

Monarch Messages

Sharing information and helpful resources with our school community.



Welcome to the first edition of Monarch Messages!

This new newsletter will be sent home 4x a year with our students, and you'll also be able to find past copies on our website. Our goal is to connect you, our school families, with helpful information to promote health and wellness, prepare for transition planning, and explore social / recreational opportunities.

If you have questions or want more information about something in this newsletter - please get in touch!

Wishing you a happy and healthy springtime!

A Note from Nursing

by Noa Bourke, MSN, MHA, RN Director of Nursing

Several parents joined us for our March Dental Forum with local dentists answering questions and offering guidance for accessing dental care for children with special needs. Some of the steps they shared:

Thinking About Dental Care

- Step 1** **Insurance coverage.** While you may not know the exact care and procedures required for your child, getting a clear picture of your insurance dental benefit is the first step. Ask if the provider's office has other options for coverage in addition to your child's insurance.
- Step 2** **Medical history.** Share your child's medical information with the dentist prior to care. Receiving this information up front is essential to determining if they are a good match for the services and care required.
- Step 3** **Be realistic.** Many of our students at Monarch may need extra time or an extra appointment to get an annual cleaning done. Make a plan that can flex as needed.
- Step 4** **Scheduling.** Plan for success! You know your child best. If they do better in the morning, after a medication time, or with a particular parent, plan accordingly.

Plan Ahead

- Step 5** **Office space.** Ask to check out the physical layout of the office. If your child needs extra space for mobility aids or a wheelchair, it's good to problem solve before the appointment.
- Step 6** **Paperwork.** Ask to complete the paperwork ahead of time so you can focus solely on your child on appointment day.
- Step 7** **Prepping your child.** Ask for photos of the lobby, dental chair, dentist or hygienist, the x-ray space, etc. Some students will benefit from exposure to these photos with an explanation. Monarch can create a social story if this would be helpful.
- Step 8** **Practice.** Have your child lie on their bed with their mouth open. Drape a towel to simulate the bib, place sunglasses on them and have a flashlight handy. Any part of normal dental care that you can practice beforehand will be helpful! Keep it quick and gentle. You could have your child be the dentist and count your teeth.
- Step 9** **Timing.** You know your child best. If they can't they wait in the lobby, try waiting in the car to be called when the provider is 100% ready for them. Discuss this with the front desk ahead of time, so they know if and where you are waiting.

At the Appointment

- Step 10** **Be creative.** Think of what will make them most comfortable - sunglasses, a blanket, headphones with their favorite songs - or maybe, they would like you to read them a story while the dentist works. Try to find a comfort that will not interfere with the dental work.
- Step 11** **The appointment.** Will it be perfect? Probably not. Ensuring their daily meds have been taken and having any extra meds for anxiety on board will be helpful. Comfortable clothing should be worn and a favorite fidget in hand might help too. If the procedure may be uncomfortable, premedicate with OTC pain medication. Check with the dentist to confirm this is appropriate.

Next Steps

- Step 12** **Afterwards.** Acknowledge that the child did a good job, but do not over emphasize the significance. The young person will pick up on your relief that it went well and will determine it was a "big deal". We want our young people to accept that dental work is routine and part of healthy living.
- Step 13** **Follow up with the provider.** You may not be able to ask questions when you are with your child. Make a time to connect with the provider to discuss the plan of care. This is also a good time to debrief on what worked and how to make the next appointment even more successful.
- Step 14** **Next steps.** Make another appointment to keep your child's dental health monitored. Regular care will decrease the stress, prevent small problems getting larger, and help develop the relationship between the child and the dentist.



Time for Transition Planning

with Lindsay Beaulieu, Director of Vocational Services / Transition Coordinator

Have you ever heard the phrase "transition planning" and wondered what that meant or how it applied to your child? When we talk about Transition in the Special Education world, we are looking at how we are preparing our school-aged students for life after graduation. Post-secondary goals should be individualized and should drive the IEP process throughout the years leading up to graduation.

*PLEASE NOTE: While preparing students for post-secondary living should be considered throughout their entire school careers, there are laws in place that help guide the transition process:

- In NH, the IEP process requires transition services to begin at age 14.
- In ME, the IEP process requires transition services to begin either when a student enters 9th grade OR when a student turns 16, whichever comes first.

