



Transitioning to Adulthood – How to Prepare for the 18th Birthday

Birthdays are an exciting time, but when your loved one with special needs turns 18 many legal and financial changes occur. Here are some things to keep in mind as you approach your child's 18th birthday.

I.D. and Service

- Once the person with a disability turns 18, they should obtain a Michigan State I.D. from the Secretary of State.
- All males must register for the Selective Service System at 18. Men with disabilities that would not qualify for military service are still required to register for selective service.
 - Register at [SSS.gov](https://sss.gov)

Social Security and Medicaid

- The month after the person with a disability turns 18 you can apply for Social Security Income (SSI) with the Social Security Administration (SSA).
 - Apply on ssa.gov or by calling your local Social Security Office.
 - The current SSI rates can be found on [our website](#) under "Resource".
 - Receiving SSI will make the person with a disability eligible for Medicaid.
- Once Medicaid is established you can apply for "Adult Home Help Services" with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The person must be deemed dependent on others for one or more activities of daily living.
 - Learn more at Michigan.gov/AdultServices.
- Apply for long term developmental disability support services with the [Oakland Community Health Network \(OCHN\)](#). The person seeking services must be Medicaid eligible to receive services. Long term developmental disability support can be received through Easterseals-MORC or Community Living Services – Oakland.
 - Call OCHN at (248) 464-6363 to request an ACCESS screening.

Nutrition Assistance

- Apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
 - Apply by creating a MI Bridges account on NewMIBridges.Michigan.gov.

- **Typically, SNAP is not available to a person with a disability who is under the age of 22** and still living at home with parent(s), but it is possible if they are enrolled in the [Michigan Combined Application Project \(MiCAP\)](#). This program allows you to receive food benefits when you receive SSI. To qualify for MiCAP all of the following requirements must be met:
 - 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)
- Call (877) 522-8050 to request an application.

Other Considerations

- Consider if it is necessary to establish a Power of Attorney, a Patient Advocate Designation, or guardianship. Arc staff are available to discuss alternatives to guardianship and supported decision making.
- Consider establishing an ABLE Act savings account or a Special Needs Trust.
 - The [ABLE Act savings account](#) allows for the person with a disability to have a savings account without it affecting government benefits.
 - A Special Needs Trust is an estate plan that will not affect government benefits.
- Regarding special education, this is the time plan for Transition Services (post-high school program). [Michigan Rehabilitation Services \(MRS\)](#) is available for competitive employment support.
- Consider personal income tax issues by obtaining a copy of The Arc Michigan's Annual Income Tax Guide. A free copy may be found on-line at the following link: <http://thearcoakland.org/informational-resources/income-tax-guide/>

Your loved one turning 18 can be an overwhelming and exciting time. Keep these resources in mind to make the transition easier and remember the Arc of Oakland County is only a phone call away to help navigate it.