Action step 1.

### Review your wants and needs related to housing.

Look again at what you're planning for adult housing:

- Will you live in your parents', caregivers' or family's house?
- Will you live on your own or with roommates?
- Do you need to be close to public transportation?

Answering questions like these can help you know what's important in making decisions about housing. Think about what works for you now and what you need in your new space to feel comfortable and supported.

### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From the Urban Land Institute on residential options for people with autism](#)

## Action step 2.

### Make a budget.

Moving into a new place can be expensive. There are lots of costs, like:

- AskFurniture
- Moving fees
- Rent
- Security deposits
- Utilities like electricity, water and heat

Make a budget to help you plan for a move and other living expenses. A good guideline is that rent should cost less than one-third of your monthly income.

### Resources

- [From Autism Speaks about being safe with money](#)
- [From the Autism Speaks Special Needs Financial Planner app](#)
- [From the Federal Trade Commission about various financial topics](#)





### Action step 3.

## Continue to work on setting up services and supports.

Make sure you apply for [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) as early as possible. Check in with your local housing authority on your status on the waiting list for rental assistance. Once you turn 18, you are eligible for low-income housing supports based on your own income. Continue to work with a special needs planner to be sure you are saving as much as possible for your future housing needs.

### Resources

- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

### Words to know

[home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#)

### Action step 4.

## Continue to assess your new living situation.

Once you move to independent living, it doesn't have to be forever. If you need to, you can make a change. Your choice of housing may change as you get older. This is OK. Continuing to evaluate your living situation and what is or isn't working can help you plan for the future.

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)



Moderate Support • Ages 10-14 • Goal:

# Develop Life Skills

## Action step 1.

### Practice life skills at home and in the community.

Learning to do chores at home, like cooking and laundry, can help you get ready to live on your own. At the same time, developing skills, like shopping and managing money, can help you be active in the community.

If you have an [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#), you can ask for a [community skills assessment](#) as part of your [IEP transition plan](#).

### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks IEP Guide](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on life skills and autism](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on teaching important life skills](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on 10 ways to build independence](#)

### Words to know

community skills assessment

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plan



### Action step 2.

## Develop skills for independent living.

Keys to living on your own include being able to:

- Plan
- Organize
- Manage your time

Creating and following routines can make it easier to remember and complete tasks. Try different [supports](#) to find out what works best for you, like:

- [Visual prompts](#)
- Color-coded schedule or organizer
- Scheduling or calendar apps

You may also consider a residential transition program, where you can continue to learn and strengthen your independent living skills while living in a supported environment for a short period of time.

## Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on community-based skills assessment](#)

## Words to know

supports

visual prompts





Moderate Support • Ages 14-16 • Goal:

# Identify Funding and Housing Options

## Action step 1.

### Think about housing options.

Where and how do you think you'll want to live as an adult?

You may have several housing options, like:

- Living at home with your family
- Living on your own in a house, apartment or [shared living](#)
- College housing
- A [group home](#)

