



# Preparing Tweens and Teens for Adulthood

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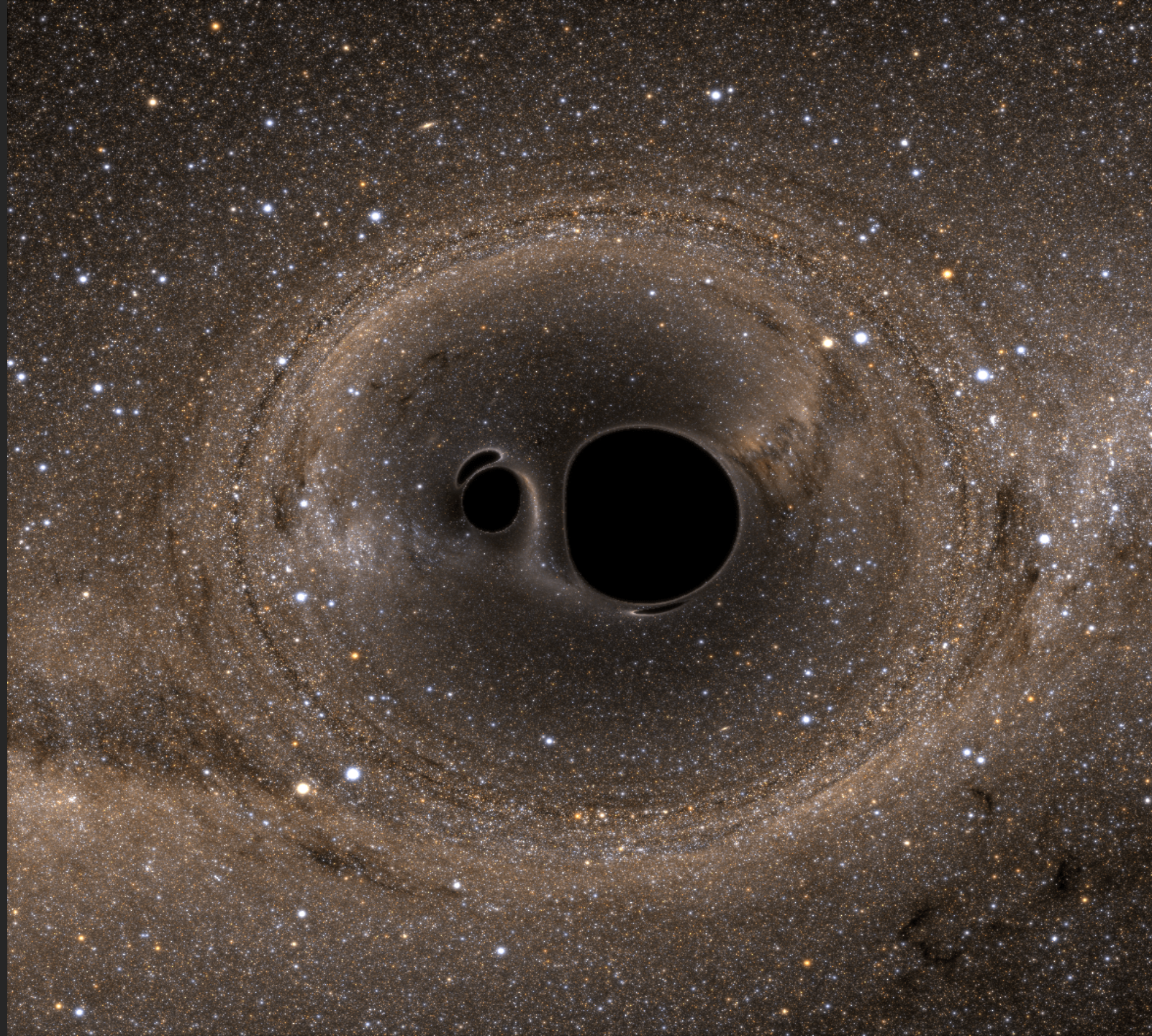


# The **Black Hole Phenomenon**

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Who is **MOST** at  
Risk?

Yes, our kids..





40% of those with ASD that do attempt college, less than half will NOT complete it.

**Why?**

Only **55.1 percent** of young adults with autism held paying jobs **during their first years out of high school**, the lowest percentage among the disability categories examined.

