

additional time after high school to explore, in depth, the five domains necessary for effective transition to college or career. Students discover and develop their individual strengths, become effective self-advocates and acquire a broader repertoire of social competencies and independent living skills, leading to a meaningful adult life.

**Passages ECO (Exploring Community Options)**

ECO is a multi-year post high school transition program for students with a broad range of mild to moderate disabilities. ECO fosters personal growth, responsibility and independence. The program provides the opportunity for individuals to explore a variety of vocational opportunities and experience the realities of the workplace. Students develop technical skills and individual qualities necessary to succeed. They discover and develop their individual gifts and strengths, become self-advocates, and realize their full potential.

Both **5 for 5** and **ECO** are designed to foster personal growth, responsibility and independence through teaching skills in five domains:

**Financial Literacy** focuses on money management skills as it relates to independent living and lifelong financial decision-making. Students are taught, and practice, money management skills through simulated and real life experiences.

Key areas of focus include:

- Money management (banking, budgeting, credit and debit, loans and financial records)
- Contracts
- Wages, social security and taxes
- Insurance
- Internet safety

**Independent Living** focuses on managing responsibilities necessary for everyday tasks. Technology to keep track of personal and home organization is explored. Focus areas include:

- Personal/health care and hygiene
- Access to health and dental care
- Housing options
- Meal preparation
- Independent travel
- Safety
- Clothing care
- Time management
- Functional reading and writing
- Knowledge of sexual functioning and birth control

**Recreation and Leisure** focuses on expanding student engagement in a wider variety of activities in their free time. Focus areas include:

- Hobbies and interests
- Sports
- Fitness
- Social media
- Community and internet resources
- Online safety

**Social Skills** facilitates relationship building and self-awareness in order to identify personal strengths, set goals and make appropriate choices.

Focus areas include:

- Social thinking
- Social communication/pragmatics
- Manners and etiquette
- Self-advocacy and self-management
- Friendships and dating
- Problem solving, conflict resolution and coping skills

**Transition to Next Steps** helps students identify life goals and develop necessary skills to meet their goals. Focus areas include:

- Career options
- Self-determination and self-advocacy
- Job training
- Applications, resumes and interviews
- Use of technology
- Support structures in the community, workplace and college
- Sources for education and training
- Identify sources for education and training

ACCEPT, founded in 1974 and headquartered in Natick, Massachusetts, is an education collaborative serving 16 school districts in Boston's MetroWest area. ACCEPT provides a wide range of innovative, high quality regional programs and services, including special education student programs, transportation, technology, home-based services, Medicaid reimbursement, behavioral consultation and professional development.

ACCEPT uses the collective power and resources of member school districts to provide exceptional programs and services that maximize the potential of students, their families, educators and communities.

ACCEPT's special education teachers, therapists and professionals are experienced, well trained and licensed.

Member School Districts are: Ashland, Dover, Dover/Sherborn, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Sherborn, South Middlesex Regional Technical, Sudbury and Wellesley.

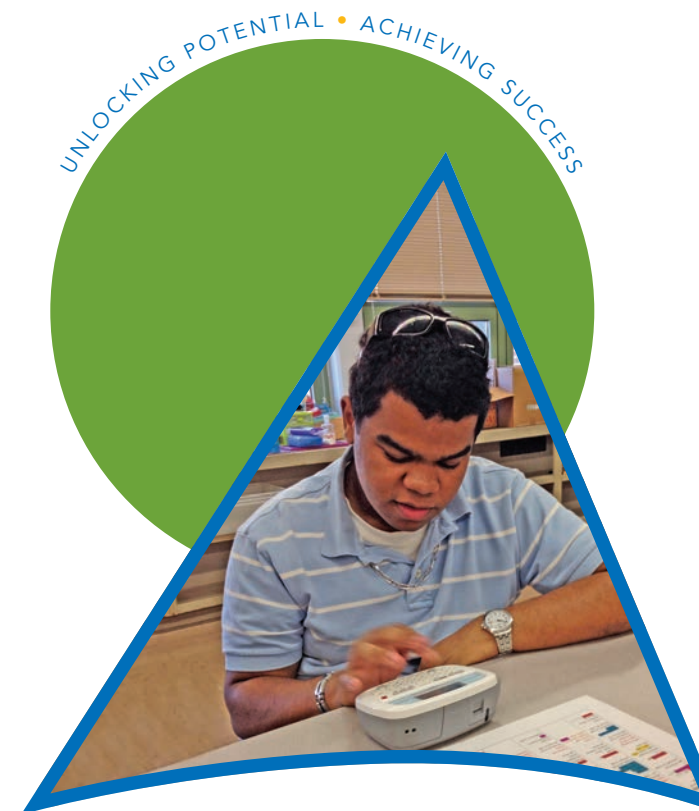
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**Transition Programs and Services**



## Overview of Transition Programs

ACCEPT's transition programs prepare students for a successful transition to adult living. They provide career/vocational skill development, job coaching, person-centered planning, specialized instruction, and transition and vocational assessments. Staff work with students, families, schools and community agencies to provide support services that meet the unique needs of students. Students benefit from ACCEPT's technology-rich classroom environments. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards, laptop and/or desktop computers for student use, iPads, and other assistive technology devices.

Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and Transition Plans based on assessment information are developed to maximize student independence and participation in the community. Special educators, vocational rehabilitation counselors, job coaches and speech, occupational and other therapists work in collaboration to provide a wide range of direct services and supports.

The development of skills related to functional academics and independent living is fostered by tailoring the program to each student's vocational and transitional goals. ACCEPT staff identify appropriate work sites in the community and determine necessary accommodations to ensure positive experiences for students.

### ACCEPT Guiding Principles

- Respect for diversity and human differences
- Best practices
- Continuous improvement
- Open and honest communication
- Integrity

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL • ACHIEVING SUCCESS

## ACT (ACCEPT Center for Transition)

ACT is designed for high school students and young adults to provide opportunities to explore a variety of educational, vocational and occupational opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment. Students learn a variety of skills related to activities of independent living, work experience, career exploration and job seeking, including resume writing and interview skills. Through simulated work stations, students experience the realities of the workplace and develop technical skills and individual qualities that are required to succeed in the community. All students in ACCEPT transition programs attend ACT regularly. ACT services are also available to districts as an adjunct to their programming.

*ACT services include:*

### Vocational and Transition Evaluation Services

Vocational Assessments are conducted to systemically identify and evaluate an individual's level of functioning as it relates to vocational preparation and employment. Using standardized and non-standardized assessment tools and real and simulated work activities, the assessment provides valuable information about the individual's interests, abilities and aptitudes. The assessment helps to identify vocational strengths, needs and career potential. Recommendations regarding supports, assistive devices and job accommodations are developed based on the assessment and take into account the individual's intellectual capacity, physical functioning, dexterity and work tolerance.

Transition Assessments are conducted to assist students and their families in making the transition from school to next steps. Through the assessment process, information is collected in the key areas of employment, independent living, recreation and leisure, community participation and post-secondary learning. The assessment touches on the individual's needs, preferences and interests and forms the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the IEP.

## Job Development and Placement

Vocational rehabilitation counselors use the results of vocational and transition assessments to identify engaging and worthwhile community-based work opportunities and job sites. Student interests and aptitudes, as well as employer commitment to support and value each student, are taken into account before placement. Vocational rehabilitation counselors, in conjunction with employers, identify reasonable accommodations to allow students to succeed at work.



## Job Coaching

Based on student need, job coaching is provided one-to-one or in small groups. Job coaches collect data on skills, goals and outcomes. When appropriate, support is faded to enable maximum independence in a paid employment setting.

## C2C (Classroom To Community)

C2C serves students 18 to 22 with autism and related disorders with severe social, cognitive and/or language delays. C2C provides community, vocational, social and functional life skills activities to enhance students' abilities and facilitate transition to life beyond age 22. An Augmentative and Alternative Communication specialist works directly with the students in this program to enhance communication skills. The classroom staff provides a highly structured environment with consistent routines utilizing an eclectic approach that embraces Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), TEACCH strategies, language and picture communication systems and discrete trial training. A sample of curriculum activities include:

### Community Activities

- Cooking and nutrition
- Safety in the community
- Laundry
- Recreation

### Vocational Activities

- Volunteering in the community
- Participating in simulated jobs at ACT
- Determining interests
- Foundational skills

### Social and Communication Activities

- Conversational skills
- Behavioral self-management
- Identifying emotions
- Tone of voice and volume control

### Functional Life Skills Activities

- Self care skills
- Time awareness
- Hygiene
- Household chores
- Community safety skills

## Passages

Passages is a post-high school community-based life skills program designed to help students increase their level of independence and become more active members of their community. A safe, thoughtfully-planned environment encourages mutual trust, respect and acceptance among all participants. Passages has developed a hands-on success-based approach to increase student confidence and competence. Passages instructional strands, **5 for 5** and **ECO** each prepare students for a smooth transition to appropriate next steps.

### Passages 5 for 5

5 for 5 serves students with Asperger's Syndrome, Nonverbal Learning Disabilities (NLD), ADHD, and other learning disabilities who require additional skills to transition from high school to post-secondary educational opportunities such as college, vocational or technical certification, or workplace training programs. 5 for 5 is designed to increase independence for students who need