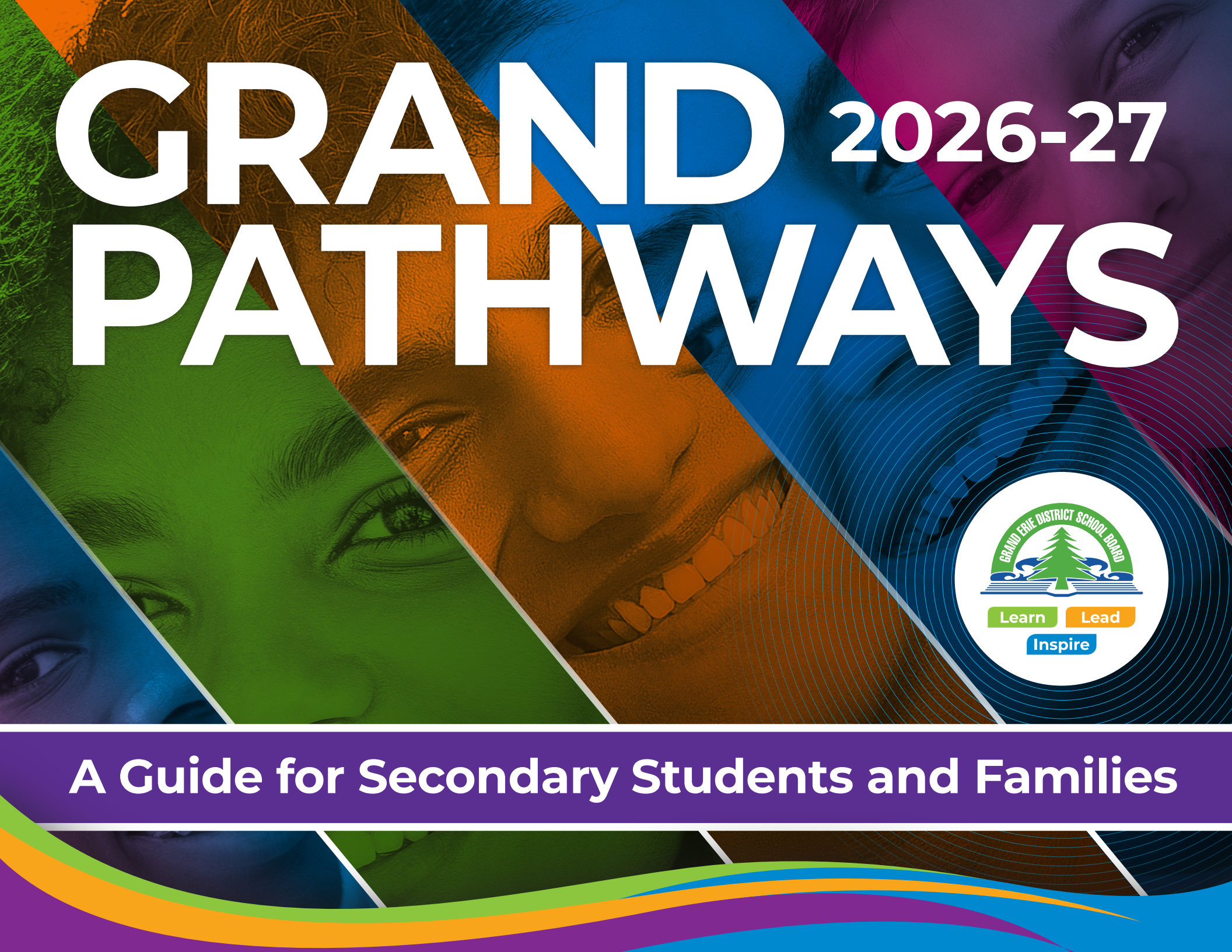

GRAND PATHWAYS 2026-27
GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Learn
Lead
Inspire
A Guide for Secondary Students and Families

The Purpose of the Guide

Who is this guide created for?

This guide was developed for students in secondary school to consider their pathway options after secondary school. The content is written in student and parent-friendly language with links to further information and details to support all post-secondary pathway.

Each pathway is as unique as the student. Explore your opportunities, ways to achieve your post-secondary goals, and the supports and programs available in Grand Erie.

Our Vision	**Learn**, **Lead**, **Inspire**.
Our Mission	Together, we build a culture of **learning**, **well-being** and **belonging** to inspire each learner.
Our Collective Priorities	To nurture **curiosity** and **opportunity** for each learner. To support the **cognitive**, **social emotional** and **physical needs** of each learner. To support an **equitable**, **inclusive** and **responsive** environment for each learner.

Grand Erie Goals

Learning › Graduation

Prepare every student for their post-secondary destination:

- **Apprenticeship**
- **College**
- **Community**
- **University**
- **Workplace**



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Graduate Profile

Our shared vision for the knowledge, skills and attributes learners need to lead, contribute and thrive in an evolving world

Adaptable and Future-Ready Individuals

Agile, curious and prepared for change.

Collaborative Contributors

Team-oriented, active participants and listeners.

Self-Aware and Resilient Learners

Confident, reflective and persevering.

Creative and Critical Thinkers

Analytical, innovative and solution-oriented.

Thoughtful Communicators

Respectful, compassionate and kind.

Responsible and Engaged Citizens

Accountable, action-focused and community-minded.



