



# Autism After Age 21: What Now?



What happens when my child is no longer in school? Where will he live when he no longer wants to live with me? And, what is going to happen to my child when I'm no longer around or able to care for him?

These are just a few questions that Easter Seals hears from concerned parents of kids with autism. As the nation's largest provider of services and support for children and adults living with autism and their families, Easter Seals is highlighting its services for children with autism who grow up and "age out" of the school system.

Easter Seals offers services to support adults with autism as they navigate through the barriers they are likely to encounter in their day-to-day lives. These may include help finding a job, day programs, residential support to live on their own, community and recreation activities, and financial planning. Additionally, Easter Seals works with families to identify other services in the community. It's all to help young adults with autism thrive in their communities.

## Finding a Job

Finding a job is a critical first step toward self-determination and financial independence for adults with autism. Easter Seals professionals help people with autism assess their skills, identify employment goals and provide training to meet personal goals. Easter Seals also works with businesses to provide resources for employers to support workforce development.

## Day Programs for Young Adults Who Remain at Home

Easter Seals adult day services offer socialization and recreation opportunities for individuals with autism living in the community. While people with autism participating in day programs might need some supervision, they need only minimal assistance with activities of daily living.

## Moving Away from Home

Adults with autism have many choices when it comes to living away from home. The primary goal of Easter Seals' residential services is to assist people with autism to stay in the community in a living arrangement of their choice. Options can include:

- **Independent Living.** Involves living in their own apartment or house with little, if any, support. Services may be limited to complex problem-solving, money management, or budgeting.



It may be commonplace to associate autism with children because of the attention called to the importance of early intervention and diagnosis, but it's equally important to remember that children with autism grow up to be adults with autism. Most children with autism are eligible to receive special education services through the school system until age 21. Services for adults with autism are critical, yet there is an urgent need for increased funding and support to expand adult-specific services. You can help at [www.actforautism.org](http://www.actforautism.org).



- **Supported Living.** Provides individuals with autism a bit more support, involving a support worker assisting the individual with certain areas of self-care or social planning. Individuals typically have their own apartments, but may share living space or live in the same building as others with similar needs.
- **Supervised Group Living.** Group homes are facilities that provide support for several individuals with disabilities. Group homes are usually located in residential areas and have the physical appearance of the average family home. Professional staff assist the residents with daily living and social activities based on individual needs. In some cases, group homes will specialize in providing services to people with autism. Here, the staff are more likely to be trained to better meet the unique needs associated with autism.
- **Adult Foster Care.** In adult foster care, individuals live in a home with a family. Adult foster care is intended to be as permanent as possible. Families usually receive financial assistance from the government to support individuals with autism in their home. They are not necessarily trained or expected to teach independent living skills.
- **In-home Services.** Many adults with autism live at home or with a friend or family member. When additional support is needed, in-home services may include a companion, homemaking/housekeeping, therapy and health services or personal care.
- **Respite Care.** Some individuals with autism remain in their parents' home far into their adult years. Sometimes families receive respite care where a professional comes to the home and provides support services to allow the parents to partake in their own personal, recreational or social activities.

### Community and Recreation Activities

Adults with autism can be active participants in all areas of community life including social and recreational activities. Easter Seals programs may include weekends away, evenings out and other opportunities to participate in recreational activities throughout the year. With more than 100 camping, recreation and respite programs, Easter Seals offers thousands of individuals with autism the chance to



develop lasting friendships and learn what they can do, regardless of their age. Participants enjoy adventures and conquer new physical challenges, and some camps also offer sessions exclusively for campers living with autism.

### Outliving Ones Parents

Easter Seals partners with health and human service organizations as well as public and private insurers to provide life-changing services and support for children and adults living with autism and other disabilities and special needs and for their families.

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