What other families say about DBS Transition Services

"The Division for the Blind has given our family hope and inspiration."

"The information that I have gained will empower me to help my son in transition into the world and workforce, as well as in school and perhaps college."

"Division of Blind Services has prepared us for the many challenges of life."

"Transition services assisted me in finding my way to independence and a future."

"The services have helped the whole family. They have made us aware of resources that we had no idea were available and they helped us with our children's ARDs, with workshops and enrichment activities that help the whole family to bond and feel like we are not alone in this struggle. They have been a blessing to our family."

"They have helped me deal with my son's blindness by introducing me to blind people who are very successful in the work field. They have given my son a chance to see he is not the only one in the world who is blind. They are always someone who I can count on to encourage me and my family. Thanks DBS."

TEXAS Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

1.800.628.5115

www.dars.state.tx.us

#02200 - DBS - 1/09

Transition Program

"WHAT I BELIEVE I CAN ACHIEVE!"

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

Division for Blind Services

Transition Program

Adolescents who are blind or visually impaired have brighter futures today than at any time in history!

advances in technology make it possible for them to live, learn and work alongside their peers.

There are many **excellent resources** to help youth who are blind achieve their fullest vocational potential.

powerful laws protect their rights to education, employment and access to their communities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act are just two of the laws that help students who are blind or visually impaired prepare for the transition from school to adult life, employment and independence. These laws are in place to ensure that services and supports for transitioning students who are blind or visually impaired are coordinated among agencies to assist the student to move from school to post-school activities. The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is the state agency that supports Vocational Rehabilitative programs (VR) including the Division for Blind Services Transition Program. Each year, students who are blind or visually impaired receive VR services designed to help the student bridge the gap that may occur as they prepare to transition from school to the world of work.

"I AM CONFIDENT IN MYSELF!"

"I BELIEVE IN MY ABILITIES, SKILLS AND STRENGTHS!"

Building a Foundation of Confidence

Transition planning is student centered and its success relies on the collaboration between the student, his or her family and the support systems available to the youth and family. In addition to the student and family, this Transition Team includes a combination of professional and nonprofessional members who are interested in the success of the student and may consist of the Transition Counselor, educational staff, specialists from DBS or the educational system, or any other members of the community who can provide support and assistance.

Transition planning activities and services bring together those resources and supports that promote the achievement of independence and vocational success. The earlier planning can be initiated, the sooner supports and services can be coordinated to achieve the goals of the student.

The Division for Blind Services begins transition planning and services for students at age ten. The Transition Counselor works with the Admissions, Review and Dismissal committee (ARD) to plan and develop long term vocational objectives and independent living goals that are consistent with the interests, abilities, strengths, and informed choices of the individual student.

Core Services

The Transition Program offers a wide range of services associated with six major skill areas. We think of them as stepping stones to an independent, productive and satisfying life.

adjustment to blindness — Counselors familiarize families with diagnostic procedures, medical treatments and other things they need to know to support their youth. Services are designed to equip the youth with coping and self-advocacy skills to boost confidence and self-esteem as he or she adjusts to living with a vision impairment.

independent living (IL) skills — IL services promote independence and self-sufficiency as the youth matures. The family and Transition Counselor identify services that support the student in becoming as independent as possible in everyday life—at home, in school and at work.

communication — With strong communication skills, youth who are blind or have a visual impairment can thrive at home, at school, at work and in the community. The Transition Program promotes development of a variety of skills including reading, writing and using Braille and other techniques, using assistive technology and accessing information.

travel — Orientation and mobility skills enable adolescents to safely navigate and explore the world around them and to join their peers in social and community activities.

support systems — The Transition Program assists youth and families to connect with a wide range of community support systems, such as peer, parent and sibling support groups; advocacy organizations and educational support groups.

vocational development — Vocational exploration begins at an early age and involves the whole family. Our program promotes the development of organizational and problem-solving skills and assists the youth in career development and exploration.

Services for Youth and Families

- Ongoing evaluations to determine changes in vision and/or service needs;
- Counseling and guidance;
- Diagnostic evaluations and referrals;
- Summer work activities and programs;
- Literature and training materials;
- Hobbies, leisure activities and sports;
- Mentoring with peers and adults;
- World of Work activities, including individual or group training for students and families (e.g., Braille, social/behavior skills for vocational success, using technology, accessing information, advocacy skills, job readiness workshops, career exploration, etc.);
- Assistive technology and developmental equipment;
- Onsite educational observation and assistance, consultation with teachers and other education professionals;
- Support group connections for youth, parents and siblings; and
- Referrals to other resources.