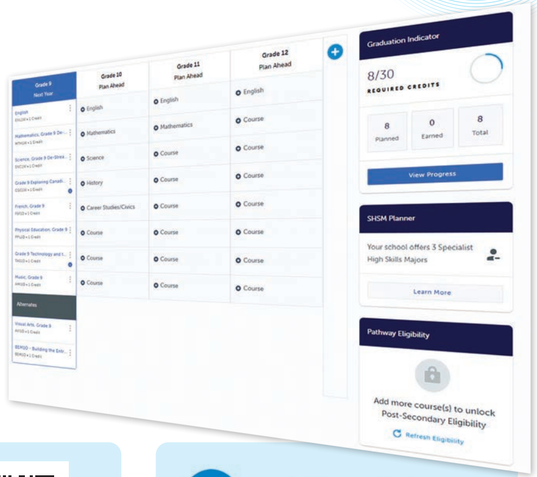


myBlueprint

Your tool for planning high school and beyond

myBlueprint (Career and Life Planning Program) has many tools for students and families to explore who they are as learners and the various opportunities available to them. Students can access myBlueprint through their Grand Erie Brightspace Account under **My Library** and **Resources**.

- **Who Am I? Surveys**
  Learn about your interests and strengths
- **High School Planner**
  Plan secondary courses, review graduation requirements, and explore eligibility for post-secondary programs
- **Post Secondary Planner**
  Learn about post-secondary opportunities in Apprenticeship, College, University, and Workplace
- **Occupations**
  Explore occupations and related occupations
- **Money and Budgets**
  Support financial planning
- **Job Search**
  Create résumés, cover letters, and search for employment opportunities



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about myBlueprint

myBlueprint

Get started

- Visit **myblueprint.ca/granderie**
- Click **School Account** Login
- Enter your Grand Erie **email** and **password**
- For families, click **Sign Up** and select your student's school to create a **Family Account**

Pathway Considerations

Community

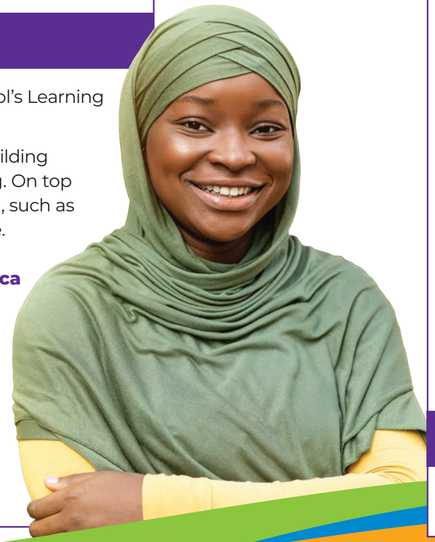
Description

This post-secondary pathway offers opportunities for students with disabilities to transition to community participation through real-world work experience, volunteer experience and access to supportive college programs.

Support Services

The following links and support services may be overwhelming. Consider speaking to your school's Learning Resource Teacher to support navigating these resources.

- **Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE):** This program focus on building skills like communication, human relations, computer literacy, and life skills in a college setting. On top of these skill building opportunities, you can select courses in a specific area that interests you, such as Culinary Management, Law and Security, Office Administration, Social Service Work and more. Make sure to check what course specific offerings are available at the offering college before applying. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Colleges in Ontario | ontariocolleges.ca**
- **Norfolk Association of Community Living (NACL):** Provides residential lifestyle support and career support for people with developmental disabilities in the county of Norfolk. They are a charter member of **OASIS** (Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs) and a member of **CLO** (Community Living Ontario) Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Norfolk Association of Community Living**
- **Community Living Brant:** Provides supports and services to meet the diverse developmental needs of people within the community. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Community Living Brant**



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Community Pathway Considerations**

Support Services

- **Community Living Haldimand:** Has a proud history of providing community-based supports and ensuring meaningful, inclusive possibilities for adults with developmental disabilities. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Community Living Haldimand**
- **SOAR:** SOAR Community Services is a not-for-profit organization that offers help to the people in Brantford, Brant, and Haldimand. They provide community members with support in the areas of Employment, Housing, Justice, and Addictions and Mental Health. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **SOAR**
- **Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN):** The Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) is a province-wide organization that brings together businesses and Employment Service Providers to increase employment opportunities for job seekers who have a disability. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **ODEN, Ontario Disability Employment Network**
- **Partners 4 Planning:** Partners for Planning is a national non-profit organization that supports people with a developmental disability and their families to be proactive in planning for the future. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Partners 4 Planning**
- **Contact Brant:** Helps families navigate community support for behavioural, developmental, and special needs. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Contact Brant**
- **Haldimand-Norfolk REACH:** Haldimand-Norfolk REACH is a multi-service agency, providing children's mental health, developmental services, Autism services, youth justice services, family services, and a residential program for transitional-aged youth. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Haldimand Norfolk REACH**
- **Developmental Services Ontario:** Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) is the access point for adult developmental services funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). There are nine locations across Ontario. Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Developmental Services Ontario**

Timeframe

Resources may be accessed as early as age of 16. Speak to your **Learning Resource Teacher** to learn more and connect you to central supports.

Pathway Considerations

Workplace

Description

Students can choose to directly enter the workforce after high school. This is an opportunity to gain experience in meaningful workplace training, develop transferable skills and/or save money. This may be for a period of time before exploring other opportunities through part-time, seasonal, or full-time employment.

