



A Quarterly Publication Produced BY & FOR NC Youth with Disabilities

APRIL 2022

Social and Mobile

Helpful Tips to Expand Social Circles with a Disability

by Billy Pickens, ECAC Youth Outreach Coordinator



One of the happiest moments of my life was graduating from college, especially being that I graduated just weeks before the pandemic took hold of our daily lives. However, in a moment of vulnerability, graduating also meant rebuilding my social life in a lot of ways being that many of my friends from college were beginning to embark on their own new chapters.

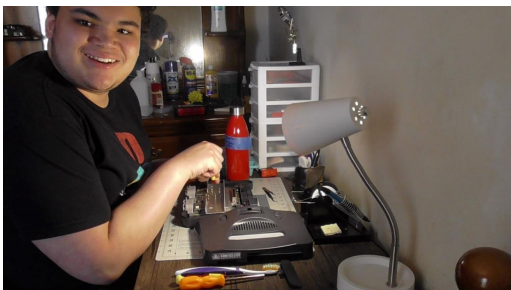
While I knew we would connect again at some point, I also knew that it would not come with the ease that close proximity on campus had to offer and finding new connections can be challenging, especially as a person with a disability. You have to consider many obstacles such as transportation, acceptance, self-confidence and anxiety. I do not make this realization to play victim or ask for sympathy. In fact, during the pandemic, I not only saw this realization as a challenge but as a reason to think outside of the box and use it as a learning experience not just for myself but for the many others reading this who I know may be going through a similar situation.

For this reason, I am embarking on a series over the course of the next few newsletters called Social and Mobile where I will give you some tips that I feel may be able to help you in expanding your social circle making friends that help you enjoy

life to the fullest. While I cannot give you all of the tips in one article, there is one I would like to highlight from the beginning. Remember that you can do it! I think many times, especially as people with disabilities, it is easy for us to feel understandably discouraged or feel that we have nothing to offer to the world around us. In order for these tips to work, it is important that you find enough confidence in yourself to know that you are valuable and necessary. Some may not see that in you, but the good news is that as they say, there is somebody for everybody and I hope that more than anything, these tips give you as much confidence in that truth as it has given me in my own social journey.



YEP's *"Nothing About Me Without Me"* column is intended to recognize youth in their roles as decision makers. Contributors are invited and encouraged to write about whatever they decide is important to tell others about.



Repairing Video Game Consoles

by Johnathan R.
ECAC YAT Member

I started learning how to repair video game consoles when I was 15, and my first console I repaired was a Nintendo 64. I repaired a Nintendo 64 because it had dust inside the console, so I



Check Out My New Music!

by Thomas G.
ECAC YAT Member

I just released a Christian Ep (extended play) with singing and rapping. I made the instrumental for all the songs and

purchased a tool kit from Amazon for \$15 and it came with a Phillips-head screwdriver, a tri-wing screwdriver, a security bit screwdriver, a suction cup, cleaning brush and cleaning cloth, a Torx screwdriver, pry openers, and tweezers. I opened the console with a security bit screwdriver, then I used a Phillips-head screwdriver to open the motherboard. Once I opened the motherboard I saw dust, so I used 91% Isopropyl alcohol (which is safe for electronics), and I clean the plastic parts with dish soap and cold water. After I cleaned the motherboard and the plastic parts, reassembled it and tested it out and it worked perfectly! I played Super Mario 64 and I was happy after I repaired it. Consoles that are broken can be repaired, not thrown away. It is very important to learn how to repair video game consoles.

played my trumpet in all the songs. I wanted to be different from the generic Christian music you hear on K Love as that music can get very repetitive. I have combined many types of sounds into the songs. Every song sounds different so I guarantee that there is at least one song that you will enjoy on the Ep. I want my music to reach other people. The Ep is only 22 minutes long and has 8 songs so it won't take long to listen to the entire thing. All the songs are clean which means it's not explicit so that anyone can listen and enjoy it. I hope you all like it.

[Click To Listen on Spotify](#)

[Click To Listen on Apple Music](#)

[Click To Listen on SoundCloud](#)

[Click To Watch on YouTube](#)



YEP's NCGT column is here to put a spotlight on the many talents and abilities of NC Youth & Young Adults with Disabilities ages 5 to 25. The format of submissions can be a poem, artwork, blog, video, song, essay, article, presentation, an "About me" article, you name it. ECAC's Youth Advisory Team then reviews the submissions and chooses which ones to feature. Selected entries receive a \$25 Visa gift card in the mail!

MEET APRIL'S NCGT WINNERS!

Emma Leigh C.

Age 23, Brunswick County

Emma shares: My artwork/coloring provides escape from my anxiety and depression. I spend at least 6-8 hours on each piece.