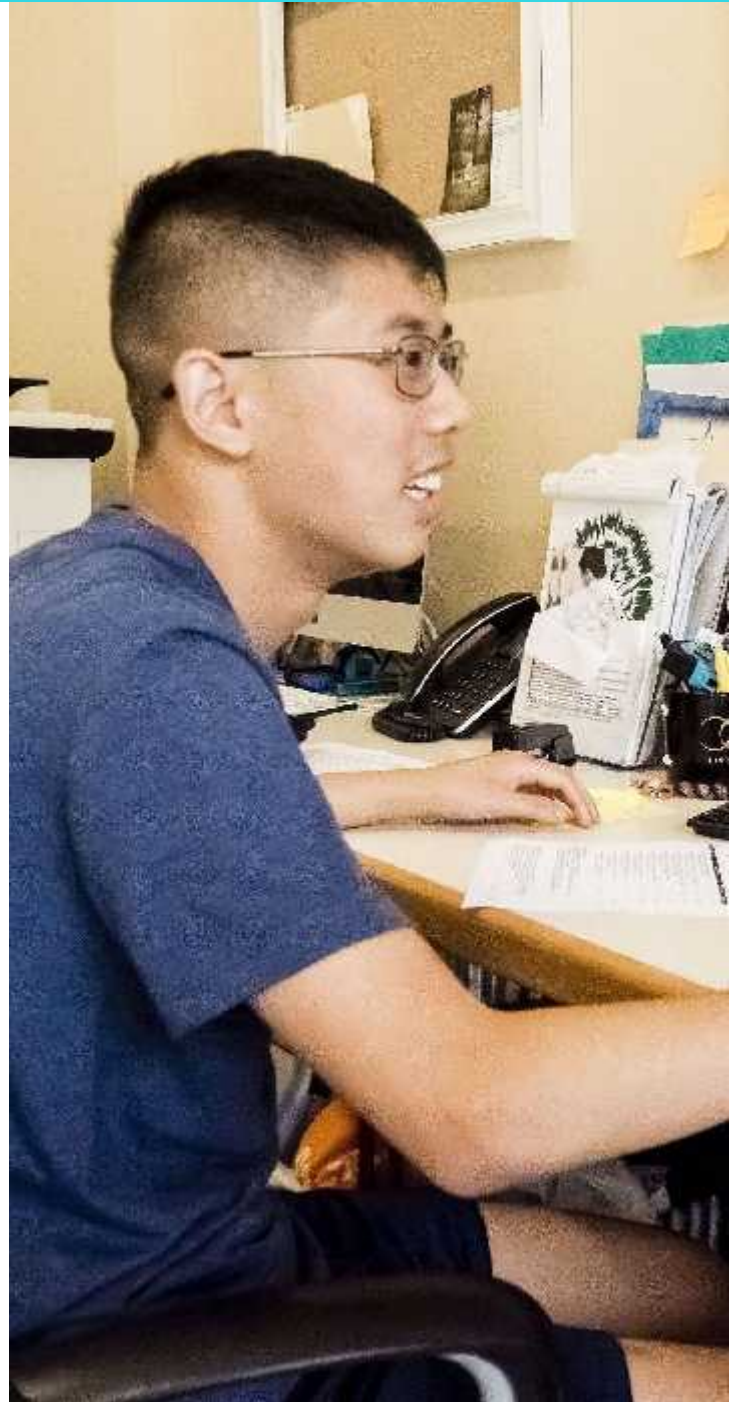
### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
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### Words to know

group home

shared living





## Action step 2.

### Apply for Home and Community-based Services.

All states provide [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) to help children and adults with disabilities live at home. Eligibility varies within and across states. Services can include:

- Day or overnight services
- Employment services
- Residential services, including [shared living](#) and [group homes](#)
- Transportation services

HCBS may have long waiting lists. It's a good idea to apply for services as soon as your child is diagnosed with autism.

### Resources

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- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

### Words to know

[home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#)

### Action step 3.

## Find low-income housing supports.

Contact the local housing authority to make sure you're on the waiting list for rental assistance for:

- [Low-income housing](#)
- [Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers](#)

If you're not already on the list for these programs, ask when you can be added. Even if your family isn't low-income, when you turn 18 you are eligible for services based on your own income.

## Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on funding for housing](#)
- [From usa.gov on finding affordable rental housing](#)

## Words to know

low-income housing

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher





#### Action step 4.

### Start saving for adult housing.

Contact a [special needs planner](#) to explore saving options, like:

- [Special needs trust](#)
- [Pooled trust](#)
- [Life insurance-funded annuity](#)

Open an [Achieving a Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) account](#). You want to save in accounts that won't be used later to determine your child's eligibility for support programs, like [Social Security](#).

### Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on special needs financial planning](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on ABLE accounts](#)
- [From the ABLE national Resource Center on ABLE accounts](#)
- [From the Academy of Special Needs Planners on special needs planning](#)
- [From the Social Security Administration on Social Security](#)

### Words to know

[Achieving a Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) account](#)

[life insurance-funded annuity](#)

[pooled trust](#)

[Social Security](#)

[special needs planner](#)

[special needs trust](#)

Moderate Support • Ages 16-18 • Goal:

# Think About Your Housing Options



## Action step 1.

### Identify your housing needs.

Your housing choice should be a good fit for your:

- Support needs
- Financial needs
- Personal preferences

If you're not happy with an option, keep looking. Housing can have long waiting lists, so when you find something that meets your needs, put your name on the waiting list. You may need to get an evaluation to be accepted for housing or to get funding.

You may also consider a residential transition program, where you can continue to learn and strengthen your independent living skills while living in a supported environment for a short period of time.

### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From the Urban Land Institute on residential options for people with autism](#)

### Action step 2.

## Visit housing options.

Going in person to check out different housing choices can help you decide which is right for you. You can:

- Ask a parent or [guardian](#) to schedule a visit
- Meet in person with the landlord or housing director
- Talk to autistic adults who live there to find out what it's like

## Words to know

[guardian](#)





### Action step 3.

## Get services and supports ready.

Most housing doesn't include services and supports. This is why applying for [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) as early as possible is so important. You want to have services ready. These can include

- Health and mental care
- Employment services
- Money management
- Transportation services

Continue to seek out low-income housing supports and saving for adult housing. Make sure you are on the waiting list for rental assistance, if needed.

