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# **Transitioning to Adulthood Plans and Services for Adults With XXYY Syndrome**

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## **Part 6: Continuing Education Options**

# Part 6: Continuing Education Options

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**The Challenges of Continuing  
Education & the Reasons  
to Still Do It**

## The Cliff-Effect

The cliff-effect for adults with disabilities refers to the fact that designing a much-needed structure to occupy his days hinges on the availability of continuing education opportunities and services. Many parents are shocked to find how hard it is to fill his days with meaningful, fulfilling activities that lead to more independence. Waiting lists for services and limits on the types of accommodations he can receive in continuing education settings are the reason for this. When you couple that with what he might need in the way of supports for employment, big gaps can exist. This is basically the entire reason we have taken the time to write this series of booklets for you.

### **Continuing education is a challenge, but worth pursuing**

Continuing education for your son with XXY is important as part of a larger plan. However, the experience of our families with adults with XXY shows that it is very difficult to find programs that are suitable and that translate into employment/career. Please review the results of our survey in Part 1 of this series, *Laying the Groundwork*, to understand why we are saying this.

In addition to improving employment possibilities, there are many good reasons to pursue continuing education:

- To give him something meaningful to do when he graduates from high school
- To develop more life skills
- Community inclusion and making friends
- To improve his academic levels such as reading and math
- To improve his self-esteem
- To lessen the “cliff-effect”
- To give him the chance to do what everyone else is doing

Continuing education for your son with XXY is going to hinge on these things:

How much accommodation your son needs academically—While there are specific programs for people with disabilities, any other academic setting will only provide a very limited amount of accommodations for people with disabilities. If you look on the next page at the link from Atlanta Technical College, you will see the types of accommodations that are made. Those may not be enough for your son, especially if he was on an IEP.

Money – Some programs for people with disabilities are part of private schools. The programs can be very expensive and there may not be a lot of financial aid available.

Location – Some of the programs that might interest you the most may require that your son live away from home. He may not be ready to live away from home or living away from home may be too much change for him. When thinking about these programs, you need to think about the amount of change he will experience all at once.

# **Ideas for Continuing Education**

## While your son is still in the transitions program

Ask about your school district's BOCES program. BOCES provides a variety of programs through your school district and area vocational schools. You can access BOCES while your son is still in transitions from 18-21 years old.

Here is a resource recommended by one of our parents:  
[Preparing Students with Disabilities for Post Secondary Education](#) (pdf)



## Ideas for continuing education programs

### College programs for people with special needs

This web site has a list of 245 college programs for people with disabilities in Canada and the United States:

[Think College](#)

[Example: Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA](#)

### [ASDAN \(UK and other countries\)](#)

ASDAN was recommended by one of our families for continuing education programs. They are actually an international program! Their programs are for youth and adults.

[TAFE, NSW, Australia](#)

### Technical, Vocational and Trade Schools

In addition to the above opportunities, you may find your local technical, vocational and trade schools to be the greatest resource for continuing education. Typically, if your son is involved in the transitions program, you will learn about such programs. The technical schools may provide a limited number of programs but they are often located close to you.

Technical schools can often provide enough accommodation that will suit males with XXYY, but not always. You need to investigate the school and visit to find out what they can do for your student. If they are linked to the transitions program, they may be more accommodating. Sometimes they will provide a limited number of specific programs such as horticulture or culinary arts that are mostly geared to people with disabilities.

Here are a few examples, to help you know what to look for near you:

[Pickens Technical College, Aurora, CO](#)

[Atlanta Technical College](#)

[Emily Griffith Opportunity College, Denver, CO](#)

[Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra, ACT, Australia](#)

There are other types of Vocational/Trade schools, but not all of them are reputable.

[Here is some information from the Federal Trade Commission about them.](#)

## Other types of academic settings

Some communities have other great opportunities for learning through community centers and non-degree learning centers. Here are some examples, to help you know where to look for them.

[Community Recreation Centers](#) – offer all kinds of classes



Here's an example from [Aurora Recreation Centers](#) in Aurora, CO and you may have something similar in your community.

### Adult, non-degree and alternative education schools

Many communities have a variety of adult education programs/schools. Below are some examples. Your son could take some classes that interest him, without the pressure of academic performance. We can't possibly list all of them so just google "alternative adult education," "adult education," "non-degree education program" and the name of your city to find them.

[Colorado Free University](#)

[Campbell Adult and Community Education, San Jose, CA](#)

[Antioch Alternative Education Program, Antioch, CA](#)

### Auditing classes

At virtually every college, people can audit classes. This might be a great way for your son to have the experience of further education, without the pressure of academic performance. While he won't receive credit for these classes, he will still learn valuable information and skills that he can list on his resume.