Logan T.

Age 16, Mecklenburg County

Logan submitted a story he wrote called "The Lion's Adventure."

[Click Here to Read "The Lion's Adventure"](#)

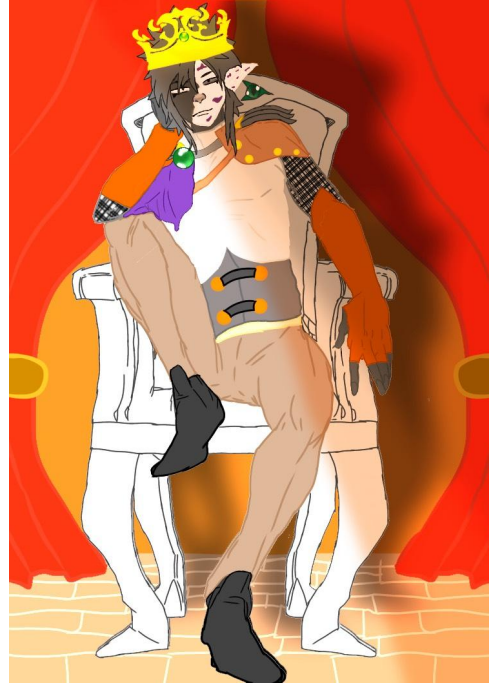
The Lions Adventure



Ramiya M.

Age 19, Halifax County

Ramiya shares: I want to send in one of my drawings because I want to be a graphic designer. Drawing also helps me when I am in a bad or sad mood. Drawing brings me to my safe place.



Madison D.

Age 15, Lincoln County

*Madison submitted a video of herself singing Amazing Grace and shares:
"I hope this can be a blessing to everybody."*



Adele W-G.

Age 20, Durham County



Adele shares: The Tale of Kaspar and the Soup"- a lighthearted English retelling of the German public domain poem "Die Geschichte vom Suppen-Kaspar" by Heinrich Hoffmann. Out of all the poems I've retold, this one is my particular favorite, and I have also received many compliments on it from my close friends. I was even told once that it has "a wonderful combination of humor and tenderness in it".

[Click Here to Read "The Tale of Kaspar and the Soup"](#)



THE PATH TO ADULTHOOD FACT SHEETS

Transition from high school to adulthood for a student with a disability takes planning that involves many steps and many paths. Click on ECAC's new Path to Adulthood Fact Sheets below to learn more about high school and beyond!

Heading to High School: Choosing a Course of Study

The Path to Adulthood

As your child gets ready to attend high school, the IEP Team will make an important decision about the appropriate Course of Study. The IEP Team, which includes you and your child, will consider progress on academic and functional goals, current performance in key areas, interests, and more. As required by IDEA, your child's high school education must prepare them for their future and open the door to a wide range of opportunities! Therefore, all discussions about high school will be grounded in your family's vision for your child's future.

Under North Carolina policy, IEP Teams must discuss the course of study during the year that your child will turn 14 or in the 8th grade. This decision must be reviewed annually, and it is possible to change your student's course of study. Be sure to ask about the implications of changing the course of study as it may have an impact on your student's graduation date, readiness for college, etc.

You can request an IEP meeting to talk about the course of study if your child's school does not schedule one.



If your child may want to attend a four-year university when they graduate, this will determine both the course of study and individual course selection. Be sure to ask questions about college entrance in your IEP meeting.

NC School offers three courses of study:

- 1) Future Ready Core Course of Study; Leads to a NC Diploma
- 2) Occupational Course of Study; Leads to a NC Diploma
- 3) Extended Content Standards; Leads to a Graduation Certificate

The Future Ready Core Course of Study:

This is sometimes called the "Standard Course of Study." It is the combination of required courses and electives that most students with disabilities will take, and that all students without disabilities take. This course of study is designed to prepare students for careers and for college, and students graduate with a high school diploma.



If your child has a specific learning disability in math that makes it unlikely they can master Math 1, they may be eligible to take alternative math requirements and graduate with a diploma.

Your child's IEP or 504 Plan can provide a wide range of supports and services based on their individual needs. These include specially designed instruction, related services, and accommodations/modifications.

The Occupational Course of Study (OCS):

The Occupational Course of Study meets the needs of a specific group of students with disabilities who need a modified curriculum that prepares them for work and independent living after high school. OCS can be a good fit for students whose academic skills and life skills are well below their age level, including those with mild intellectual and developmental disabilities. In addition to required courses in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and PE, students must develop a work portfolio and meet work requirements. These include school-based work activities and a range of paid and unpaid experience in the community. Students on the OCS graduate with a regular high school diploma; however, they will not be eligible to apply to a 4-year university.

