

## Independent Travel

There are certain skills that have the capacity to open a large number of doors, SIGNIFICANTLY increasing options and opportunities for your teenager - independent travel is one of these critical skills.

Without the ability to get from place to place on your own, your teenager will not only face more barriers to find, secure and maintain employment, but will also be limiting their capacity to lead an enriched life out and about in the community. Arranging to get together with friends, using community facilities and participating in a range of recreational activities necessary to maintain physical and mental health and wellbeing are all considerably compromised.

### Independent Travel and school-directed activities including Work Experience

Students participating in work experience (and other community-based vocational education activities) are required to make their own way to and from their work location. Also, while schools may organise and fund transport from home to and from school for eligible students with a disability, this service usually ceases at the end of Year 10. In Year 11 and 12, your teenager may not necessarily start and finish classes at the same time each day as their timetable will include free periods and is dependent upon the type of classes/course/units he/she participates in. As such it is extremely important to prepare and support your teenager to develop independent travel skills, preferably having established some level of confidence by the time they are in Year 10.

It is important to think creatively about ways to foster independent travel skills. Include Independent Transport as a key goal in your teenager's Individual Learning Plan and work together with the school to develop strategies to achieve this goal.

Independent travel is not limited to learning how to use public transportation. Consider ways to combine walking and bike riding into your plans. For example, to be able to get to a community centre from home you may consider riding to a city centre interchange to catch an express intercity bus to another city centre closer to your final destination. That way you could load your bike onto the bike rack attached to the front of the bus and then off-load the bike on the other end, riding the last part of the way to the community centre instead of having to work out timetables and wait for a connecting bus service. This could have the potential to limit possible associated anxieties such as personal security, waiting at a bus interchange for extended period of time, missing your stop on a suburban bus that has multiple stops.

Most schools also offer Road Ready classes for those students (Year 10 and above) who intend to apply for a learner driver licence.



## Independent Travel

The following tale was written by Professor Arlyn Roffman, a specialist in transition issues in special education in the US. While the story focuses on two young women with a learning disability, the points raised are equally relevant for young people with an intellectual disability.

### A Tale of Two Teens

One was energetic and outgoing and had led an exciting life during her teen years. She had a driver's license, had held several part-time jobs, and enjoyed spending her salary at the mall, which she frequented with her many male and female friends. She did her own laundry, made her own lunches, and occasionally cooked simple suppers for the evenings when she was on her own. Her history stood in stark contrast to that of the second young woman, whose parents admitted to being "a little overprotective." She had never been expected to assume any responsibility for chores at home, had never, in fact, even made herself a sandwich. She had never held a job, had neither a driver's license nor friends. Even on her bicycle, she had always been restricted to the block on which the family lived. (Meeting the Challenge of Learning Disabilities in Adulthood, Roffman, 2000, p. 164)

Denied the opportunity to blossom, the second young woman was caught in the stranglehold of dependence. As soon as she had the opportunity to learn daily living skills, she grew enormously clearly, she had been ready to move forward toward an independent adult life. Her major constraint had been not the learning disability itself but the attitude of her parents, who had cultivated a prolonged dependence. In contrast, the first young woman had been eased along with both high expectations and a great deal of support from her parents and had developed a number of skills that would serve her well as she left home and began life in an apartment.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Roffman, A 2007, **Expert Answers Guide: Helping Teens with LD Develop Daily Living Skills**, accessed 19/11/2007, [www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?r=1133](http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.aspx?r=1133)

\* **Skill Level** (circle current skill level)

1 Cooperating: Accepting assistance

3 Consolidating: Practicing a skill

5 Transferred: Use a skill across situations

2 Beginning: Attempting a skill

4 Established: Consistently demonstrate a skill

6 Full Responsibility for using and maintaining an activity/ sequence

## Independent Travel

### Scary Questions

By the time \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ I/he/she will:

1. Be using public transport on their own
2. Be independently making my/his/her way in and around the community **including** to and from:

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> home   | <input type="checkbox"/> social activities      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> school | <input type="checkbox"/> shops and town centres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work   | <input type="checkbox"/> community facilities   |

#### Modes of transport may include:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking      | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxis/Community Shuttles    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycles     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cars and Trucks             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buses        | <input type="checkbox"/> Scooters and Motorbikes     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trains/Trams | <input type="checkbox"/> Interstate Buses and Trains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ferries      | <input type="checkbox"/> Airplanes                   |

### Functional Skills Checklist

Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<b>Map Reading and Directions</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates ability to read and understand a range of maps and directories. These may include:	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Street Directories	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Online Maps	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist Maps	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Touch Screens	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Building Maps and Directories	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Exit Maps	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses maps in a variety of situations and locations	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Seeks clarification/explanation of directions if required	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Listens to and follows directions	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Interprets and responds to public announcements	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Gives directions to someone else	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Understands common mapping signs, symbols and pictures (toilets, lifts, information, exit etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<b>Time Management</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Calculates how long it will take to get to and from destination and factors this into plans and schedules	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<b>Walking</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Plans outings using mapping skills	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates street safety - can cross the street with and without traffic signals	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> finds a safe place and time to cross the street	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> checks before and during crossing	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> understands and follows road rules	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Understands street numbering system	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Knows how to respond to strangers	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<b>Using Public Transportation</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Understands appropriate procedures for catching a bus stop/train	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies appropriate locations and etiquette when waiting at the bus/train stop	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates the ability to identify and safely hail the correct bus	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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## Negotiating the Maze Life Domain Worksheet

### Independent Travel

Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies the correct money/ticket/pass before getting on	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Finds a suitable seat once on board	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Behaves appropriately on the bus/train/tram/ferry	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Knows how to stay seated or stand appropriately on the bus/train	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies when to get off the bus/train/tram/ferry	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Gets off the bus/train/tram/ferry safely	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies appropriate people to ask for help	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognises and avoid dangerous situations and obstacles	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates ability to manage unexpected situations such as re-routed buses, missing stop, getting lost etc.	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<b>Bike</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Rides safely and responsibly (road rules, hand signals, bike helmet, lights etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Loads and unloads bike from buses with bike-racks	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintains bike	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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This Life Domain Worksheet is part of the resource **Negotiating the Maze: Transitioning from school to adult life**. [www.disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au/maze](http://www.disabilitycoordinationoffice.com.au/maze)

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Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates how to repair/patch or replace a flat tire tube	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Fills bike tire with air at appropriate air pressure	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Plans, schedules/conducts regular tune ups (brakes, tires, wear and tear etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Secures bike appropriately (locks, bike parking locations etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<b>Riding in a car with friends</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Always wears seat belt	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is ready to leave when the other person is ready/ at agreed upon time.	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Asks before touching radio, window, air conditioner etc.	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Navigates or provides driver with directions to familiar places	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Refrains from giving directions if the person does not need them	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Displays appropriate behaviour when leaving the car	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<b>Cars</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Learns to drive a car	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Completes Road Ready program	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Practices driving (with L Plates)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Passes driving test (receives P plates)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Drives responsibly	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies and undertakes financial responsibilities associated with managing a car	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Manages car loans - repayments and interest	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pays Registration and Insurance costs	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Selects, purchases and monitors petrol costs	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Plans, schedules/conducts regular tune ups (oil changes, brakes, tires, wear and tear)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pays Parking fees (and fines)	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintains a car clean	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Navigates car parking lots	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses and pays parking meters	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Pays for parking vouchers	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates awareness of car security	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<b>Other</b>	1 2 3 4 5 6			
	1 2 3 4 5 6			
	1 2 3 4 5 6			
	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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