

# “Transition to Adulthood: Key Considerations”

by Tom Kendziorski  
May 1, 2019

---

When your son or daughter with special needs, especially one with an intellectual or developmental disability, reaches the age of 18, many legal and financial benefit changes will occur. Here is a handy listing for your consideration:

- Apply at the Social Security Administration (“SSA”) for **Supplemental Security Income** (“SSI”) benefits the month after turning 18, which brings along automatic **Medicaid** eligibility;
  - Note: apply for **Social Security Disability Insurance** (“SSDI”) for a Disabled Adult Child (“DAC”) if one of the parents is: retired over age 62 and receiving SSA pension; or, disabled receiving their own SSDI; or, deceased.
  - Note: **Medicare** will come to the DAC beneficiary two years after receiving SSDI by way of a parent’s work record.
- Apply at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (“MDHHS”) for **“Adult Home Help Services”** once Medicaid is established; the individual must be found dependent on others for one or more activities of daily living;
- Apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (a.k.a., **Food Stamps**) at a local Michigan Department of Health and Human Services office. In most cases, it is not available to an individual with disability who is under age 22 and still living at home with parent(s). It is possible for a person with disability to receive Food Stamps prior to age 22 while still living in their parent’s home, but they must be enrolled in the “MI-CAP” program.
  - The “Michigan Combined Application Project” (MiCAP) is a state Department of Health and Human Services program that lets a person obtain food benefits when he/she begins to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). An individual qualifies for this food assistance if he/she meets each of the following characteristics:
    - Age 18 or older
    - Receives SSI and no other type of income
    - Meets the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) definition of independent living (getting the full rate of SSI, currently \$771 per month – federal; \$14 – state)
    - Resides in Michigan
    - Purchases and prepares food separately
    - Is not currently an active case in the regular Food Assistance Program (FAP)
- Apply to the **Oakland Community Health Network** (“OCHN”) for long-term developmental disabilities support services at either:
  - MORC, Inc., or,
  - Community Living Services – Oakland.

OCHN Intake telephone number: 248-464-6363; must have Medicaid eligibility!

- All males, age 18, must register with the **Selective Service System** (www.sss.gov);
- Consider establishing a **Power of Attorney**, a **Patient Advocate Designation**, or perhaps a **Guardianship**, as may be determined appropriate;
- Special education: plan for **Transition Services** (post-high school program);
- Obtain a **state I.D.** at a local Michigan Secretary of State office;
- Consider opening an **ABLE Act** savings account (Michigan on-line registration available at: www.MIABLE.org; national information at: www.ablenrc.org);
- Consider your estate plan, in particular, creating a **“Special Needs Trust”** to protect loss of future governmental benefits:
  - Seek a lawyer referral to author the necessary documents.
  - Seek financial planning advice.
  - Write a “Letter of Intent.”
- When ready and in need of competitive employment support or post-high school continuing education support, contact **Michigan Rehabilitation Services** (“MRS”) to ‘open a case-file’ to develop an employment plan;
- Consider personal income tax issues by obtaining a copy of The Arc Michigan’s **Annual Income Tax Guide**. This booklet is written and published annually each around January 15<sup>th</sup> by Tom Kendziorski, Executive Director, The Arc of Oakland County. A free copy may be found on-line at the following link:  
**<http://thearcoakland.org/informational-resources/income-tax-guide/>**