

Statistics:

Nearly 33% of children/youth in the U.S. have a form of chronic illness.

Up to 90% of these youths will survive into adulthood. (Source—Blum, 1995)

Almost 25,000 full-time college freshmen identified themselves as having a health-related disability (16% of total college freshman). (Source—Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 2000)

What is Health Care Transition?

Health care transition is helping teens and young adults with chronic health conditions plan the move from CHILD-CENTERED to ADULT-CENTERED health care systems. This includes:

Continued health care with adult health care providers.

Shifting responsibilities from parent to child/youth/young adult.

Helping youth and young adults to make their own health care decisions.

A long-term plan starting at a young age to get ready for adult life.

Children Can Play An Active Role In Their Health Care:

When your child is young:

Talk to your child to help him/her gain an understanding of the health condition/disability in order to better communicate his/her needs.

Teach your child to take responsibility for his/her own medicine and the reasons for needing it.

Teach your child to identify signs and symptoms that require medical attention and the steps needed to get help.

Encourage your child to ask questions and talk directly with health care providers.

Teach your child self-care for his/her health condition/disability, such as treatments, therapies and exercises.

When your child is an adolescent:

Assess your teen's knowledge of his/her health condition/disability – fill the gaps in understanding.

Teach your teen to take responsibility for his/her own medicine, the reasons for needing it and steps for refilling.

Teach your teen to call the doctor when signs and symptoms need medical attention.

Discuss the long-term course of the health condition/disability with your teen and what might be expected in the future.

Allow your teen to go to doctor visits without you. Encourage your teen to communicate directly with health care providers.

Teach your teen to manage his/her self-care skills related to the health condition/disability.

Encourage your teen to keep a record of his/her medical history, including conditions, operations, treatments and current medications.