Transition | Student's Preferences, Needs, and Interests

Was the student invited to the IEP meeting? If student is 14 years of age or older, List if present, if not, skip transition
Did the student attend the IEP meeting? Yes, or see above

Student's Post-Secondary Goals (Based on student's preferences, needs and interests)	Present Levels of Performance
1. Post-Secondary Education/Training Goal: (e.g. 2 or 4 year college, vocational education, continuing and adult education, training program, or on-the job training) Post-Secondary Education/Training Goal	Current Academic and Functional Levels in Preparation for Post-Secondary Education/Training: Current Academic and Functional Levels in Preparation for Post-Secondary Education/Training:
2. Post-Secondary Employment Goal: Post-Secondary Employment Goal	Current Job Skills in Preparation for Post-Secondary Employment: Current Job Skills in Preparation for Post-Secondary Employment
3. Post-Secondary Independent Living Goal. If Needed: Post-Secondary Independent Living Goal, If Needed	Current Home/Independent Living Skills in Preparation for Post-Secondary Independent Living: Current Home/Independent Living Skills in Preparation for Post-Secondary Independent Living:
4. Future Community Participation: Future Community Participation	Current Community Participation in Preparation for Post-Secondary Independent Living: Current Community Participation in Preparation for Post-Secondary Independent Living:
5. Adult Services: Adult Services	Current Adult and Adult Type Services in Preparation for Post-Secondary Independent Living: Current Adult and Adult Type Services in Preparation for Post-Secondary Independent Living:

Above is a snapshot of the Transition section of a NH IEP.

- The LEFT side of the grid lists the student-driven post-secondary transition goals (for when the student turns 22).
- The RIGHT side of the grid provides details for how the student and team members are currently working toward those post-secondary goals.
- Projected courses are listed, as well as the student's projected graduation date.

The Transition section of a ME IEP contains the same information but in a different format.

Resources and Community Events

The organizations below offer tools and information to enrich your child's learning journey, and provide resources to offer support. Our aim is to foster collaboration between our school, parents, and community partners to ensure each student's success and well-being.

[New Hampshire Family Voices](https://nhfv.org/) is part of a network of families and friends of children and youth with special health care needs/disabilities around the nation. Whether you're seeking practical advice, connection with others facing similar challenges, or opportunities for advocacy and education, New Hampshire Family Voices is available for support every step of the way. Reach out them at: <https://nhfv.org/> | 603-271-4525

[Parent Information Center](https://picnh.org/) is a statewide organization that provides families and children/youth with disabilities/special health care needs, with the knowledge and support they need to make informed decisions that enhance each child's development and well-being. From navigating the education system to accessing community services and advocating for your child's rights, their website offers a wealth of information and tools to empower you on your journey. <https://picnh.org/> | 603-224-7005

[ReKINDling Curiosity](https://rekindlingcuriosityeducation.nh.gov/) The NH Department of Education is collaborating with camps and summer programs statewide, to provide diverse opportunities for students this summer. From fostering friendships to promoting emotional well-being, these programs offer invaluable experiences tailored to students of all ages and backgrounds. Students must be of school age – at least five and no more than 22 years of age by September 1, 2024. Those with a qualifying disability are eligible for up to \$775 in support. A full list of eligible camps and programs can be found [here](#) or you can reach out to them directly <https://rekindlingcuriosityeducation.nh.gov/> | Rekindling@doe.nh.gov

Save the Dates



- **Time for Transition: Transition Tips for Caregivers**
 - Hosted by the Parent Information Center, this virtual event is Thursday, April 4th at 6:30pm. Register on their website: www.picnh.org
- **Project Friendship Glow Party**
 - Friday 4/12/24 6:30 - 9:00 at Noble High School, North Berwick, ME
 - Pizza and dancing - open to all ages 15 and up. Please check out [Project Friendship on Facebook](#) for more information.
- **Transition Fair:**
 - Saturday, May 4th. Hosted by the Rochester School District and Community Partners...be on the lookout for more information!
- The **Best Buddies Friendship Walk**
 - Saturday, May 11th in Concord and Saturday, June 22nd in Exeter
 - Registration is free for this fun walk which promotes inclusion and friendships for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Learn more at: www.bestbuddiesfriendshipwalk.org/