

Independent Living, Here We Come!

A Checklist for Identifying Skills Needed to Live Independently



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 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.

Directions: Check off each skill that has been mastered under each area. Unmarked skills can serve as a guide to creating transition goals for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or other goal plans. After the unmarked skill has been mastered, check it off as well.

Area: Self-Care/Clothing Care

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

Skills:

- ☐ 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

Area: Insurance

Skills needed to protect one's self and possessions

Skills:

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

Area: Food Prep/Cooking

Skills needed for planning and preparing meals

Skills:

- ☐ 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



Area: Financial Management

Skills needed to understand and manage one's money

Skills:

- ☐ 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

Area: Housekeeping/Home Maintenance

Skills needed to maintain a home

Skills:

- ☐ 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



Area: Safety

Skills needed to keep one's self safe in an emergency

Skills:

- ☐ 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

Area: Healthcare

Skills needed to maintain healthcare and seek medical treatment

Skills:

- ☐ 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

Area: Transportation

Skills needed to get around the community

Skills:

- ☐ 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)



Area: Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy

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

Skills:

- ☐ 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

Area: Organization/Time Management

Skills needed to keep track of life events and managing time

Skills:

- ☐ 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

Area: Citizenship

Skills needed to participate as a citizen

Skills:

- ☐ 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

Area: Access Community Services and Relationships

Skills needed to access community services and build relationships

Skills:

- ☐ 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



Area: Assistive Technology

Skills needed for individuals who have unique communication needs

Skills:

- ☐ 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/>.

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PO Box 118, Wetumpka, AL 36092
334-567-2252 or 866-532-7660
<https://independentfuturesthatwork.com>