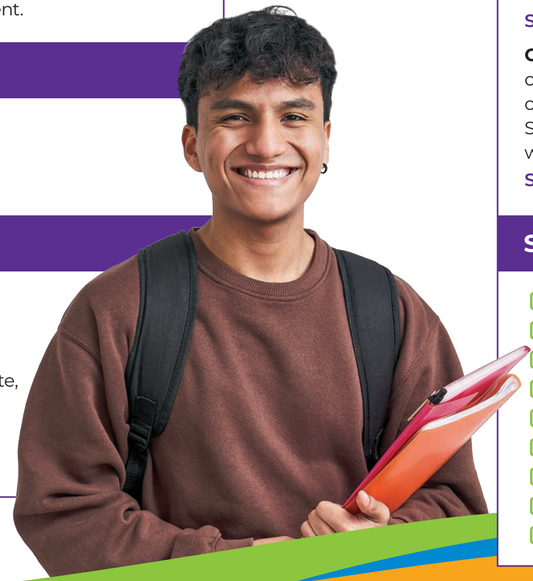
Requirements

- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Ontario Photo Card
- Some work placements require an Ontario Secondary School diploma (OSSD)

Recommendations

- Set up a bank account for direct deposit from an employer (for pay)
- Create or update your resume
- Understand your health and safety rights
- Check out the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development website, specifically the Workers Health and Safety Awareness training videos

  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Worker Health and Safety Awareness in 4 Steps – Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development**



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Workplace Pathway Considerations**

Specialized Programs for students with disabilities

The following programs are for students with disabilities seeking a potential bridge from the community pathway, to the workplace pathway

Project SEARCH: Project SEARCH offers total workplace immersion (3 work placements, 700+ hours of hands-on experience) for students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (MID, DD, ASD). Project SEARCH has the singular goal of ensuring placements of competitive employment in an integrated setting in the community.

Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Project | SEARCH - A School-to-Work Training Program**

Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE): This program focus on building skills like communication, human relations, computer literacy, and life skills in a college setting. On top of these skill-building opportunities, you can select courses in a specific area that interests you, such as Culinary Management, Law and Security, Office Administration, Social Service Work and more. Make sure to check what course specific offerings are available at the offering college before applying.

Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Colleges in Ontario | ontariocolleges.ca**

Scan the QR Code to Learn More About:

- **Halton Industry Education Council (HIEC)**
- **Programs for Workplace Students at Ontario Colleges**
- **Pathways Employment Help Center**
- **YMCA Canada Employment Services**
- **Employment Ontario Live Chat**
- **Youth in Canada**
- **Job Market Trends**
- **Grand River Employment and Training**
- **NPAAMB Indigenous Youth Employment & Training**



Pathway Considerations

Apprenticeship

Description

Apprenticeship provides targeted and specialized training in a skilled trade with 80 to 90% of the learning on-the-job with an experienced tradesperson. The remaining 10 to 20% learning is in-school at a college or approved union training centre. Students learn and earn money while working.

Students may start an apprenticeship while in high school and earn credits towards their diploma through the OYAP and OYAP FAST programs.

The four sectors of apprenticeship are:

- **Construction & Manufacturing**
- **Industrial**
- **Motive Power**
- **Service**

Requirements

- **OSSD preferred**
- **Age 16+**
- **OYAP (for grade 11 and 12 students)**



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Apprenticeship Pathway Considerations**

Application Process

Current High School Student: Speak to your guidance counsellor/Co-op teacher about **OYAP.**

OSSD Graduate: Build a network in your community with people in the industry you are interested in. Explore the trade-specific training requirements and certification information. Secure employment in the industry and future sponsorship for apprenticeship training.

- **Explore information about Skilled Trades – Trades information**
- **Secured an apprenticeship? Register with Skilled Trades Ontario Apprenticeship**
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Skilled Trades Ontario** and **OYAP**

Time Frame

- **Duration is dependent on the trade and occupation.**

Credentials

- **Red Seal Program and Red Seal Endorsement.**

Scan the QR Code to Learn More About:

- **OYAP in Grand Erie**
- **ApprenticeSearch.com**
- **Canadian Association of Women in Construction (CAWIC)**
- **Skilled Trades Exploration for Newcomers**
- **Support Ontario Youth**
- **myBlueprint Skilled Trades Site**



Pathway Considerations

University

Description

University provides students with the opportunity to explore an academic subject area, with an emphasis on independent learning and research. The subject of study is not always specific to a particular occupation, but certain careers require a university education in order to pursue them.

Requirements

- **Minimum of 6 Grade 12 U/M courses are required to apply, including Grade 12 English**
- **Most universities require a 70%+ in 4U English**
- **Check admission requirements for each program and institution that interests you.**

Application Process

- Students apply through the Ontario Universities' Application Centre. **Scan the QR Code to learn more about Undergraduate Application Guide | Ontario Universities' Application Centre**
- Applications are received until January
- Offers of admission communicated February-May
- Universities must notify applicants of their application status by late May (students will either receive an offer of admission, a refusal, or a deferral)
- Students must accept offers online by the deadline date indicated in the offer
- All offers are considered conditional based on the completion of all graduation requirements and other conditions stated in the offer



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about University Pathway Considerations

Credentials and Time Frame

- **Undergraduate degree (3-4 years)**
- **Honours Bachelor's degree programs (4 years)**
- **Graduate programs – Master's Degree (1-2 years)**
- **Doctoral programs (3-7 years)**

Scan the QR Code to Learn More About:

- **Ontario Universities' Info (OUInfo):** Explore OUInfo for program overview and admission requirements, and links to each university's Accessibility, Indigenous Student Resources, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion departments.
- **University, College and Career Resources**
- **University Study:** Learn more about universities (private and public) in Canada.
- **Want to Play College Sports?** Visit the NCAA website.
- **Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities:** Know what disability related services are available to you at a post-secondary institution – financial aid, academic support, accessibility services, and mental well-being
- **Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program (APSIP):** A consortium of Indigenous Recruiters for numerous colleges, universities, and polytechnics. Check the website for tour dates in the Grand Erie District School Board area.