**9 out of 10 people** with Autism are either:  
Unemployed or underemployed





## Top 5 Most Common Barriers to Employment For Autism

1. Cognitive **inflexibility**
2. Social skill & communication **deficits**
3. Inability to self regulate & ineffective **coping skills**
4. No reliable **transportation**
5. Poor or inconsistent **hygiene**



Parent to  

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Parent...

Let's Talk





**I AM NOT YOUR FRIEND.**

**I AM YOUR PARENT.**

**I WILL STALK YOU**

**FLIP OUT ON YOU**

**LECTURE**

**DRIVE YOU INSANE**

**BE YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE AND**

**HUNT YOU DOWN WHEN NEEDED**

**BECAUSE I LOVE YOU.**



An aerial photograph of a rugged cliffside meeting the ocean. The cliff face is composed of layered, greyish-brown rock with some green moss or lichen. The top of the cliff is covered in green grass. The ocean is a deep blue, with white foam from waves crashing against the base of the cliff and scattered rocks. A large, semi-transparent circular inset on the left side of the image shows a close-up of the cliff face, highlighting the texture and color of the rock.

**Push...**

**Just not off the cliff**





# Shifting into Adulthood: Home



# Parents: Ask yourself

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- What are they **responsible** for at home?
- Do they **interact** every night with the family?
- Do they attend typical **high school activities** like a football game, afterschool clubs or a school dance?
- Can they call and **order** a pizza? Doordash has ruined this, huh?
- If they take medication, do they know **why**?
- Can they make a doctor or therapist **appointment** on their own?



# Parents: Ask yourself

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- Can they plan and **purchase** some of their groceries?
- Do they have a **checking** account & use it?
- Do they have a plan for **transportation**?
- Do they know why they have an **IEP or 504** plan?
- Do they ask for **what** they need in school?
- Can they **accept** changes in their daily life?





It is not easy...

**WHO IS ON YOUR TEAM?**



# Shifting into Adulthood: School





# Special Education: Untended Consequences

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- Accommodated or modified **too much**
- Promoted **learned helplessness**
- **Created dependence** on an adult vs. relying on their own critical thinking
- In helping, we stopped or prevented **opportunities for them to fall** so they learn that they can get up on their own
- Provided an **unrealistic “bubble”** for student, even the parent

Oops....Is this occurring or did occur?



# Untended Consequences: Its Never too Late!

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- **HOW much** is really needed to modify or accommodate? What is really needed?
- Is the **student asking** for the accommodations or modifications? That may be a sign they don't need it.
- **Be strategic**, is half of the accommodations checked off automatically without really being needed? Or only needed in certain classes?
- **Fade each year** if possible and treat as a celebration!
- **Provide opportunities** for them to stretch and feel uncomfortable



A close-up photograph of a red pushpin stuck into a map. The map shows various colored lines representing roads and geographical features. In the background, several other pushpins in blue and yellow are visible but out of focus. The text "Successful Transition Starts with a Road Map: School" is overlaid on the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Successful Transition Starts with a Road  
Map: **School**



# Successful Transition: **Step 1**

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## **Where am I?**

- A **baseline** of the student's strengths and deficits must be determined. In order to obtain this baseline, a thorough transition assessment should be conducted.

Excellent parent resource: Texas Transition

[Website](#)

# Successful Transition: **Step 2**

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## **Where am I going ?**

- A working “road map” is established per the results of the transition assessment/s. The “road map” is **adjusted year by year** as progress is made or new deficits are discovered.





# Road Map: **Example**

KEVIN



## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Issue:** Identified severe generalized severe anxiety, cognitive rigidity and inability to engage people.



**Pinpoint for map:** To address these, Kevin started work experience in the school setting as an assistant to the school computer technician.





# 10th Grade

**Issue:** Progress was made with overall anxiety in the school setting but had **not** generalized.

**Pinpoint for map:** To address this, Kevin started work experiences in various environments, such as a daycare center. In addition, we required Kevin to attend “typical” high school events such as football games and dances.



# 11th Grade

**Issue:** Inability to self advocate, identify his strengths & weakness, sudden increase in cognitive inflexibly and still working on social anxiety.




**Pinpoint for map:** Increased outside community work experiences, from a couple hours per week to 4-to-6-week rotations.