North Carolina High School Graduation Requirements

The Path to Adulthood

To graduate with a diploma or certificate, students with disabilities must meet the state course and credit requirements that are in place the year that they start high school. Please note that some school districts or individual schools may have additional requirements to earn a diploma, so be sure to check in with your child's IEP Team or guidance counselor.

Three Pathways:

- Future Ready Course of Study
- Occupational Course of Study
- Extended Content Standards

Students in Future-Ready Course of Study and Occupational Course of Study (OCS) must earn at least 22 credits to graduate with a high school diploma.

If your child is in the OCS program, graduation requirements will include employment preparation credits and work hours.

If your student meets the requirements for the Extended Content Standards, they will receive a Graduation Certificate, and can participate in graduation ceremonies.

Please see the chart on back for the specific course requirements with current graduation requirements. >



Student with Specific Learning Disabilities in Math

$$8:2(2+2)=$$

There is specific guidance for students who have been found eligible under the category of Specific Learning Disability in the area of Mathematics if the learning disability will prevent the student from mastering Math 1. Under General Statute 115C-81b, these students are not required to pass NC Math 1 to meet state graduation requirements. Students receiving this exemption must still earn four mathematics credits.

Decisions on course selections for individual students are made at the local level. Check with your child's IEP Team if you're concerned about math requirements and ask to discuss the options and how alternate math courses might affect planning for college.

Secondary Transition in North Carolina

The Path to Adulthood

The first stated purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is "to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living."

Transition planning is the process of helping a student with a disability to prepare for a successful move from high school to life after high school. Transition planning must set goals for further education, employment, and independent living, and provide supports and services to make these goals possible. Outside agencies can participate as IEP Team members if you invite them.

The IEP Team, including you and your child, must start to plan for their "transition to adulthood" at age 14 in North Carolina. For example, during the school year that they turn 14 (or in 8th grade) your child will start to receive their own invitations to IEP meetings and fill out a variety of "transition assessments."

Transition services may focus on any of the following:

- Developing self-advocacy skills;
- Gaining important independent living skills;
- Developing essential skills for a career or job that matches the student's interests;
- Improving social and peer interaction skills;
- Accessing educational opportunities after high school; and
- Other specific skills the student needs to ensure a successful transition into the community



The vision for the future that you and your child express and document on the IEP guide many important IEP Team decisions. ECAC encourages you to include your child in developing a vision statement and participating in IEP meetings as much as they are able to.

Students who attend their own IEPs have a better understanding of:
• their disability • their strengths and needs • their accommodations • their rights

Taking an active role in IEP meetings develops relevant skills in the areas of:

- Socializing • Goal setting • Problem solving • Decision Making
- Planning • Self-Determination • Self-Advocacy

Life's a Journey: Learn More! Do More! Be More!

The Path to Adulthood

Many options are available to North Carolina students with and without disabilities to help them prepare for their adult lives. Whether teens and young adults want to work, attend college, or need support to figure it out, many programs are in place across the state. This fact sheet offers a sampling of opportunities that are currently available as well as resources where you can get more information and keep up with new developments.

The options in the left column are available to high school students, while those on the right are available once students leave high school. Unless noted otherwise, the opportunities listed below are open to people with and without disabilities.

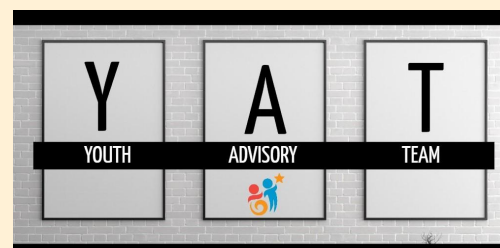
If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then crawl. But, whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Career Exploration and Training in High School:

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** courses are offered by almost all NC High Schools. These courses count as elective credits toward meeting graduation requirements. CTE courses introduce students to career fields including business, information technology, automotive, horticulture, health sciences, cosmetology, photography, culinary arts, carpentry and more. Consult your school system's high school planning guide or guidance counselor for more information.
- **Internships, Apprenticeships and Service Learning** offer work-based learning experiences in real-world settings. Students spend time working in local businesses, non-profit organizations, medical centers, or government agencies, including the National Guard. They get to see and participate in work activities and learn about jobs from people who actually do them. Your school's Career Development Coordinator or guidance counselor should have more information about opportunities in your local area.
- **Pre-Employment Transition Services** are offered by the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to students with disabilities between ages 14-21. NC DVRS works with schools and a variety of community partners to provide these Pre-ETS services: training in self-advocacy and workplace readiness skills, job exploration, work-based experiences and postsecondary counseling.