## Resources

- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

## Words to know

home and community-based services (HCBS)

Action step 4.

**Talk about changes and new responsibility with your family.**

Even if you decide to keep living at home with your family or caregivers, you're still transitioning to adulthood. Talk to your family about changes in expectations and support. For example, when living at home as an adult, you may take on more responsibility for your own:

- Belongings
- Living space
- Time





Moderate Support • Ages 18-22 • Goal:

# Select a Housing Option



## Action step 1.

### Review your wants and needs related to housing.

Look again at what you're planning for adult housing:

- Will you live in your parents', caregivers' or family's house?
- Will you live on your own or with roommates?
- Do you need to be close to public transportation?

Answering questions like these can help you know what's important in making decisions about housing. Think about what works for you now and what you need in your new space to feel comfortable and supported.

### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From the Urban Land Institute on residential options for people with autism](#)

### Action step 2.

## Visit and shadow different living options.

Although some housing options may look perfect online or in photos, it's important to visit them in person to be sure that they're a good fit for you. Find out if you can spend a night there. This can help you find out about sensory issues onsite that you may not notice on a short visit during the day.

You may also consider a residential transition program, where you can continue to learn and strengthen your independent living skills while living in a supported environment for a short period of time.



### Action step 3.

## Continue to work on setting up services and supports.

Make sure you apply for [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) as early as possible. Check in with your local housing authority on your status on the waiting list for rental assistance. Once you turn 18, you are eligible for low-income housing supports based on your own income. Continue to work with a special needs planner to be sure you are saving as much as possible for your future housing needs.

## Resources

- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

## Words to know

home and community-based services (HCBS)

Action step 4.

**Continue to assess your new living situation.**

Once you move to independent living, it doesn't have to be forever. If you need to, you can make a change. Your choice of housing may change as you get older. This is OK. Continuing to evaluate your living situation and what is or isn't working can help you plan for the future.



Intensive Support • Ages 10-14 • Goal:

# Develop Life Skills

## Action step 1.

### Practice life skills at home and in the community.

Doing chores and being active in the community can help you be independent. Practice steps needed for these skills with your:

- Family
- Therapists
- Teachers

You can ask for a [community skills assessment](#) as part of your [IEP transition plan](#).

### Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on community-based skills assessment](#)

### Words to know

community skills assessment

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plan



Action step 2.

## Develop routines for independent living.

Following a routine gives you more independence at home. Your [IEP team](#) can include goals in your IEP transition plan that help you learn the steps of daily living tasks. Try different [supports](#), like [visual prompts](#) and color coding, to find what works for you.

You may consider an adult transition support program, sometimes called a “transition academy,” as one of your options after graduating from high school.

## Resources

- [From Autism Speaks on community-based skills assessment](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on life skills and autism](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on teaching important life skills](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on 10 ways to build independence](#)

## Words to know

Individualized Education Program (IEP) team

supports

visual prompt



Intensive Support • Ages 14-16 • Goal:

# Identify Housing and Funding Options

Action step 1.

## Think about housing options.

Where and how do you think you'll want to live as an adult?

You may have several housing options, like:

- Living at home with your family
- Living on your own in a house, apartment or [shared living](#)
- College housing
- A [group home](#)

