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**Project 10 Topical Briefs** are published on a monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme and also highlights current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition.

This month the *Topical Brief* is focused on **Independent Living and Housing**.

## **Residential Options of Florida (ROOF) Aims to Increase Housing Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities**

ROOF is a non-profit organization focused on increasing housing options for Florida residents with developmental disabilities.

<http://firoof.org/>

ROOF's goals are as follows:



- Provide housing information to individuals, families and providers
- Advocate for inclusionary housing
- Collect data on the housing needs of individuals with developmental disabilities
- Build regional networks that are responsive to the affordable housing needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in local communities across Florida.

The ROOF website, while still in development, provides information on planning for independent living, such as supported living and renting or purchasing a home. The site provides helpful links such as the Florida Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which is a grant program to help individuals or families at certain levels of household income to access funds to support energy costs in the home. There are also links to apps that help individuals manage house cleaning routines, learn how to recycle and complete basic home maintenance tasks.

Additional resources available on the ROOF website include:

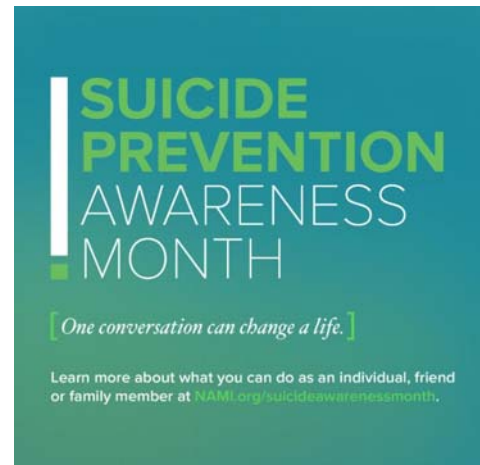
- *Housing in Florida: A Resource Guide for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities*, a comprehensive guide that assists individuals with developmental disabilities and their families find affordable, inclusive housing options that are safe and secure as well as non-segregated. This guide was produced through the Florida Housing Coalition and funded by Florida

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Send to a Colleague

### **September is Suicide Prevention Month**



### **Emory Cares 4 U Reports that Students with Disabilities May Have Higher Risks of Mental Health Issues**

Emory Cares 4 U is a center at Emory

Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC).

- Webpages dedicated to assisting housing providers to understand the value of renting to persons with developmental disabilities and providing information about where properties marketed to persons with developmental disabilities can be listed.
- Universal design resources that assist consumers and housing providers to be informed about features that can be incorporated into home designs that improve usability by all people.

The 2016 Partners for Progress Conference is being sponsored by ROOF and the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). See the Upcoming Events section of this publication for details.

## Independent Living: A Worthy Goal

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines transition services in a manner that includes preparing students for independent living, when appropriate. The last part of the definition states that transition services is a set of activities that:

Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

[34 CFR 300.43 (a)] [20 U.S.C. 1401(34)]

The Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) program defines independent living as, "Living just like everyone else - having opportunities to make decisions that affect one's life, able to pursue activities of one's own choosing - limited only in the same ways that one's non-disabled neighbors are limited."



The core of independent living is self-determination. Many people think of independent living in terms of living on one's own, being equitably employed in a job related to one's interests, participating in reliable sources of transportation and having healthy social interactions. While these descriptions are definitive aspects of living independently, they do not fully explain the concept. Independent living may also include establishing a healthy lifestyle in regard to exercise and nutrition; creating budgets and planning for one's financial future; making decisions about one's health; paying taxes; deciding whether or not to have children; and more. Developing the skills and, possibly, supports to make life's decisions is the essence of self-determination. It is the right and opportunity to forge one's own direction in all spheres of life and it is the engine that drives independent living. Developing self-determination is a process that continues throughout one's life, but has become a focal point for secondary transition.

A study by Wehmeyer and Palmer (2003) compared the

University that aims to "de-stigmatize mental illness and reduce suicidal behavior".

<http://www.emorycaresforyou.emory.edu/index.html>



Emory Cares 4 U reports that the risk for mental health

problems is higher for students with learning disabilities and students with physical disabilities. Although students with disabilities are faced with issues similar to those faced by students without disabilities, they may experience heightened difficulties due to factors related to their disabilities.

Additionally, Emory Cares 4 U states, "Students with learning disabilities typically have higher rates of depression, and students with physical disabilities have more thoughts and attempts of suicide compared to students without disabilities. Additionally, students' risk for suicidal behavior has been shown to be higher if the disability is less visible." The Emory Cares 4 U website provides a list of resources related to suicide prevention. For additional information, [click here](#).