Postsecondary Education and Training:

- **Community Colleges** - North Carolina has a very strong community college system that offers a variety of programs that range from Basic Academic Skills, High School completion/ GED preparation to Associate Degrees. Some students later transfer to 4-yr colleges or universities. Other students earn certificates or diplomas in a specific career field or skilled trade. Many community colleges partner with local employers to teach job skills that are needed in their particular industry.
- **Vocational or Technical Schools** - Some of these schools train students for a specific occupation, such as cosmetology, barbering, truck driving or diesel mechanics. Other schools may have multiple programs that teach skills needed for entry-level jobs in particular career fields.
- **Traditional Colleges and Universities** - These schools can be private or publicly funded. They also range in size from very small to extremely large. They offer programs that lead to Bachelor's or graduate degrees. Students select a "major" area of intensive study, but coursework is usually designed to provide a broad base of knowledge across many content areas.
- **College Experience Programs for Students with Developmental Disabilities** - There are currently at least 14 programs for students who have intellectual and/or other developmental disabilities located on community college or university campuses in North Carolina. These programs differ in terms of length, primary focus (e.g., vocational vs. independent living), and the extent to which students are included in the



ECAC recognizes the power and value of the voice and ideas of young people. ECAC has launched a Youth Advisory Team (YAT) to help us design projects, programs, and resources that are created for youth, by youth. ECAC will work in partnership with the group to coordinate opportunities and trainings that support the interests and personal development of the YAT members.

The **Age of Majority** is when a child becomes an adult in the eyes of the law. In North Carolina, that age is 18. Adults can legally make all kinds of decisions on their own. This includes taking on debts, signing contracts, and making medical decisions. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that schools notify 17-year-old special education students and their parents that all of the rights that parents have under that law will transfer to the student when they turn 18. This rule is to give parents enough time to consider how they can provide the right amount of support to their young adult child. This fact sheet will briefly describe different ways to protect and support young adults who have a disability. It also gives you some things to think about when deciding which support options may be appropriate for your child.



Informal Natural Support

Most 18-year-olds, with and without disabilities, rely on their parents and family members to help them make major life decisions. The young adult can benefit from the wisdom of more experienced advisors who they trust. They can choose to sign a **consent for release of information** so that their advisors have access to information, and possibly the ability to communicate with others on their behalf. The student can also invite parents or other advisors to participate in their IEP meetings.

Think about...

A young adult can choose to not seek advice or ignore the advice that is given. If an adult student and their advisor disagree during a school meeting, the student's ideas and choices have the most influence.

Power of Attorney

There are several types of Power of Attorney. All involve a competent adult voluntarily giving someone else (an "agent") the authority to make certain types of decisions on their behalf. The individual determines how broad or narrow the agent's authority will be. The areas of authority are clearly described in a written document that is signed, witnessed and notarized. Lawyers are not required. A Power of Attorney can take effect immediately. It can also be set up to take effect only under specific circumstances, such as a medical crisis. The Power of Attorney can be changed or canceled at any time.

Think about...

All adults are presumed to be competent unless proven otherwise. Power of Attorney works best if the individual and agent have a good relationship. If there is a disagreement, the individual makes the final decision.

Educational Representative

Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities includes specific steps that public schools must take when they believe that an adult student is not able to provide informed consent or exercise their rights under special education law. If there is no court-appointed guardian or other adult with power of attorney, the student will be evaluated by two professionals who do not work for the school system. If they certify the student as "incompetent," a parent, family member or surrogate parent is appointed to act as the student's educational representative.

Think about...

The educational representative is only involved in educational decisions. The certification of incompetence is reviewed at a chosen time, or whenever it is challenged by the student or another person. When there is a challenge, the student regains their rights until the review is completed.

There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more.
—Robert M. Hensel

The more risk you allow your children to take, the better they learn to look after themselves.
—Roald Dahl

VIEWS EXPRESSED DISCLAIMER



ECAC is providing this newsletter as a public service. Reference to any specific product or entity does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the ECAC. The views expressed by guest writers, speakers and artists are their own and their appearance in YEP does not imply an endorsement of them or any entity they represent. Views, thoughts and opinions expressed by YEP contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the view of ECAC or any of its staff.



1-800-962-6817

www.ecac-parentcenter.org

ecacyouth@ecacmail.org



The production of this material was funded by the Office of Special Education Programs Grant No. H328M200039. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned is intended or should be inferred.

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center | 907 Barra Row, Suite 103, Davidson, NC 28036

[Unsubscribe acombs@ecacmail.org](mailto:acombs@ecacmail.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by bydhamilton@ecacmail.org in collaboration
with



Try email marketing for free today!