



Getting Ready for When Your Teen Reaches the Age of Majority: A Parent's Guide

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As the parent of a child with a disability, I want to share the importance of understanding and being prepared **prior** to your child reaching the age of majority.

The term “age of majority” refers to when a young person reaches the age where they are considered to be an adult. In Louisiana, this happens to be at age eighteen (18).

Within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there are relevant IEP-related provisions that require the following:

(c) Transfer of rights at age of majority. Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under State

law, the IEP must include a statement that the child has been informed of the child’s rights under Part B of the Act, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under [§300.520](#). [§300.320\(c\)](#)

Under this provision, educational decision-making rights transfer from the parent to the student. A notice of this **fact** must be given to both parents and the student 12 months before the date on which the student reaches the age of majority.

If parents are concerned about their child’s ability to make informed educational choices, they can seek options to retain parental rights to

make educational decisions while their child is still in high school. These may include power of attorney or legal guardianship.

If the individual student takes over he/she will have the rights to:

- ◆ receive notice of and attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings
- ◆ give consent to a re-evaluation and consent to change of placement
- ◆ request for mediation or a due process hearing to resolve a dispute about evaluation, identification, eligibility, IEP, placement, or other aspects of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) What's the risk? However, transferring rights to young adults who are unable to make informed decisions or take responsibility for their choices carries many risks.

For example the student **can**:

- ◆ decide to drop out of high school
- ◆ accept a certificate of achievement and become ineligible for much-needed transition services and their decisions can affect their quality of life after high school.

Thinking back, I am glad that I prepared my son and me for what was to come. We would plan in advance for IEP meetings or medical appointments. I included him in on every aspect

of planning and explained to him that one day he would take over.

Below are some tips on laying a foundation for your child prior to them turning 18 years old.

- ◆ Paying bills (allow your child to pay the house bills for practice)
- ◆ Managing their own health care, including making their own appointments
- ◆ Can I live independently (e.g., What kinds of support do I need to be able to live alone? etc.)
- ◆ Getting from place to place (e.g., Car, bus, taxi, etc.)
- ◆ Registering to vote and, if needed, learning their rights regarding voting accommodations
- ◆ Registering for the selective service
- ◆ Signing contracts (e.g., To rent an apartment or make a big purchase such as a car)

The above are just a few tips to get you on your way to planning. For more information and to access the Parent Guide, please visit [Getting Ready for When Your Teen Reaches the Age of Majority: A Parent's Guide](#)



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