



Independent Living, Here We Come!

Preparing for independent living is an exciting time in any youth's journey towards adulthood. For youth with disabilities, that time can also be filled with questions and challenges. This checklist can help identify skills necessary to live as independently as possible given each youth's unique needs and challenges. Use this checklist to look at different skills necessary for independent living, to assess where a youth with disabilities currently stands, and identify what skills still need to be worked on in order to achieve some level of independence. Depending on ability levels, some of the higher-level skills may not be able to be obtained by all youth with disabilities.



Self-Care/Clothing Care Skills

Skills needed to take care of one's body and clothing

- ☐ Establishes a morning hygiene routine
- ☐ Establishes a bedtime routine
- ☐ Uses restroom appropriately, including hand washing
- ☐ Showers/bathes with soap
- ☐ Keeps personal possessions secure (i.e., wallets, phones, keys, money, etc.)
- ☐ Chooses clean, appropriate clothes to wear based on weather and occasion
- ☐ Asks for help when needed
- ☐ Knows importance of using deodorant
- ☐ Sorts laundry
- ☐ Operates washer and dryer appropriately with detergent, fabric softener, and lint removal from dryer
- ☐ Folds and puts away clean laundry

Insurance Skills

Skills needed to protect one's self and possessions

- ☐ Understands the different types of insurance available (i.e., health, home, renters, automobile, etc.)
- ☐ Understands coverage for any policies owned





Food Prep/Cooking Skills

Skills needed for planning and preparing meals

- ☐ Plans meals
- ☐ Completes a grocery shopping list
- ☐ Buys/shops for meal ingredients
- ☐ Prepares simple meals
- ☐ Turns off stove after use
- ☐ Uses kitchen electronics safely
- ☐ Discards old/expired food
- ☐ Washes fruits and vegetables before eating them
- ☐ Recognizes common measurements
- ☐ Understands need for avoiding certain foods
- ☐ Identifies supplemental nutritional programs (i.e., Meals on Wheels, food banks, etc.)
- ☐ Sets table

Financial Management Skills

Skills needed to understand and manage one's money

- ☐ Uses coins and bills appropriately
- ☐ Opens and maintains a checking and/or saving account
- ☐ Uses a debit and/or credit card appropriately
- ☐ Develops and/or follows a weekly budget
- ☐ Comparison shops between stores to find best value
- ☐ Knows how to use coupons to save money
- ☐ Knows how to return purchased items



Housekeeping/Home Maintenance Skills

Skills needed to maintain a home

- ☐ Keeps living space clean
- ☐ Mops, sweeps, and vacuums floors
- ☐ Makes bed daily and changes bed linens regularly
- ☐ Takes trash out
- ☐ Uses household equipment safely
- ☐ Washes dishes and puts clean dishes away
- ☐ Changes light bulbs when needed
- ☐ Unstops the toilet (simple clogs with plunger)
- ☐ Asks for assistance when unable to manage household tasks or maintenance

Safety Skills

Skills for keeping one's self safe in an emergency

- ☐ Recognizes sound of a fire alarm and what to do
- ☐ Has a smoke detector and knows how to check it and replace batteries
- ☐ Knows how to use a fire extinguisher
- ☐ Knows when and how to call 9-1-1
- ☐ Creates a plan to address emergencies such as flood, fire, hail, tornado and hurricane
- ☐ Knows where to take shelter in the event of a tornado or hurricane



Healthcare Skills

Skills needed to maintain healthcare and seek medical treatment

- ☐ Knows how to read a prescription bottle
- ☐ Knows how to refill prescriptions
- ☐ Cleans cuts and applies Band-Aids
- ☐ Uses and reads a digital thermometer
- ☐ Knows when to seek medical assistance
- ☐ Chooses healthcare providers that fit needs
- ☐ Communicates openly with healthcare provider
- ☐ Keeps a copy of health history and medications to provide to healthcare providers
- ☐ Understands what types of healthcare coverage he/she has (i.e., health, dental, vision, etc.)
- ☐ Writes down questions for doctor and takes to appointment



Transportation Skills

Skills needed to get around the community

- ☐ Identifies types of transportation available in local community
- ☐ Obtains driver's license, if able
- ☐ Wears a seat belt in automobiles
- ☐ Applies for a handicapped parking permit, if needed
- ☐ Reads and recognizes safety and traffic signs
- ☐ Obtains car insurance if needed
- ☐ Understands insurance coverage
- ☐ Follows GPS directions to different locations
- ☐ Understands driving strategies for bad road conditions
- ☐ Knows how to maintain a car (i.e., wash, clean, know where to get oil changed, gets maintenance when needed)



