

Recommended Steps by Age

15-16	<p>Apply for Washington State ID card WHY: A photo ID will be needed to apply for many adult services. Applying before age 18 is easier. www.dol.wa.gov, 360-676-2096</p>	
16	<p>Apply with Developmental Disabilities Community Services (DDCS) WHY: Get support for you and your child, including case management, services to help build independence, and help finding and keeping a job. Apply early to access these long-term supports. www.dshs.wa.gov/dda, 360-714-5000</p>	
17-17½	<p>Think about whether guardianship is needed and what kind WHY: At age 18 your child becomes a legal adult and might need help with decisions about health, work, or legal matters. There are other options besides full guardianship. The Arc can help with resources and planning. www.arcwhatcom.org, 360-715-0170</p>	
17-19	<p>Apply for low-income housing through the Housing Authority WHY: The waitlist for housing can be long, so it's important to apply early. Call or check website regularly for waitlist openings. www.bellinghamhousing.org, 360-676-6887</p>	
18	<p>If your child isn't yet getting Social Security Benefits, apply now! WHY: Now that your child is an adult, your income doesn't count, and they may qualify for monthly cash benefits and health coverage. Work incentives allow people with disabilities to work and still keep benefits. To get the most from Social Security, your child should pay rent to the family. www.ssa.gov, 800-772-1213</p>	
18	<p>Ask your DDCS Case Manager about Person Care If your child needs help with bathing, grooming, dressing, laundry, etc., funding may be available for Personal Care. Support can be provided by a family member or a contracted Individual Provider (IP). Contact your DDCS Case Manager to learn more about being a paid provider through Consumer Direct of Washington (CDWA).</p>	
Senior Year	<p>Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid WHY: if seeking aid to attend college, this form must be filled out by March 1st of senior year for best consideration. www.fafsa.ed.gov</p>	
18-22	<p>Apply for services with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) WHY: This agency helps people with disabilities get and keep a job and understand how working may affect benefits. www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr, 360-812-6610</p>	
20-22	<p>Apply to the School to Work Navigator Program WHY: Students in their last years of school can get connected with a job coach who will help with service navigation and ensure a smooth transition from school to work and adult life. Must be DDCS-eligible and enrolled or on the waitlist with DVR. https://whatcomcounty.us/ddprogram, 360-778-6012</p>	
Anytime	<p>Explore Whatcom Transportation Authority and Paratransit services WHY: Learning to ride the bus helps your child be more independent. They offer flexible alternative door-to-door public transportation for people with disabilities. www.ridewta.com, 360-733-1144</p>	
Anytime	<p>Connect with the Arc of Whatcom County WHY: Connect with resources and get navigation support from other parents of children with disabilities. www.arcwhatcom.org, 360-715-0170</p>	