



Gearing Up For Your Transitions

Chris Coulston's

Personal Story

Q: What were your challenges and successes as you went through the transition process?

A: I started to attend transition conferences when I was in 6th grade. I was 12 years old. I wish I had started a little earlier because there is so much to learn about transition. These are important skills to learn that I use right now. I self-advocate for myself in school, I actively prepare and participate in my parent / teacher conferences and I prepare and co-lead my IEP meetings with my case manager. Self-determination is also an important part of transition. I need this skill now to complete high school and college and build my career!

Q: Were there any specific programs, agencies or persons which were helpful to you and your family/caregivers during your transition process?

A: Kathie Herel is the main reason I started to learn about transition. She told my mom to go to the Transition Conference. My mom took me to the conference where I heard Jonathan Mooney and a group of students called the Blue Jays present. Jonathan Mooney gave me hope about transitioning to college and a career after I leave high school. He was young and he was a great presenter! The Blue Jays were a group of students who could talk about their strengths, their choices and the supports they need to reach their goals! I have also heard LeDerrick Horne. My favorite quote of his is, "I want to go to college and I need your help getting me there!" I was lucky to be invited to the Brandywine Special Needs Parent Teacher Association (BSNPTA) Delaware Kids Inspiring Kids program to learn more about Self-Determination. This program has made all the difference for me!

Q: What is your anticipated path for the future?

A: I am going to the Pennsylvania Transition Conference this summer to learn more about transition. I am going to learn more so I can help my friends learn about transition. They do not know the things I know and I am worried for them. Everyone should know about transition but I don't think everyone understands how big it is. I work on transition every day!

My goal is to be a Health Care Administrator. I became interested in the health care field after my volunteer experience at the Kutz Nursing Home. If I did not go to the Transition Conference, I would not understand how critical it is to gain work experience in high school. It's work but it's fun!

