

Inclusive Education

- testimony from a mother



Life has a way of giving you wonderful, unexpected wake up calls. At my son's graduation ceremony, I was in the moment of him walking across the stage and receiving his diploma. He had his plan for post-secondary life all sorted out in grade 10. I looked over at my youngest daughter, who was in grade 9 at the time, she has Down syndrome and attends a modified program in high school. I thought to myself "we need to sort out her plan for after high school".

So many questions popped into my head – where do I start, what does post-secondary life look like for her, what is available for her, does she get a job, does she want a job? What is her daily life going to look like after high school? Like I said – a lot of questions.

After a sleepless night, I did a deep dive the next morning into the archived Aspire newsletters online. I found a lot of information. Now I had to decipher the acronyms and see how everything works. I thought I had time still before we had to plan for my daughter. I'm so glad that the light bulb went off as I needed to start planning now!

I reached out to people who I have met at Aspire hoping they could steer me in the right direction. Thanks to Shintaro Tachihara – the Manager of Children's Respite and Family Resources. He introduced me via email to the two people that are representatives to the Richmond branch of CLBC now (www.communitylivingbc.ca). Before I could "open a file" for my daughter I needed a few things done beforehand. Enter the "Transition checklist" – this is broken down by age which is helpful and news flash - you need to start at age 15! A link to a sample transitions checklist is available on the Aspire Richmond website under Inclusive Education Resources.

I also connected with the Life Skills program at my daughter's high school – they set up introductions to Emily Tan Secondary Transitions & Explorations – Pathways to the Future, she had some handouts for me, and she also had the Transition checklist. Emily was very knowledgeable, answering my many questions with ease and very forthcoming with information.

As all parents I want to give my daughter a fulfilling life with friends of her own and a life with purpose. She is so capable. She is so much more than an "open file" in a program. We will give her the foundation and guidance she needs just as we did our two other children to dream big things.

We have created the Drive for Ability scholarship fund to aid Aspire high school students with the postsecondary education. You can find it on the [Aspire website under the resources section](#).

Surjit Dhinjal
Wife, Mother and Aspire Board member all rolled up into one.

Scan/Click
for more resources!



Inclusive Education Resources

compiled by the Aspire Inclusive
Education Committee with the
support of Ben Sharpe,
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www.AspireRichmond.com/resources/inclusive-education



Community Living BC
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