Applying to Universities Throughout Canada?

- You can apply to the following **out-of-province universities** through the Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC): *Acadia University, Bishop's University, University of British Columbia, Concordia University, Dalhousie University, McGill University, Saint Mary's University, Simon Fraser University, and The University of Victoria.* All other Canadian universities outside of Ontario you must apply directly to the university.

Pathway Considerations

College

Description

College programs focus on occupation-driven learning with a blend of academic learning and practical skills training. Additionally, they focus on developing technical and occupational skills required for your chosen career area.

Classes are often led by instructors with professional experience in the industry. Many college programs offer a co-op component to allow students to gain valuable experience in their chosen field before graduating.

Colleges:

- **Preparation Programs**
- **Pre-university programs**
- **Academic Upgrading**
- **Transfer Programs**
- **Collaborative Programs – between a college and university**
- **Degree Programs**

Private Career Colleges:

- **Certificate and diploma programs in specific fields (arts, business, service, trades, etc.)**

Requirements

- **Completion of an OSSD, Grade 12 English (or Grade 12 French) and enrollment in either:**
  - College (C)
  - Mixed (M)
  - Open (O)
  - University (U)
  - Combination of the course levels listed
  - **Note:** Degree programs at college require six U/M Grade 12 courses for admission



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about College Pathway Considerations

Application Process

- **Students apply through the Ontario Colleges website. Check out: ontariocolleges.ca**
- **Students can apply to a maximum of five college programs**
- **Students may begin applying in October of their graduating year**
  - Pay attention to firm application deadlines for “highly competitive” programs
  - All other programs remain “open” until the program is full
- **General application submit by date is end of January**

Credentials and Time Frame

- **Certificates** (range from 3 to 12 months)
- **Pre-programs** (1-2 years)
- **Diplomas** (2 years)
- **Advanced Diplomas** (3 years)
- **Degrees** (4 years)
- **Transfer programs** (4-5 years) – time to earn a diploma or degree at one institution and second credential at another partner institution.



Scan the QR Code to Learn More About:

- **Ontario Colleges (by OCAS)**
- **Programs for Workplace Students at Ontario Colleges**
- **Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities**
- **Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program (APSIP)**

Pathway Considerations

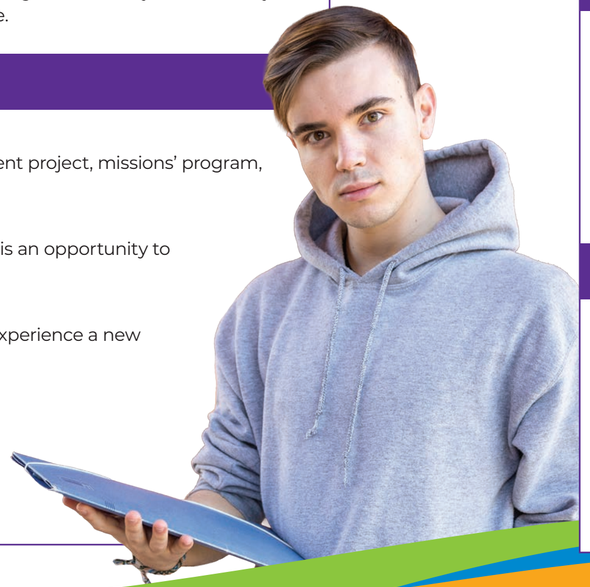
Other Opportunities

Description

Consider a gap-year to change possible barriers to opportunities. A gap year is a break after secondary school before making the commitment to a post-secondary pathway. This is time to figure out who you are, what your opportunities are, what you want to become and what you need to get there.

What can you do on a gap year?

- **Volunteer**
  Volunteer in your community or abroad through a community development project, missions' program, exchange or medial program.
- **Work**
  Work away from home or at home to broaden your financial options. This is an opportunity to save for the career path of your choice.
- **Travel**
  Travel to different parts of the world to learn another language, study, or experience a new culture.
- **Explore**
  Explore a skilled trade, trial a career or participate in an internship.
- **Certified Program**
  Consider a program that provides you with opportunities to develop your skills, engage in community service, mentorship, travel, and work terms.



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Other Opportunities** for **Pathway Considerations**

What are the benefits?

- **Gain skills including independence, responsibility, adaptability, organization, communication, teamwork, and self-awareness through exploring who you want to become**
- **Opportunity to further explore your pathway and areas of interest or passion**

Considerations

You will need to have supports in place before taking a gap year. These supports may aid you in pursuing post-secondary after a gap year.

- **Talk to your guidance counsellor.**
- **Talk to others who have experienced a gap year**
- **Set goals and create an action plan (including how you will fund this year).**

If you have applied and received an admission offer, directly reach out to the institution to learn more. You may be allowed to defer your admission.

