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## On Being 18 Your Legal Rights

At age 18 you now have all the legal rights and responsibilities of an adult. You have the responsibility of making your own decisions. With this comes the responsibility of knowing your IEP and advocating for your needs.



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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## The Age of Majority



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## What is the Age of Majority?

The age of majority is the age at which a person becomes an adult. In Virginia the Age of Majority is 18.

## What changes occur when I turn 18?

At 18 years of age you control your decisions. Parents no longer have legal responsibility or control over your decisions.

With the ability to make decisions, comes the responsibility to make mature decisions because all the rules and laws for adults apply.

## What are some of my rights?

- Voting
- Making a will
- Making a contract (renting an apartment, buying a car)
- Applying for credit
- Making medical decisions for yourself

## What are some of my responsibilities?

- Registering for the draft (males)
- Knowing that any trouble you get into is your responsibility
- Knowing that if you get into trouble, you go to adult court
- Knowing that your parents are no longer responsible for supporting you



## How does this affect school rights?

- You make decisions regarding your education, including IEP decisions.
- You have the right to have all information regarding your disability and your IEP presented in a format you understand.
- You have the right to accept or refuse IEP services.
- You have the right to disagree with your IEP and receive help in writing a complaint or requesting mediation or a due process hearing.

## What are my school responsibilities?

Just like you have adult responsibilities outside of school, you also have responsibilities for your education. They include:

- Asking questions, seeking help, understanding your disability and advocating for your needs
- Attending all meetings and actively participating in decisions regarding your IEP
- Understanding that if you refuse IEP services, you may not get them back
- Being cooperative

## Why do I still need an IEP?

An IEP is an Individual Educational Program. It is a legal document written to make sure you get the support you need to be successful in school.

## What should I think about in making decisions about my IEP?

- My interests
- My strengths
- My academic weaknesses
- How to improve in these areas



- How my teachers can help me improve academically
- What accommodations I use or would like to have
- What supports I need to be successful in school
- Can I realistically be successful in school without these supports
- What I'll do when I graduate
- What information I need to transition out of high school
- How can school personnel help me with transitioning

## What is my role in the IEP process?

- State your strengths and weaknesses.
- State your educational and personal goals.
- State the accommodations you need.
- Advocate for your needs.
- State your future plans and how you will achieve your goals.
- Discuss how school staff can help you achieve your goals.

Remember, reaching the Age of Majority gives you responsibilities along with your rights. Your disability does not go away because you turn 18 or graduate high school. It shows responsibility when you become an active member of your IEP team, advocate for your needs, and continue the support that has helped you achieve success in your education.

