

Vision planning

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A guide for parents and carers
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WHAT IS A vision plan

A vision plan is a clear and intentional description of what a good life looks like for your disabled family member. It is a person-centred process that is built around the disabled person's hopes and dreams, to construct a picture of the kind of life they would like.

A vision plan functions as a compass, showing us the path to take, what to avoid and what to focus on when we experience challenges and setbacks.

All too often, the professionals and services that our family are involved with dictate what the

future looks like by presenting options that they believe will be best. Having a clear vision that is designed around your disabled family member enhances self-determination and reduces the possibility of a life designed by service agencies.



WHY A VISION PLAN is important.

Formalising a vision by putting it on paper helps us to clarify our thoughts and ideas as a family and to give us direction about what kind of life our disabled family member can have. When life gets tough it is easy to focus on the present and to lose sight of where we are headed or why we are doing things. If we have a vision, then we can all steer toward that vision. You may not know yet how you are going to get there, but the vision helps keep you on track.

Having a vision allows you to evaluate choices that are before you. It allows you to ask, will this bring the person closer to the desired outcomes? It helps you see what kind of people you need to bring on board to support your vision.

A vision plan helps us to communicate our vision to others and to enlist support from them. When we talk with family members, friends and professionals it allows them to see why we are doing certain things and why something that may seem small is an important part of a bigger plan.

Understanding the vision plan means that others are more likely to adapt how they relate to or what they do with your loved one. A vision plan may even assist you with getting funding through NASC if the item in question is part of your plan.

Having a vision helps to recognise the disabled person's rights to the same kind of ordinary life outcomes that all people have.

Having a clear vision of what a good life looks like means understanding that disabled people need to be given the same opportunities to fulfill their hopes and dreams like others at similar stages of life. This includes opportunities for learning, employment, having a home, family and social participation.

If you would like to be further inspired about creating a vision then we recommend watching Wendy Stroeve's clip [Clarity of Vision - Imagine More](#)

VISION PLAN

WHAT A vision plan looks like.

There are many ways to create a vision plan.

Each family's vision plan will be formatted in a way that is unique to them. Common formats of vision plans are:

- Having a written document
- Using photos
- Creating a collage from magazine pictures (you can Google 'vision boards' for inspiration)
- Drawing cartoons or pictures that embody the vision

There is also the option of paying an organisation to create a PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) plan in which a facilitator and an illustrator help you create a picture of what you hope to attain in the future and then work backwards to smaller achievable steps that can be carried out now. Some people have found that they can utilise their funding from their NASC to get a PATH plan created.



HOW TO CREATE a vision plan.

Develop a strong vision

A vision plan for your disabled family member should be centred around their interests, hopes dreams and what they would like their future to look like. If they are unable to verbalise or articulate what they want, then try to think about what they are interested in or enjoy.

It can be easy to limit our expectations by the things that don't seem possible, so challenge yourself to think big, to expect what may seem impossible. Your vision may not fit the norm of what society would expect from someone with a disability, but your vision needs to be about what your family member wants, not what society says they should be doing.

The following is a list of ideas that most people identify as attributes of a good life. Write these down with your family member and jot under each heading what they'd like to achieve in the future.

- Having a good education
- Having meaningful relationships
- Having a place to live that feels like their own
- Security
- Autonomy over their lives
- Good health
- Pursuing their interests
- Being able to contribute meaningfully to society

It can also be helpful to ask:

- Who are the most important people in their life?
- What are their most prized possessions?
- What are their gifts, passions, and interests?
- What do they enjoy most in life? For example list the social, recreational, cultural, artistic, and sporting activities that your family member enjoys.
- What are the most important values and beliefs in your family?
- What are the traditions that your family follow and like to celebrate?
- If you were not here to safeguard the vision, what would you want to ensure is not lost?
- Within your vision of a good life list ten things that you would like to see present in the day-to-day life of your family member.

To gain some inspiration you can try reading other people's visions. [Click here to see some examples.](#)

You could also talk to other family members, friends, teachers, and other important people that are involved in the life of your disabled family member.

CREATING a vision

Set goals that are based on the vision

With a clear understanding of what your family member wants in life, start writing down goals in line with the vision. Choose positive goals that move toward the vision and are possible. These goals do not need to be set in stone but will be flexible to suit the needs of your disabled family member. As a family you can set the timeline for the goals, but around one to two years is a good start.

Break each goal down into small achievable action steps

To move forward from where your disabled family member is now, identify steps that can be completed to attain their goals. It can help to work backwards. For example, if the goal was to be achieved in two years' time, then what would it look like in one years' time and in six months' time.

Consider:

- What the action is
- Who do we need to support us with this? Is it a family member, friend, someone from a club they belong to etc?
- What resources do we need to achieve the goal? Do we need further training, skills, or knowledge to help us achieve our goals?
- When will the action be achieved by?
- Try to share the vision plan with as many people as possible that are involved in your family's life to see if they have any ideas of how they could contribute.



TOP TIPS

It's never too late to begin early

Whether your family member is a child, a teenager transitioning to adulthood, or an adult that would like to pursue a good life, remember that it is never too late to begin creating a vision plan.

Be proactive rather than reactive

Try to create a vision plan now rather than waiting for crisis to occur so that the direction is already clearly set out for everyone.

Focus on strengths

Rather than looking at weaknesses or the things your disabled family member can't do, try to focus on the strengths that your family member has. It helps to remain positive and imaginative and to think of the possibilities.

Focus on the person not the disability

It is easy to limit the life possibilities of people who live with disabilities by getting caught up with the obstacles or challenges that are posed by their disabilities. Instead, focus on the person. What are their unique strengths, passions, interests, and goals?

It's a process not a product

A vision is not static, it evolves over time. You will need to constantly revisit the vision plan during times of transition for example, or as a person's interests and dreams change.

Take your time

A plan doesn't happen overnight. Creating a self-determined vision for a good life can take some time to process, collate and make your own.



HELPFUL resources.

IMAGINE BETTER

Talking about surrounding yourself with support

www.carematters.org.nz/Talking-About-Surrounding-Yourself-with-Support

BRINGING THE GOOD LIFE TO LIFE

Community Resource Unit Ltd

www.thegoodlife.cru.org.au/

RESOURCES ABOUT YOUR VISION

Imagine More

www.imaginemore.org.au/your-vision

INFORMATION ABOUT THE PATH PROCESS: BRISTOL EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

www.inclusive-solutions.com/PATH-Guide-for-Participants

COMMUNITY WORKS

Thinking about the PATH

www.communityworks.info/path

MEET OUR PATH AND MAP FACILITATORS

Taikura Trust

www.taikura.org.nz/meet-our-path-and-map-illustrators



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