Scan the QR Code to Learn More About:

- **Canadian Gap Year Association:** A non-profit organization supporting families and students in making purposeful post-secondary decisions.
- **Discover Year:** Helping young adults better understand what they want in life and build the skills they need to go out and get it.
- **International Experience Canada (IEC):** A government program (18-35 yrs.) designed to help you gain international work experience, improve language skills and work in Canada.
- **Volunteer Canada:** Volunteer Canada works with corporate, charity, non-profit, and education partners nationwide to strengthen the quality, quantity, and accessibility of volunteering.

Secondary Programming

Course Selection

OSSD, OSSC and Certificate of Accomplishments requirements.

Effective in 2024, students must complete **30 credits** to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). That's **17 compulsory** credits plus **13 elective** credits.

Compulsory Credits (Total Of 17)

- 4 Credits in **English** (1 credit per grade)*
- 3 Credits in **Math** (at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)
- 2 Credits in **Science**
- 1 Credit in **The Arts**
- 1 Credit in **Canadian Geography** (Grade 9)
- 1 Credit in **Canadian History** (Grade 10)
- 1 Credit in **French as a Second Language**
- 1 Credit in **Health and Physical Education**
- .5 Credit in **Career Studies**
- .5 Credit in **Civics**
- 1 Credit in **Technology Education** (Grade 9 or 10)
- 1 Additional credit from the **STEM-Related** course group

*All Grade 11 students will complete **English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices (NBE3U/NBE3C/NBE3E)** as their compulsory English credit.

Ontario Secondary School Course Diploma (OSSD)

Students will earn an OSSD by completing a minimum of 30 credits and involvement requirements.

Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC)

Students may be granted an OSSC by earning a minimum of 14 credits, including seven compulsory credits.

Certificate of Accomplishment

Students may be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment if leaving secondary school at age 21 without having met the requirements for the OSSD or OSSC.



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Course Selection**

STEM-Related Course Group

- **Business Studies**
- **Computer Studies**
- **Cooperative Education**
- **Mathematics** (in addition to the three compulsory credits currently required)
- **Science** (in addition to the two compulsory credits currently required)
- **Technological Education** (in addition to the one compulsory credit required)

Other Graduation Requirements

- **Elective Credits**
  In addition to 17 compulsory credits, students also earn 13 elective credits. These credits can be earned in a variety of subjects.
- **Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)**
  Students must complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test as a graduation requirement. Those who don't pass on the first try will have an opportunity to rewrite the test or complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course.

Other Graduation Requirements

- **eLearning**
  Students must complete a minimum of two eLearning courses to meet graduation requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).
- **Community Involvement Activities**
  Students must complete 40 hours of community involvement as a requirement to graduate. Download the **Community Involvement Activities Completion Form**. If you choose to go above and beyond in your volunteer work during high school, you can earn a **Minister's Certificate of Recognition for Community Involvement** when you graduate.
- **Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement**
  Students who entered secondary school September 2025 and did not complete the Career Studies (GLC2O) course before September 2026 are required to complete the **Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement** as part of the Career Studies (GLC2O) course.

For more information about earning your Ontario Secondary School Course Diploma (OSSD) visit:

ontario.ca/page/high-school-graduation-requirements

Secondary Programming

How do I Pick my Pathway?

Choosing your career pathway is an exciting journey that involves exploring your interests, strengths, and values. It is important to research different careers, seek advice from mentors, and gain hands-on experience through co-op or part-time jobs. Remember, your career path may change over time, so stay open to new opportunities and be willing to adapt as you grow. As you explore your pathway consider the following:

Pathway Planning

- Talk to a Guidance Counsellor
- Talk to your Specialized Services Transition Navigator
- Take Co-op
- Explore a trade
- Take a tour at a post-secondary institution
- Talk to graduates
- Engage in Career Coaching sessions
- Explore opportunities in your area

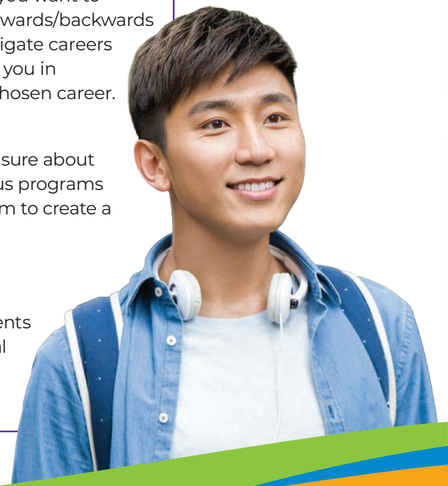


Scan the QR code above for a copy of the latest Forwards/ Backwards Planning Guide

Forwards/Backwards Planning

Whether you know what career you want to pursue or you are unsure, the forwards/backwards planning resources help you navigate careers that may interest you or support you in planning your pathway to your chosen career.

- **Forward planning**
  Supports students who are unsure about their future by exploring various programs and occupations, allowing them to create a flexible high school plan.
- **Backwards planning**
  Ideal for students with a clear career goal, as it ensures students meet all necessary educational requirements to achieve their career path.



Secondary Programming

Graduation Supports

Indigenous Graduation Coaches

Your school's Indigenous Graduation coach's role is to build positive relationships with Indigenous students, families, and communities. The Indigenous Graduation Coach acts as a role model for students in pathways planning related to graduation and post-secondary destinations and provides cultural teachings and programming opportunities for students to support connection to their cultural identity.

Specialized Services Transition Navigator

Supports students with disabilities and their caregivers in navigating pathway opportunities, critical life transitions, and application processes. Collaborates with school teams, provincial agencies, post-secondary institutions, and community partners to support preparation for adult life, including access to community services, further education, employment, and independent living opportunities.