Here is an example of a class that would be great for auditing

College of Southern Nevada:

[Reading Improvement Course](#)

### Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab)

Every state in the U.S. has a Voc Rehab program. It's a state program that helps people with a wide range of disabilities and problems to find gainful employment. Voc Rehab is both an employment opportunity resource and a continuing education resource. They provide funding for people to obtain a certification they may need for a specific job. For example, Fork Lift operator certification, CDL license, etc. Please refer to the *First, he needs an income* booklet for more information about Voc Rehab.

### Very specific types of small schools/certifications

Think about what your son likes to do and look for opportunities for him to learn how to do it and even make a career of it. Here are some examples but there are many of these types of opportunities. These are just to give you an idea of what is out there:

[Jewelry and Watch Repair School of New England](#)

[Dog grooming, pet sitting certifications](#)

[Free small engine repair classes \(online\)](#)

[Wood carving school](#)

[Numismatic diploma program](#) (coin collection, correspondence course)

[Aiport Security Training Programs](#)

[Alden's school of leather trades](#)

[Playground safety inspector certification](#)

[Fly fishing instructor certification](#)

Schools for making and repair of stringed instruments:

[Luth.org](#)

Boat mechanic:

[Become a Certified Marine Mechanic](#)

[How to Become a Boat Mechanic in 5 StepsKentucky Horse Shoeing School.](#)

[Lexington, Kentucky](#)

For our train lovers!

[Railway Studies Distance Course \(UK\)](#)

[Train conductor certification](#)

[Training Programs for rail jobs](#)

[Learn.org](#)

Has all kinds of similar information

### **For Artists & Actors**

You don't have to go to college to become an artist but great instruction can offer your son a path to opportunities in the art world. There are even some nonprofits made up of people with disabilities that can provide some instruction like this one:

[VSA Colorado](#)

Acting classes through theatre guilds

[Colorado Theatre Guild](#)



### **For those who can drive**

Adults with XXYY who are able to drive a vehicle well and safely can also use that skill for continuing education. Here are a few ideas for how:

#### *Obtain specialized licenses*

Commercial Driver's license – a CDL license is for truck driving, which can lead to many different types of job opportunities

[Go here](#) to find more info on finding courses and test prep for a CDL:

#### *Heavy Equipment Operating*

[There are schools and courses in heavy equipment operating](#)

### **Free, online learning**

[Kahn Academy](#) provides free, online learning in a huge number of subjects. Here, your son can improve his reading and math skills so that he can move on to further education and possibly keep up with his peers. But they offer a lot more than that.

[Open Education Database](#) has thousands of free, online courses

[Open2Study](#)

*“The most important piece of the transition for continuing education is to focus on strengths, abilities and interests of the individual taking the classes. Start small. Too much too soon may result in failure.” - Parent of an adult with XXYY*

# Overcoming His Resistance

## Overcoming Resistance

We would be remiss if we didn't at least mention that one of the top reasons parents are not pursuing more continuing education for their sons with XYY is because their sons won't cooperate. They've had enough of school, they are afraid of change and they just are not that motivated.

Here are some things you can try to help him to overcome his resistance:

- Therapy—find a good therapist for him to begin dealing with his issues. If he had a lot of trouble in school, focus on that.
- Try just one small thing—start with some of the smaller ideas in this booklet like a class at the community center.
- Give him a limited amount of time to be out of school—if necessary, tell him that he has the semester to himself but give him a limit.
- Testing—We have recommended in previous parts of this series that your adult son should have some testing to document what his learning disabilities are if you haven't done that already. Your son's resistance can be all about the fact that he knows what he cannot do.

You may have to dig deep to find out why he is so resistant. For some it is because the programs that are available are not of interest to them. For others, it is anxiety. Some have also experienced so much bullying in school that they just will not put themselves in that place again.

**The most important thing is to not settle into “nothingness.”** It is super easy to just let it all go because he might be happy just staying home playing video games. However, some of our adult guys still cannot be left home alone to their own devices so it may not even be possible for this to happen.

## Share your resources & ideas

If you've found a resources or have an idea that you think will work, please share it with us. We will update this booklet!



*“I had to be the advocate. I wanted to know about class size, who would be with him, would he be able to roam without guidance, what was the purpose of him taking the class?” - Parent of an adult with XYY*

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**Transitioning to Adulthood** is a series of booklets prepared by Renee Beauregard of the XXYY Project. This is an excellent summary of steps that parents/guardians of young adults with developmental disabilities must consider in preparing for their entry into the adult world of employment and independent living.

The recommendations are focused on young men with 48 chromosomes, rather than the 47 that describe the trisomy X/Y variations (Klinefelter syndrome, Trisomy X and 47,XYY.) For this reason, not all of the assumptions regarding functioning level will apply to all young people with X and Y chromosome variations. Take this into consideration when reading through the sections.

For more information on AXYS and on the XXYY Project, a project of AXYS, please visit <http://www.genetic.org> and <http://www.xxyysyndrome.org>

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