## Warning Signs Indicating a Student May Be Considering Suicide

Emory Cares 4 U has posted a list of signs that indicate a student may be considering suicide:

- Experiences feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
- Reports feeling very depressed
- Experiences anxiety and/or stress
- Increases their use of alcohol and/or other drugs
- Engages in reckless behaviors
- Has physical symptoms
- Withdraws from family community, or friends and from activities once enjoyed
- Says things such as, "I don't deserve to be here," "I wish I were dead," "I am going to kill myself," or "I want to die."
- Is focused on death and dying
- Talks about wanting to attempt or complete suicide
- Writes poems, letters, or stories

independent living outcomes and self-determination scores of students with cognitive disabilities at one year and three years after high school. Self-determination was measured using The ARC's Self-Determination Scale. To measure independent living levels, the study participants were given surveys with questions about where they lived, whether they paid their own rent, their employment status and more. Incidentally, the two groups, participants with low self-determination scores and high self-determination scores, had similar IQ scores without a statistically significant difference. The study results showed that participants with higher self-determination scores attained higher degrees of independent living on every point of comparison. These outcomes encourage the belief that self-determination development is an essential contributor to the attainment of independent living outcomes.

#### References

An American Definition of Independent Living. (1992). Retrieved from <http://akmhcweb.org/recovery/Independentliving.html>

Wehmeyer, M. L., Palmer, S. B. (2003). Adult outcomes for students with cognitive disabilities three-years after high school: The impact of self-determination. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 38(2), 131-144.

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Impact on Independent Living for Transition Age Youth**

Changes in the work of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) have come about due to the passing of WIOA in July 2014. A fifth core service with a three-pronged focus has been added. The third prong focuses on transition services. As Hammond, Jones, and McElwee (2015) communicate in the ILRU Youth Transition Manual, CILs will now, "facilitate the transition of youth who are individuals with significant disabilities who are eligible for individualized education programs under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 14149d), and who have completed their secondary education or otherwise left school, to postsecondary life" (p. 3).

The  
WIOA



legislation will enable CILs to assist youth with disabilities to achieve their goals to transition to employment, postsecondary education, leadership and independent

- about death and/or suicide
- Starts giving away possessions

To view this list and other instructive information [click here](#).

## **Self-Awareness Month**



Lessons for Teaching  
Self-Awareness & Self-Advocacy

The University of Oklahoma's Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment, provides a free curriculum to teach students self-determination skills, such as self-advocacy and self-awareness that increase outcomes for secondary and postsecondary students. Ten units of instruction are available which include lesson plans and student materials. These resources are easily downloaded from the website.

#### Reference

Cantley, P., Little, K., & Martin, J. E. (2010). *ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transition-education-materials/me-lessons-for-teaching-self-awareness-and-self-advocacy.html>

## **Florida Independent Living Council**

<http://icflorida.org/home>

The Florida Independent Living Council, Inc. (FILC) is a statewide council that supports Floridians with disabilities to develop greater independence through the provision of consumer directed, individualized services in partnership with the Centers for Independent Living.

FILC was established by federal mandate

living. Strategies suggested by Hammond et al. (2015) include:

- Identify leadership opportunities for youth with disabilities to function as staff or interns within a CIL.
- Create programs, such as self-determination and self-advocacy activities, that will allow youth with disabilities to be served as participants.
- Develop classes or workshops that address particular areas that support students in their goals to live independently such as travel training, financial literacy, cooking and more.
- Plan youth outreach activities that will attract individuals to the centers and create pathways for additional involvement.
- Provide informal peer support.
- Recruit, train and expand use of volunteers.
- Cultivate collaborating partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and schools in order to coordinate services and eliminate service gaps. Some of the joint programs that have been developed through CILs, VR and schools can be found in the Youth Transition Training Manual at [http://www.ilru.org/sites/default/files/Youth\\_Transition\\_Manual\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ilru.org/sites/default/files/Youth_Transition_Manual_2015.pdf).
- Build capacity by developing and working with new collaborating partners such as recreational organizations, community centers, university centers for excellence in developmental disabilities, disability organizations, disability resource centers in colleges and career and technical centers, youth leadership forums, YMCAs, Americorps and many more.
- Promote inclusion and communication through a community task force.

Through collaborative work between school districts, CILs and other agencies, youth can grow in self-determination and attain access to the experiences and supports needed to achieve independence.