Secondary School Team

Your school's Guidance counsellor, Learning Resource Teacher (LRT), and Student Success Teacher (SST) are available to support you with pathway planning, course selection, strategies, and resources to achieve your goals, scholarship advice, self-advocacy tips, and contacts with community partners. They may also connect you with further supports if needed, such as Child and Youth Workers, Attendance Counsellors, Public Health Workers, Social Workers, and more.



Secondary Programming

Alternative Programs

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

- **OYAP**
  The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) allows you to explore a skilled trade and begin an apprenticeship while working toward your OSSD. OYAP also provides you with on-site work experience and the opportunity to register as an apprentice with an employer.
  Requirements: OYAP students may begin work placements at 15 years old with 14 credits completed, though some workplaces may require a minimum age of 16.
- **OYAP FAST: A New Pathway to the Skilled Trades**
  Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program – Focused Apprenticeship Skills Training (FAST) is an accelerated stream within OYAP. The FAST program will allow students in grades 11 and 12 to obtain additional apprenticeship learning through cooperative education credits while completing their OSSD.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **OYAP**

To enroll in this program students will be required to:

- Meet the OYAP eligibility requirements
- Have signed parent/guardian consent to participate in OYAP-FAST (if under 18)
- Meet with the Guidance Department to plan student timetable
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Alternative Programs**

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) is a program that combines training and real-world experience in a student's subject of choice. Students gain valuable industry experience through co-op placements and learn about career options. Upon completion of the program, students will obtain a red seal on their diploma.
Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)**

School College Work Initiative (SCWI) Dual Credit and School Within a Post-Secondary Institution (SWAPSI)

- **School Within a Post-Secondary Institution (SWAPSI)**
  A program designed for students requiring an alternative secondary school environment to complete their high school credits and wanting a post-secondary experience. Students are enrolled in secondary and post-secondary courses but attend these classes at the post-secondary institution.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **School Within a Post-Secondary Institution (SWAPSI)**
- **Dual Credit**
  An opportunity to earn a college and secondary credit at the same time. Students receive college-level instruction aligned with the college curriculum, with the support of a secondary teacher. The dual credit program is often delivered at the same time and location as a secondary course. However, certain opportunities offer an on-site experience in a college lab. This program is available to Grade 12 students approaching graduation.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Dual Credit**



Secondary Programming

Enhanced Programming

Scan the QR Code to Learn More about Enhanced Programming

Grand Erie Learning Alternatives (GELA)

- **GEFLEX Alternative Classrooms**

  This program is for students in grades 11 and 12 who are working towards an OSSD and require an alternative learning environment to support their learning needs. Speak to the guidance department at your home school to request a referral to GEFLEX to determine if this program is the right fit for you.

- **Adult Education**

  Grand Erie Learning Alternatives (GELA) Adult Education offers programs and courses that are designed to help adults achieve their educational goals, whether finishing off a high school diploma or upgrading courses required for future pathways. Adult Education offers in-person and eLearning options to meet individual needs. Contact Adult Education at **adulteducation@granderie.ca** or **519-759-0000** to set up an appointment to speak with the Adult Guidance Counsellor.

- **NATIONS/New Start Alternative Program**

  This program is for secondary students from Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississauga's if the Credit First Nation, First Nations, Metis, or Inuit and who are working towards an OSSD and require an re-engagement, attendance support and alternative learning models which includes smaller and more flexible learning environment. The program includes experiential and culturally relevant learning opportunities. Speak to the **guidance department** at your home school to learn more about this program.

- **Turning Point**

  This program is for secondary students at Valley Height Secondary School working towards an OSSD or OSSC and who require an alternative learning environment to be successful. Speak to the **guidance department** to determine if this program is the right fit for you.



Well-Being Supports

Scan the QR Code to Learn More about Well-Being Supports

Supporting well-being through transitions in secondary and post-secondary education involves being mindful of both the challenges and opportunities that come with change. These transitions can bring new environments, responsibilities, and expectations, which can affect our mental and emotional health.

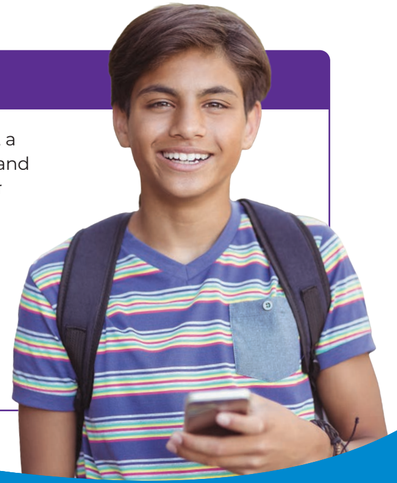
To navigate your pathway successfully, it is important to focus on building strong support systems, maintaining a balanced routine, and staying connected to your sense of purpose and identity. It's important to reflect on what helps you feel grounded—whether that's through friendships, hobbies, or self-care practices—and to seek out resources that promote resilience and growth.

Mental health is essential to our overall well-being. When we have good mental health, we experience a sense of purpose, belonging, and community. We are better equipped to manage everyday stresses and challenges, and we can thrive both academically and personally.

Supportive Mental Health and Well-Being Resources

The following resources come from **School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO)**, a comprehensive online resource for students, parents/caregivers, educators and professionals. Whatever your role, there are resources to support you in your well-being.

