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# INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSITION TO ADULT HEALTH CARE

## PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

### **What is Health Care Transition?**

Health Care Transition is the process of preparing your youth for health care as an adult.

During childhood, you have helped your child with special health care needs manage their health in ways such as:

- Calling to set up appointments
- Completing medical forms
- Keeping track of their medications
- Advocating on behalf of your child

As your child gets older, managing those health needs may become more of their responsibility. While each child will gain various levels of independence as they enter adulthood, all youth will require an organized transition process to help them:

- Gain independent health care skills
- Prepare for an adult model of health care
- Transfer to adult health care providers

For children with special health care needs, we cannot assume that they will become fully independent in managing their health care when they turn 18. For those of you with child(ren) with complex health needs, there will be opportunities throughout this handbook to guide you as you navigate the next steps in medically transitioning your child to adulthood.

### **Why do we start thinking about the transition to adult health care at 12?**

We begin talking about the transition to adult health care at age 12 so that youth and their families are prepared for the potential challenges that may arise with transition. Transitioning to adult health care can be time consuming and complicated, so giving yourself enough time to understand it will help you in the future.

**Remember:** *You are not alone in this process! There are health care providers and community supports to assist you with this transition.*

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