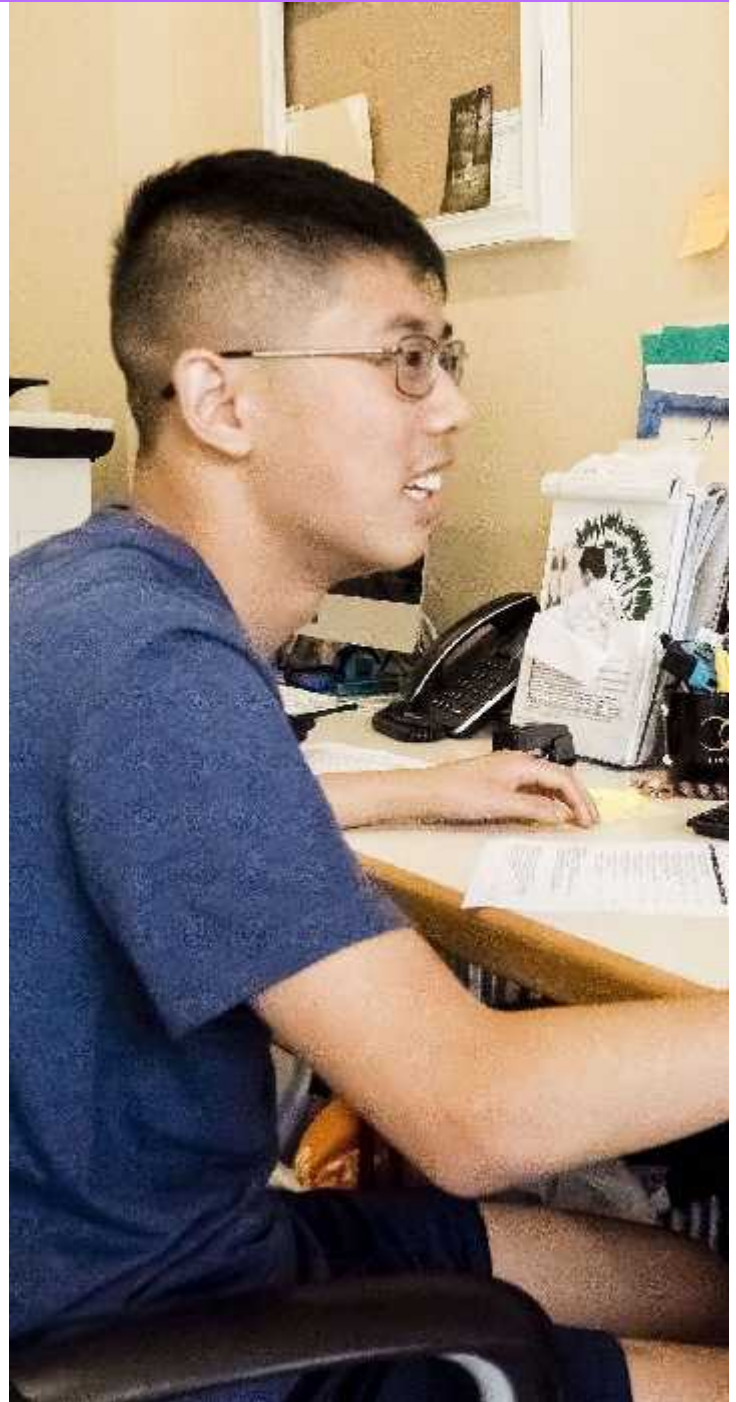
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## Words to know

group home

shared living





## Action step 2.

### Apply for Home and Community-based Services.

All states provide [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) to help children and adults with disabilities live at home. Eligibility varies within and across states. Services can include:

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HCBS may have long waiting lists. It's a good idea to apply for services as soon as your child is diagnosed with autism.

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- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

### Words to know

[home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#)

### Action step 3.

## Find low-income housing supports.

Contact the local housing authority to make sure you're on the waiting list for rental assistance for:

- [Low-income housing](#)
- [Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers](#)

If you're not already on the list for these programs, ask when you can be added. Even if your family isn't low-income, when you turn 18 you are eligible for services is based on your own income.

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## Words to know

low-income housing

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher





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#### Action step 4.

## Continue saving for adult housing.

Contact a [special needs planner](#) to explore saving options, like:

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- [Pooled trust](#)
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Open an [Achieving a Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) account](#). You want to save in accounts that won't be used later to determine your child's eligibility for support programs, like [Social Security](#).

## Resources

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- [From the Academy of Special Needs Planners on special needs planning](#)
- [From the Social Security Administration on Social Security](#)

## Words to know

[Achieving a Better Life Experience \(ABLE\) account](#)

[life insurance-funded annuity](#)

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Intensive Support • Ages 16-18 • Goal:

# Think About Your Housing Options



## Action step 1.

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You may also consider a residential transition program, where you can continue to learn and strengthen your independent living skills while living in a supported environment for a short period of time.

### Resources

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### Action step 2.

## Visit housing options.

Going in person to check out different housing choices can help you decide which is right for you. You can:

- Ask a parent or [guardian](#) to schedule a visit
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## Words to know

[guardian](#)





### Action step 3.

## Get services and supports ready.

Most housing doesn't include services and supports. This is why applying for [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) as early as possible is so important. You want to have services ready. These can include

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- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

## Words to know

home and community-based services (HCBS)

Action step 4.

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Even if you decide to keep living at home with your family or caregivers, you're still transitioning to adulthood. Talk to your family about changes in expectations and support. For example, when living at home as an adult, you may take on more responsibility for your own:

- Belongings
- Living space
- Time



Intensive Support • Ages 18-22 • Goal:

# Select a Housing Option



## Action step 1.

### Review your wants and needs related to housing.

Think again about what you're planning for adult living. Make a list of things you need in your home. This could include being in a quiet neighborhood or having a bathroom close by. Think about what works for you now and what you need in your new space to feel comfortable and supported.