- **No Problem Too Big or Too Small**
- **Reaching Out**
- **Self-Care 101**
- **Know Yourself - My Mental Health Cues Activity**
- **Know Yourself - Finding My Circle of Support Activity**
- **My Circle of Support**



Funding Your Post-Secondary Pathway

While the cost of post-secondary education can feel daunting, it's important to know that there are numerous resources, planning tools, and financial support options available to help you manage and prepare for these expenses. Consider one or all of the following to financially prepare for post-secondary.

Explore myBlueprint

- **Money and Budgets**
  A video introducing the money section and the Budgets tool.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **myBlueprint.ca | Money & Budgets**
- **Financial Literacy Student Guide**
  A series of activities designed to help students grasp key aspects of financial literacy, including budgeting, saving, borrowing, overcoming financial barriers, and setting goals. The ultimate goal is for students to apply this knowledge and these skills to create a detailed financial plan and presentation for their first year after graduation.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **myBlueprint.ca Financial Literacy Student Guide**
- **Scholarships**
  The myBlueprint scholarships are available to grade 12 students to apply, to support funding their post-secondary education.

Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Funding Your Post-Secondary Pathway**

Scholarships, Bursaries and Grand Erie Supports

- **Grand Erie – Scholarships**
  Check out available scholarships on the Grand Erie website.
- **Guidance Counsellors**
  Speak to the Guidance department at your school to learn about school specific opportunities.
- **Scholarship Databases**
  Explore more scholar opportunities through databases such as:
  ScholarshipsCanada - Find scholarships, student awards, bursaries and financial aid
  Find scholarships and student awards in Canada - Student Awards



Funding Your Post-Secondary Pathway

Scan the QR Code to Learn More about **Funding Your Post-Secondary Pathway**

Government Loans and Bursaries

- **Ontario Student Assistance Program**
  A financial aid program that can help you pay for college or university.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **OSAP: Ontario Student Assistance Program | ontario.ca**
- **Ontario Learn and Stay Grant**
  Provides funding for students studying in priority postsecondary programs in underserved and growing communities in Northern, Southwestern and Eastern Ontario.
  Explore the requirements and what is covered under this grant.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about **Ontario Learn and Stay Grant | ontario.ca**
- **Financial Aid from Schools**
  Check with a college or university to see what financial aid programs they offer.
- **Emergency Loans**
  Most post-secondary institutions also offer emergency loans. For example, you could be eligible for a short-term loan (90 days) to cover tuition, if you're waiting for OSAP to arrive. Start with your post-secondary institution's financial aid office to learn what is available
- **The Grand River Post Secondary Education Office (GRPSEO)**
  Provides financial education assistance for students looking to continue their education at a post-secondary institution. Contact GRPSEO for requirements.
  Scan the QR Code to learn more about
  Grand River Post Secondary Education Office (GRPSEO)

Financial Institutions

Talk to your financial institution for more information.

- **Registered Education Savings Plans**
- **Line of Credit**
- **Loans**
- **Investment(s)**

Self-Funded

Save money from a summer job or job you hold throughout the year to help pay for your education.



Frequently Asked Questions

How do we switch our child/student's level/ pathway now that their post secondary decision has changed?

Answer: Speak to the Guidance Department at your Secondary School. They will guide you through which course and opportunities are available for navigating a new post-secondary pathway.

What resources and support systems are available at colleges and universities to help our child succeed academically and personally?

Answer: Each post-secondary institution offers a variety of supports including Accessibility Departments, Student Unions, Registrars and Financial Aid offices. Explore your future post-secondary institution website for more information. More details of supports will be listed in your program offer in the Spring.

What courses keep the most doors open?

Answer: Taking a mixture of **M** (University/ College), **O** (Open) and **U** (University) courses keeps the college, university and workplace pathways open. Explore program requirements at colleges and universities to determine pre-requisite expectations.



What is the difference between taking Applied, Academic, College, Mixed, Open, University?

Answer: Explore the course descriptions in Secondary school courses and related procedures | Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2024 | ontario.ca

What are the benefits of taking a blend of in-person and eLearning (online) courses?

Answer: Students in eLearning and in-person courses develop: time management, self-discipline, collaboration, and independent learning skills. Speak to your guidance counsellor for further information.

I have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). How does that transfer to post-secondary?

Answer: Upon acceptance to your post-secondary school institution, contact the accessibility department at the post-secondary institution.

Timeline for Post-Secondary Planning

This month-by-month timeline is designed to guide Grade 12 students through the key steps of post-secondary planning. It highlights important tasks and deadlines to help you stay organized and make informed decisions about your future.

Community Involvement hours are a graduation requirement and should be submitted as soon as they are completed. Consider submitting each month to keep track of your earned hours.