An interactive map of Florida Centers for Independent Living can be used to locate a CIL in your area <http://www.floridacils.org/LocateYourLocalCIL.html>.

#### Reference

Hammond, M., Jones D. L., and McElwee, P. I. (2015). *Expanding CIL capacity through youth-driven transition services*. Retrieved from <http://www.ilru.org/expanding-cil-capacity-through-youth-driven-transition-services>

## Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)

### Supports Independent Living

<http://apd.myflorida.com/>

APD's mission



statement says, "The agency supports persons with

and promotes independent living opportunities for persons with disabilities throughout the state of Florida. FILC works to ensure the following:

- Independent living needs of individuals with disabilities are identified and met.
- Advocacy on behalf of independent living programs and consumers is initiated.
- Individuals with disabilities have an opportunity for input into the development of a state plan for Independent Living services.

## Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act

Making decisions about financial issues, including planning for financial stability in the future, is an important aspect of independent living. The ABLE Act establishes legislation that enables persons with disabilities to financially plan for their future. Prior to the ABLE Act saving for the future was difficult due to complications with saving money while receiving federal or state benefits.

Because of the ABLE Act, all states are authorized to form an ABLE program that gives persons with disabilities the option of saving money for a secure future. The state of Florida created a non-profit organization, Able United, to administer the program.

Eligibility to access the ABLE Act Program is based on three criteria. They are:

- Florida residency
- Qualifying disability
- Age of Disability Onset

To learn more about eligibility as well as saving and investment options, visit the ABLE United website at [www.ableunited.com](http://www.ableunited.com).



developmental disabilities in living, learning, and working in their communities." Two of APD's supporting programs include Supported Living and Supported Employment and are described briefly below:



**Supported Living:** Arrangements enable many individuals to live independently in their own homes. An overview of Supported Living services is available at <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/supported-living/about-supported-living.htm>

A more detailed resource, the *Supported Living Guide*, is available at <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/supported-living/living-guide/index.htm>

**Supported Employment:** APD supports the policies of the Employment First Interagency Cooperative Agreement which indicates a full commitment to increase opportunities for competitive employment for individuals with disabilities. APD also provides an Employment Enhancement Project (EEP) that serves individuals on the Waiting List. The EEP is primarily aimed at serving individuals transitioning from school to work. More information is available at <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/supported-employment/>.



## Highlighted Resources

The following resources can assist teachers to support students with disabilities to develop skills that are needed for independent living.

### My Health Care Plan

[http://www.cpalms.org/project/my\\_health\\_care.aspx](http://www.cpalms.org/project/my_health_care.aspx)

The goal of My Health Care is to empower persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities (ID/DD) to better meet their own health and wellness needs through improved communication with providers, the use of adaptive tools and development of self-advocacy skills. The curriculum is a complete set of resources including instructional guides and videos, student handouts, presentations and others.

### Ten Sigma's Starting Line Transition Curriculum

This curriculum is designed to introduce students to important transition concepts and ultimately assists them to achieve meaningful postsecondary goals, live independently and gain competitive employment.

Project 10 is assisting with a pilot of this curriculum for schools or districts who are interested. The curriculum is available for a limited time at no cost to Florida school districts through Project 10's Regional Transition Representatives (RTR). [Contact](#) your RTR to get more information.

## Independent Living and Housing Resources

### **Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE), Florida Chapter**

<http://apse.org/chapter/florida/>

This organization advocates for increased employment opportunities and promotes independent living for people with disabilities.

### **Housing in Florida: A Resource Guide for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

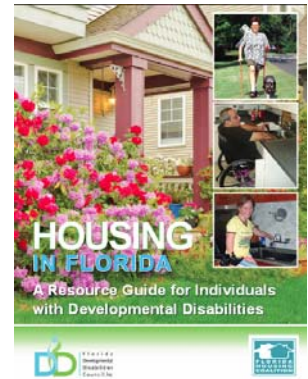
<http://flroof.org/publication/view/housing-in-florida-a-resource-guide-for-individuals-with-developmental-disabilities/>

A comprehensive guide for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families about affordable, accessible, safe and inclusive housing options in non-segregated communities.

### **I'm Determined: Transition Guide for Independent Living**

[http://www.imdetermined.org/transition\\_guide/detail/independent\\_living\\_community\\_participation/](http://www.imdetermined.org/transition_guide/detail/independent_living_community_participation/)

This webpage offers guiding questions for forming independent living goals and age appropriate goals for students of various ages from 10 to 21 years old.