SELF ADVOCATE



Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy Skills

Skills needed to know one's rights, make decisions, and advocate for one's self

- ☐ Knows his/her rights under the disability laws
- ☐ Knows how to say "no"
- ☐ Knows how to ask for help appropriately
- ☐ Can recognize and report abuse, neglect, or danger to appropriate authorities
- ☐ Makes informed decisions
- ☐ Understands what services he/she needs and can ask for them
- ☐ Can take action when needed
- ☐ Can express his/her needs to others

Organization/Time Management Skills

Skills needed for keeping track of life events and managing time

- ☐ Uses alarms to wake up in the morning
- ☐ Uses timers for reminders
- ☐ Uses a calendar to keep track of appointments, work/school schedule, etc.
- ☐ Makes a to-do list



Citizenship Skills

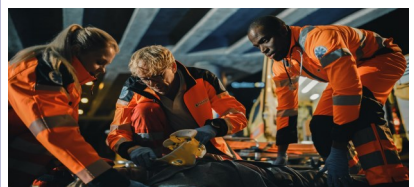
Skills needed to participate as a citizen

- ☐ Understands voting rights
- ☐ Obtains a valid state identification card (i.e., driver's license, ID card, U.S. Passport, etc.)
- ☐ Registers to vote
- ☐ Knows where to go to vote and how to ask for needed accommodations

Access Community Services and Relationship Skills

Skills needed to access community services and build relationships

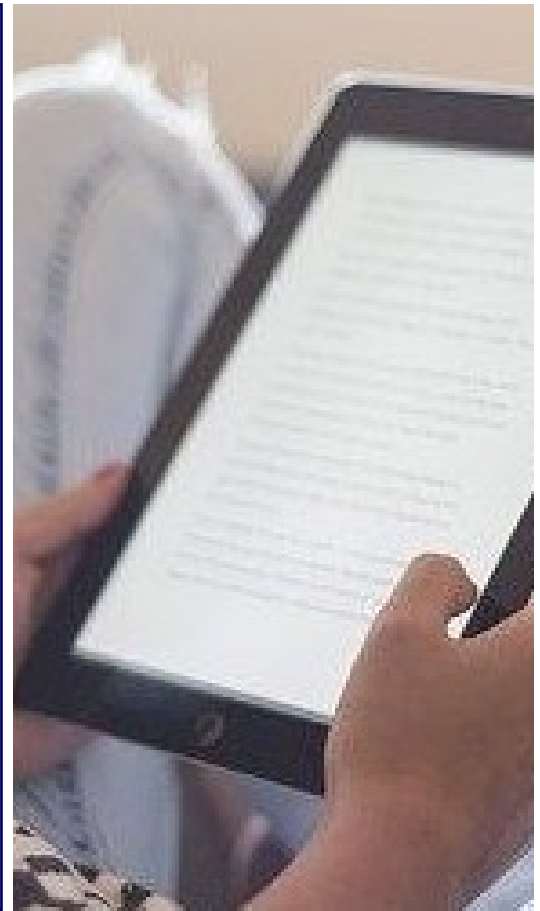
- ☐ Knows to dial 9-1-1 in an emergency
- ☐ Knows home address and phone number
- ☐ Knows phone numbers for state and local agencies
- ☐ Identifies community supports available within local community
- ☐ Identifies community helpers who can provide assistance (i.e., police officer, fireman, EMT/Paramedic, etc.)
- ☐ Builds/Has a community support network of people that can provide assistance in non-emergency situations
- ☐ Keeps in touch with family and friends via text and phone



Assistive Technology Skills

Skills needed for individuals who have unique communication needs

- ❑ Uses assistive technology and augmented communication devices independently to make communication and life tasks easier
- ❑ Knows how to express ideas, questions, or feelings to others through technology (i.e., emojis, exclamation marks, etc.)
- ❑ Knows how to request/arrange for a sign language interpreter, if needed
- ❑ Knows how to care for and maintain communication devices
- ❑ Knows how to communicate by phone/TTY/TTD if needed
- ❑ Knows when, why, and how to sign his/her name (through technology)
- ❑ Identifies a support person that can assist with verbal communication when needed
- ❑ Becomes aware of laws that provide for handicapped access to public places, such as *The Adults with Disabilities Act* and the *Fair Housing Act*



Agencies who can help with transition needs include:

- ⇒ Your state's vocational rehabilitation agency
- ⇒ Your state's independent living centers
- ⇒ Your state's Parent Information and Training Center

You can find information for your state on the Independent Futures that Work website under "Find Help in Your State" button at the link below:

<https://www.independentfuturesthatwork.com/>.

This document was created by the Independent Futures that Work project to assist parents and youth with disabilities in identifying skills needed for living as independently as possible given the youth's unique challenges and needs.



Independent Futures that Work is a project of the
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<https://independentfuturesthatwork.com>

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