September

- Ensure you have all required courses for graduation and your planned programs and pathways
- Attend Ontario Universities info sessions and regional fairs (dates vary)
- OUAC site opens for university applications
- Apply for your **Ontario Photo Card**
- OYAP Participant forms due (Semester I)

October

- Attend Ontario Colleges info sessions and regional fairs (dates vary-speak to your Guidance department for support)
- OCAS site opens for college applications

November

- Seek apprenticeships or work possibilities
- Visit Universities and Colleges
- Apply for your **Social Insurance Number (SIN)**
- Accelerated OYAP application and training agreement due
- Attend Indigenous University, College, and polytechnics recruiter information sessions hosted by The Aboriginal Post Secondary Information Program **(APSIP)**

December

- Visit Colleges and Universities
- Check scholarships/bursaries and awards for specific universities and colleges
- Explore Grand Erie's Scholarship page for potential scholarships/bursaries
- Complete Worker Health and Safety Awareness modules to understand your rights in the workplace

Scan the QR Code to Learn More about the Timeline for Post-Secondary Planning

January

- Study for exams and prepare for culminating tasks
- OUAC applications due mid-January (confirm date with Guidance) for equal consideration
- Verify 6 U/M courses for university or 6 Senior C/U/M courses for colleges
- Check scholarships/bursaries and awards for specific universities and colleges
- Explore **Grand Erie's Scholarship page** for potential scholarships/bursaries

February

- OCAS applications early February (confirm date with Guidance) for equal consideration
- OYAP Participant forms due (Semester II)
- Complete course selection, if needed for a Grade 12+ year
- Apply for your **Ontario Photo Card**

March

- Complete any supplementary applications
- Explore **Grand Erie's Scholarship page** for potential scholarships/bursaries; Speak to your Guidance department for school specific scholarships/bursaries or awards
- Visit colleges and universities over March break

April

- Explore **Grand Erie's Scholarship page** for potential scholarships/bursaries
- Visit colleges and universities
- Open a bank account
- Apply for your **Social Insurance Number (SIN)**

May and June

- Verify all graduation requirements are met and submitted to Guidance
- Accept offers - verify specific timelines
- Apply for OSAP
- Apply for residence or look for housing possibilities
- Complete **Worker Health and Safety Awareness modules** to understand your rights in the workplace

Recently Arrived Students to Canada

- Obtain transcripts from previous schooling (sealed and a certified English translation if transcripts are in another language)
- Complete Grade 11–12 for an OSSD or get your educational documents evaluated by a credential assessment service (e.g., **ICAS** or **WES**).
- Check if your post-secondary institution requires proof of English Proficiency assessment (e.g., **IELTS**, **TOEFL** or **CAEL**)

Community Living Timeline

Transitioning to adult services is a process that takes time and requires planning. When you turn 18, children services will end, and new adult services may begin. A successful transition begins as early as possible to prepare you for adulthood. The following timeline shows important transition periods organized by age.

Timelines

High School Entry

- Request a psychological assessment that includes cognitive and adaptive function scores for Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).
- Update your transition plan and Individual Education Plan (IEP) with your school team

Age 16

- Contact DSO for short intake.
- Mail the requested information to your DSO, including your psychological assessment.
- Your DSO will mail you a letter to confirm if you are eligible for adult developmental services at 18.
- Investigate day programs and/or post secondary options with your school team.



Timelines

Age 17.5

- Complete your Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) application (separate from DSO).
- Your doctor will need to complete an eligibility package if you don't have your DSO letter that confirms that you are eligible to receive adult developmental services at 18.

Age 18

- If you are eligible, your monthly ODSP will begin.

Age 18+

- If your application has been started:
- An appointment will be set up with a DSO assessor to complete the application package.
- Your DSO assessor will send you an Assessor Summary Report (ASR).

Timelines

Age 18-21

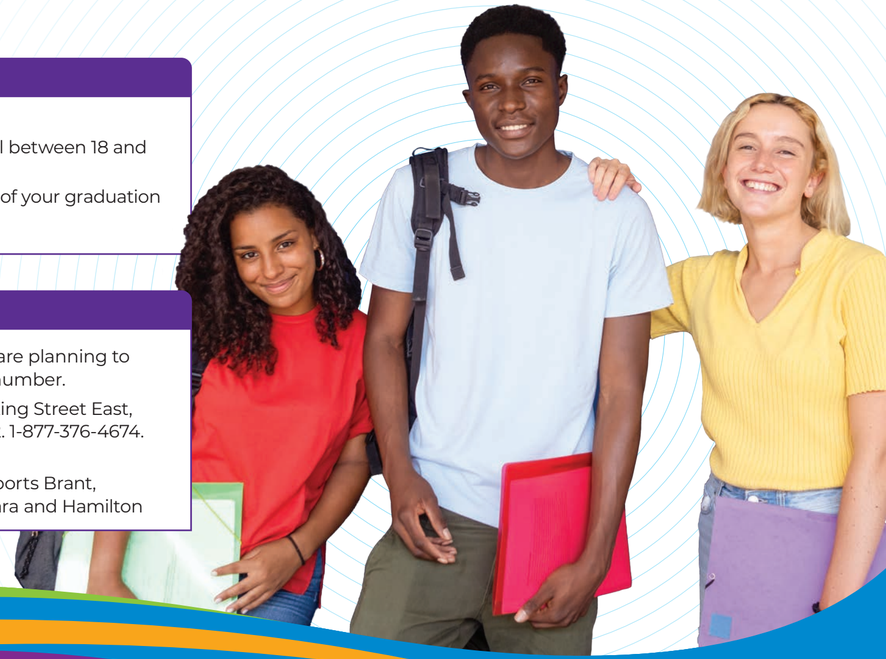
- Graduation from high school between 18 and the year you turn 21.
- Inform your DSO and ODSP of your graduation date 6 months prior

Updating Information

Contact your local DSO if you are planning to move or change your phone number.

DSO Hamilton-Niagara. 140 King Street East, Suite 4, Hamilton, On. L8N 1B2. 1-877-376-4674. (1-877-DSO-HNR4)

- DSO Hamilton-Niagara Supports Brant, Brantford, Haldimand, Niagara and Hamilton





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