



## Guidelines for Educating Your Child Toward Independent Living

Following are some of the guidelines Life Enrichment Options (LEO) considers important when young adults with developmental disabilities want to experience independent living. These skills apply to living in an Adult Family Home situation, or more independently in an apartment. Although they will not be living independently until they are over 21, it is necessary to start learning these skills as soon as possible.

- Should be capable of rising and dressing independently.
- Be able to shower and complete all personal hygiene activities independently (shaving, brushing teeth, etc.). May still require some oversight/assistance.
- Toileting independently.
- Prepare simple breakfast and lunch independently. (Be able to pour cereal, milk & juice; make a simple sandwich).
- Laundry skills, at least with supervision.
- Able to self-medicate with/or without supervision - able to put pills in mouth & swallow.
- Dial 911 for emergencies; respond to fire alarm and fire drills with minimal cueing.
- Participate in general upkeep of their rooms, or apartment -- keeping their personal items in their own space, with minimal support.
- Understanding they don't wear the same clothes day after day.
- Be able to use the phone.
- Know how to respect other's privacy and personal space.
- The ability to socialize with others.
- Be able to follow rules, understanding the care provider is not their parent, yet is not just a friend but one who can make rules to be followed.
- Know how to use a key to lock the door.



- Know how to work as a team doing household chores -- table setting, unloading dishwasher, trash removal, etc.
- Know how to say thank you.
- Know how to ask for help.
- Knowing appropriate behavior with the opposite sex.
- Be able to be left safely alone for four hours.

Important transition factors for families:

- Write down all important doctor and routine information: who are important people in the resident's life; how to support the resident; what specific things frighten the resident. It's an overwhelming process to start but it is so very helpful to a caregiver to have as much information as possible.
- Have realistic expectations of the caregiver and of your son or daughter.
- Respect your son or daughter's choices and goals and supporting them in what they choose.
- Be ready to let go. You are still the most important people in their lives, and you will continue to be, but everyone needs a chance and the space to make a new life away from the family home.