# 12th Grade

**Issue:** Peer social engagement, literalism and work stamina.

 **Pinpoint for map:** Obtained his 1<sup>st</sup> paid employment at Michaels working 5 to 6 hours a week with intensive job coaching support.



# Graduation ARD

**Issue:** Graduate or attend 18 + service



**Pinpoint for map:** In May of his senior year, Kevin obtained a job at Home Depot working 10-12 hours per week.

Transition assessments showed that Kevin had the skills for his developmental stage- he needed to work for awhile and obtain more life skills that could be addressed at home.





# Graduation: Slow Down

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Students graduating by **IEP**, cannot be graduated until they meet one of the following: (Commissioner's Rule 89.107)

1. Met required state standards for graduation plan
2. Obtained full employment & doesn't need ongoing supports
3. Mastered specific **employability** skills & doesn't need ongoing supports
4. Attending college or post secondary training
5. Met aging out requirement

**Note:** By law, the district has to hold an **ARD** to consider student back in school, if one is requested.

# Post- Graduation

**Issue:** Needed time to learn to work, gain independent skills, move out.

**Pinpoint for map:** 1 ½ yr. after graduating moved out (needed weekly support). Learned to drive a car across the street to Home Depot and back to his apartment. Worked at Home Depot for 3 ½ years then went back to VR to do career exploration to obtain a “career” job.





# Today



**Pinpoint on map:** Kevin has worked full time for the past 5 years as a mail clerk downtown for the Texas Workforce Commission. At first, rode the bus to work but moved closer and now rides an electric scooter (thanks to COVID & stimulus check) to and from (only a couple miles from work).



# Early Employment Experience

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- **Everyone** needs their 1<sup>st</sup> job
- The **earlier** the better
- We all had 1<sup>st</sup> jobs that we **didn't** exactly love
- Your 1<sup>st</sup> job is not about loving what you are doing: it is about **learning** how the real-world works
- **No one** comes out of college with their “career job”
- Every job, no matter **how small**, opens up more opportunities and will lead you to the one you really want



# Vocational Rehabilitation

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- Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)- paid 6-week work experience for the summer
- Vocational adjustment classes (such as money management)
- Work experiences
- ABA (individual and/or social skill groups)
- Vocational assessments
- Transportation needs (Bus or driving)
- Obtain first job or come back and advance in one
- College, certificate or technical training (as well as help support services)

# Tips for Success!

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- Don't let your child play the **disability “card”**, it does not define them and certainly doesn't give them excuses
- Don't allow for bad behaviors- remember, they are teens/ young adults- **not all behaviors** are the disability
- **Ask** for help!
- Take **1 year at a time**- this year, “our focus is on.....”
- But **plan** for the big picture
- **Don't rush** through the school system, graduate when they are truly ready





## [Start My VR Services](#)

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Online Referrals for VR  
(If your student is attending  
a high school,  
check first with them)

Contact

**Start My VR** 

- [Vocational Rehabilitation Self-Referral](#)
- [Older Independent Blind Self-Referral](#)
- [Self-Referral Status Update](#)

Thank You

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gov



# Texas Workforce Commission Contact Information

Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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101 East 15th Street

Austin, Texas 78778-0001

800-628-5115

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice)

The Texas Workforce Commission accepts calls made through any relay service provider.

[WWW.TWC.TEXAS.GOV](http://WWW.TWC.TEXAS.GOV)

# Federal Funding Information (FFY 2019)

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For purposes of the VR program, the Federal VR grant paid 78.7 percent of the total costs of the program. In Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019, the VR agency received \$221,936,258 in Federal VR funds. Funds appropriated by the State paid 21.3 percent of the total costs (\$60,066,611) under the VR program.

For purposes of the Supported Employment program, Federal funds paid 90 percent of the total costs. In FFY 2019, the VR agency received \$1,446,266 in Federal Supported Employment funds. State appropriated funds paid 10 percent (\$80,348) of the total costs under the Supported Employment program.

For purposes of the OIB program, Federal funds paid 90 percent of the total costs incurred under the program. In FFY 2019, the agency received \$2,159,283 in Federal grant funds for this program. Funds appropriated by the State paid 10 percent (\$239,920) of the total costs incurred under the OIB program.