### Resources

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From the Urban Land Institute on residential options for people with autism](#)

### Action step 2.

## Visit and shadow different living options.

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You may also consider a residential transition program, where you can continue to learn and strengthen your independent living skills while living in a supported environment for a short period of time.



### Action step 3.

## Continue to work on setting up services and supports.

Make sure you apply for [home and community-based services \(HCBS\)](#) as early as possible. Check in with your local housing authority on your status on the waiting list for rental assistance. Once you turn 18, you are eligible for low-income housing supports based on your own income. Continue to work with a special needs planner to be sure you are saving as much as possible for your future housing needs.

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### Words to know

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Action step 4.

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Once you move to independent living, it doesn't have to be forever. If you need to, you can make a change. Your choice of housing may change as you get older. This is OK. Continuing to evaluate your living situation and what is or isn't working can help you plan for the future.

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)





# Glossary

## A

### **ABLE Account**

Stands Achieving a Better Life Experience account. A savings account that helps people with disabilities and their families save for housing, education, transportation, medical and other expenses related to their disability. It helps individuals with disabilities, including autism, save for future needs without losing access to other resources.

## C

### **community skills assessment.**

Helps check skills needed for community living, like employment, self-advocacy, transportation, home living and health and safety.

## G

### **group home.**

A place where a group of people with similar needs live. It has trained staff to help care for the people who live there.

### **guardian**

Also called legal guardian. The person who has legal responsibility to take care of a child or adult.

# H

## home and community-based services.

A Medicaid waiver program that allows states to offer services to people with disabilities who don't qualify for Medicaid. HCBS pays for group homes and independent living.

# I

## Individualized Education Program (IEP).

A plan that identifies programs, goals, services and supports to make sure a student with a disability gets a free and appropriate education at school.

## Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

The team that works on an IEP to make sure it meets a student's needs. The team can include the student, parents, teachers, a school district representative and service providers, like a speech therapist or an occupational therapist.

## Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plan.

Goals in a student's IEP that help plan for life after high school. Schools must measure and report on the goals.

# L

## life insurance-funded annuity.

Income paid by a life insurance company where a death benefit is divided up over a number of years into equivalent amounts that the beneficiary receives each year, as opposed to a lump sum.

## low-income housing.

Also called public housing. Housing (apartments, townhomes or single-family homes) you rent based on your income. This housing can be funded by the government or privately owned.

# P

## pooled trust.

A special needs trust organized by a nonprofit organization that pools resources of many people.

# S

## Section 8 Housing Voucher.

Rental housing you find on your own. The government pays your landlord each month. You pay the difference, if any.

## shared living.

Renting a private bedroom in a home or owning a home with other individuals.

## Social Security.

A U.S. government program that pays money to people with limited income, including people with disabilities and people who are retired or don't have jobs.

## special needs planner.

A professional financial advisor who is an expert in savings plans for people with disabilities and special needs.

## special needs trust.

A savings fund that helps pay for your child's special care needs over the lifetime but doesn't affect their ability to get public benefits.

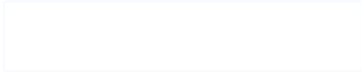
## supports

Tools or services that help people with autism in their daily lives. Examples of supports include activities that get you involved in the community, communication devices, job coaching, mentors, social skills groups and summer camp programs.



## visual prompt.

Also called a visual cue. A picture, video or written instructions that help you learn or know to do a task or follow directions.



# Resources



## For Ages 10-14

- [From the Autism Speaks IEP Guide](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on life skills and autism](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on teaching important life skills](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on 10 ways to build independence](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on Community-based Skills Assessment](#)

## For Ages 14-16

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Support Tool Kit](#)
- [Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on funding for housing](#)
- [From the Autism Housing Network on housing options](#)
- [From the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Center for Autism Research on housing for adults with ASD](#)
- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on funding for housing](#)
- [From usa.gov on finding affordable rental housing](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on ABLÉ accounts](#)
- [From the ABLÉ National Resource Center on ABLÉ accounts](#)
- [From the Academy of Special Needs Planners on special needs planning](#)
- [From the Social Security Administration on Social Security](#)

## For Ages 16-18

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [From the Independent Living Research Utilization program for resources by state](#)
- [From the Urban Land Institute on residential options for people with autism](#)
- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)

## For Ages 18-22

- [From the Autism Speaks Housing and Residential Supports Tool Kit](#)
- [From Autism Speaks on finding residential programs](#)
- [From Medicaid.gov on Home and Community-based Services](#)