### **Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) Center**

[www.ilru.org](http://www.ilru.org)

ILRU is a national center for information, training, research, and technical assistance regarding independent living. Its goal is to expand the body of knowledge in independent living and to improve utilization data gathered from research programs and demonstration projects in this field.

### **Residential Housing Options of Florida**

<http://flroof.org/>

ROOF is a non-profit organization focused on increasing housing options for Florida residents with developmental disabilities.

### **Standing Up For Me Curriculum**

<http://project10.info/SUFMLogin.php?accesscheck=%2FSUFM.phpcy.html>

The Standing Up For Me curriculum was developed in Florida and designed to advance the self-determination and self-advocacy skills of youth in Exceptional Student Education (ESE). The 2012 version of this curriculum covers the primary, intermediate, middle and high school grades and includes classroom materials, activities and evaluations.

### **Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment: ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness & Self-Advocacy**

<http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/transition-education-materials/me-lessons-for-teaching-self-awareness-and-self-advocacy>

This curriculum, developed by University of Oklahoma's Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment, provides free lessons and materials to teach students self-determination skills that are known to increase successful secondary, postsecondary and independent living outcomes for students with disabilities.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Familias Unidas en Discapacidades**

**September 27, 2016 from 8:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Embassy Suites by Hilton Tampa/Brandon

<http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu/familias/>

(Evento en español / Event presented in Spanish)

Familias Unidas is a workshop promoting education and empowerment of Hispanic families caring for a child or adult diagnosed with a disability. The Family Network on Disabilities and CARD have collaborated to provide information on: autism spectrum disorder, strategies for challenging behaviors, the transition from child to adult, individualized education and the 504 plan, communication and organization plans and parents' rights regarding the education of child.

## The 6th Annual Hartwick Symposium on Inclusive Higher Education

September 29 - October 1, 2016

Miami Marriott Dadeland

<http://fltpsid.info/EventsTraining.php>

Keynote and breakout sessions will address topics around the inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities in college and university settings across Florida. Topics include curriculum design, person-centered planning, sexuality, employment, housing, program funding, student scholarships, and more!!

The Hartwick Symposium is a conference opportunity available to:

- Higher education, community, and agency professionals invested in enhancing and creating connections for postsecondary opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities;
- Professional staff, peer mentors and faculty who work at postsecondary programs currently in existence on a college campus in Florida;
- Professional staff and faculty who are considering the launch of a postsecondary program on a college campus in Florida;
- Students (and their families) who currently attend a postsecondary program at a college campus in Florida.



## 2016 Partners for Progress

October 12 - 14, 2016

Florida Hotel and Conference Center, Orlando

<http://flroof.org/conference/>

Residential Options of Florida (ROOF) and the Florida chapter of the Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE) are excited to announce the 2016 Partners for Progress Conference. ROOF's specialized statewide network has partnered with the Florida chapter of APSE in hosting this event that will unite stakeholders from around the state to discuss and provide resources through workshops regarding housing and employment for people with developmental disabilities in Florida.



## Florida Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) 70th Annual Conference

October 23 - 25, 2016

Lido Beach Resort, Sarasota

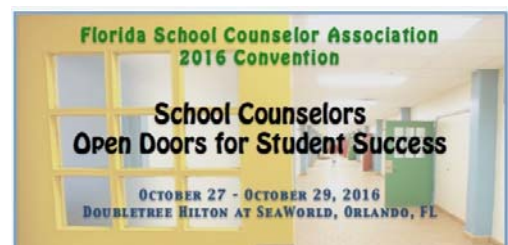
[Click here](#) for more information.

## Florida School Counselor Association Convention 2016

October 27 - 29, 2016

Doubletree Hilton at Seaworld, Orlando

<http://www.fla-schoolcounselor.org/prof-dev/2016->



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### About **Project 10 Topical Briefs:**

Project 10 *Topical Briefs* provide short informational summaries and resource links related to secondary transition.

***Have a question? Want to find or recommend a resource? Have some great news to share?***

Send us an email at

[project10@stpete.usf.edu](mailto:project10@stpete.usf.edu)

For back issues of Project 10 Topical Briefs, visit the newsletter page on the Project 10 website at  
<http://www.project10.info/Newsletter.php>.

### **Project 10: Transition Education Network**

assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

**Project 10: Transition Education Network  
University of South Florida St. Petersburg**

Questions or comments?

Email us at

[project10@stpete.usf.edu](mailto:project10@stpete.usf.edu)

[www.Project10.info](http://www.Project10.info)