

The Vision

Our vision for our family member is based on our positive assumptions of that person. Just as assumptions are needed in order to achieve a full, meaningful life for a family member with a disability, so is a vision necessary to provide a guide and a set of goals.

Where there is no vision, the people perish. Proverbs 29:18

Vision ----- O/H

- A vision is a dream and a commitment to achieve this dream.
- Visions motivate.
- Visions can be good or bad – it can be constrained by what we are used to seeing.
- Without a vision articulated by your family member and yourself, the person will be subject to someone else’s vision.
- With a vision, you will lose your way.

Individual Vision Exercise: Developing a Vision of a Meaningful Life with, and for, Your Family Member with a Disability

An example of a general vision: Mary Elizabeth will live in a world full of people who love her and want to share and support her journey though life, and who want her to be an important part of their own journey.

An example of a more specific vision: Mary is growing up as an important member of her community where her presence is valued, her contributions are welcomed, where she is missed if not around, and indeed, where she is loved. We want her to continue to live in a community where she has a number of valued roles e.g., neighbor, friend, volunteer, worker, etc. We want our daughter to go to a good school where she is truly a member of her classes and larger student body.

We envision our daughter learning a lot throughout her school career, gaining skills and competencies of all kinds, and having many opportunities to be part of all school has to offer, for example, being a member of the drama club, working on the school newspaper, singing in the chorus, being a player on the softball team, going to social affairs such as dances, games and get togethers—whatever captures her imagination. We want school to be a place where Mary meets many people and develops good friendships. We dream about her school experience being one where our daughter grows, has success, learns about life, has opportunities to contribute, and becomes a confident young woman.

When Mary becomes a young adult we hope she will pursue a career and develop her talents by going to college or some other kind of further education. We are confident that she will be an active young woman who has many interests and involvements in her community and a real enthusiasm for life. We envision our daughter working and living with other young women and enjoying the single life. Perhaps she will get married. Whatever she decides, we will support her to have the kind of home and work that she wants and the opportunities to pursue her own dreams and vision. Mary’s future is bright – the world lies before her. We are looking forward to seeing how Mary’s life unfolds and how she makes her mark in the world.

Take time now to write down your vision for your family member with a disability, or review the vision statement you brought with you to this workshop. As you do this exercise, remember to:

1. Keep in mind the desires of the family member with a disability.
2. Use what we talked about in small group discussions (see page 14) as a reference. For example, what is available to people who have a valued status? So when you think about school, home, work, recreation; think in terms of what is valued.
3. Think in terms of the “sky’s the limit”. If you could do whatever you wanted to what would you do? If no constraints or barriers existed, and there were plenty of supports, what would you do?
4. Be as specific as you can.
5. Start with the life areas that are the most important now and in the near future; then progress to the other areas. For example, if you have a young child, focus on primary school, recreation and relationships. If you are supporting an adult, focus on home, work, recreation, etc.

Our vision: (a) write down the general vision you hold for your family member:
