

Age 21:

Age 21 is the year to finalize the Adult Service provider and design the student's plan for transition for residents of Massachusetts. Visit any programs needed and meet with all representatives necessary before making a final choice of provider. Create the final Vision Statement for the IEP meeting.



Age 22:

In Massachusetts, students may stay at Boston Higashi School through their 22nd year if approved by their funding agency. Other state laws may differ and case managers can review those specifics as they relate to particular students. During the last year at Higashi, work with staff to produce a detailed action plan with the steps needed to move the student from Higashi to Adult Services. Include visits to the day program and group home (if applicable) and review all the transition steps with everyone involved. Make practical notes for yourself of items needed before the move such as furniture, clothes, toiletries, visual aids, name tags, social stories etc. Graduation is a time of happiness and pride - reflecting on all the growth and progress a student has made. It can also be mixed with sadness as one says goodbye to people and places who have been a part of the student's life for a long time. It is expected and typical for the student, staff and family to feel a wide array of emotions at this very distinct point of transition.

Transition and CAEP:

Boston Higashi staff will assist with visits and the final transition to Adult Services. Boston Higashi is invested in each student continuing onto an appropriate program and will work diligently toward a successful transition. After transition, alumni are invited to attend CAEP, our Continuing Education Alumni Program. Several sessions are run per year on Saturdays and it is an initiative to provide an opportunity for former students to come back to Higashi to build skills, exercise, socialize and have fun! For more information on CAEP, go to www.bostonhigashi.org.



Boston Higashi School Transition to Adult Services At a Glance

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At Boston Higashi School, Transition Services encompass the educational and vocational programming leading up to when a student turns 22, graduates from the Emergence Program and enters Services. Once a part of Adult Services, programming is not an “entitlement”, but rather, determined on an individual basis. Adult Services will be different for each student from Higashi, tailored to the individual and taking many things into consideration. Arriving there, however, consists of the same progression and steps, usually beginning before age 16.

Boston Higashi School Transition Services - What To Do Each Year:

Before Age 16:

The transition process begins during the years prior to a student turning 16. Parents/guardians start to envision what life might look like for the student as an adult – day programs, vocation, living situations etc. The Transition Service Coordinator at Boston Higashi School is happy to meet with families in order to explain what the transition process will look like at age 22, to describe the Emergence Program (EP) and Employment Education and how the school prepares students for life after Higashi. This is a good time for parents/guardians to update the student’s Vision Statement in the IEP and review whether any evaluations are due to be conducted. The student is invited to attend the IEP meeting at age 14 and beyond to express his/her vision for the future.

Age 16:

At age 16 the local educational representative makes a referral for Adult Services called a “688.” In Massachusetts, Boston Higashi students are usually referred to DDS, the Department of Developmental Services. Age 16 is the time to continue with the recommendations made above for the years prior to 16 – for parents/guardians to become familiar with the Emergence Program and Employment Education, and to gain an understanding of what happens at transition by talking to the Boston Higashi School Transition Service Coordinator. It is also an ideal time to network with other parents, outside organizations and to attend DDS workshops. Also, continue to update the student’s Vision Statement and check on any evaluations that might be overdue (psychological testing, communication, other educational assessments). Gathering information about transition early can alleviate stress and anxiety later in the process when the time comes to make decisions. Around this time parents/guardians may want to consult a legal and/or financial professional regarding estate and financial planning. This is a personal decision specific to each family.

Age 17:

At age 17 parents/guardians can make a request to their school system to invite DDS to the annual IEP meetings. DDS may wait until age 18 to start attending meetings. Psychological testing (cognitive testing) which should have been completed at age 14 for establishing a baseline, should be done again at this time. Preparation for guardianship should also be done at this time. Boston Higashi School is available to assist with the guardianship process. **For the protection of the student, guardianship must be completed in a timely manner, and a copy of the Decree of Guardianship submitted to the Education Office.**

Age 18:

As described above, at age 18, guardianship must be completed for all students and documentation submitted to the school. If applicable, a Roger’s Authority for students taking antipsychotic medication should also be attained. Boston Higashi case managers can help if needed. Once guardianship is complete, this is the time to apply for eligibility for Adult Services and begin communication with the assigned DDS coordinator. Information on DDS and your area office is available at www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dds/. This is also the time to complete an application for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI partially funds Adult Services and provides health insurance (Mass Health). Details can be found at www.ssa.gov. Continue to network, attend workshops, gather information on post-22 services and keep the Vision Statement updated.

Age 19 and 20:

By age 19 students have transitioned into the Emergence Program. Parents/guardians are continued to be encouraged to observe the Emergence Program and work sites. During these years it is an optimal time to schedule meetings with DDS and the Boston Higashi School Transition Coordinator and to start to craft an aspiration for programming. Observe some examples of day programs, and if applicable, group home settings. Boston Higashi School will accompany families/guardians to two programs. Keep the Vision Statement current. By this time, SSI should have been completed and adult eligibility approved. Students from states where graduation the age of transition to adult eligibility is 21 should follow the steps below.