



resourcing
inclusive
communities

An initiative of Family Advocacy

Creating a Vision Statement

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Creating a Vision Statement

Big dreams, high expectations and full lives cannot be achieved without clear vision.

A Vision Statement:

➤ Gives Clear Direction

Being clear about what the good life looks like makes it more likely to be achieved. No hoped for destination can be reached without a clear map or road for the journey.

➤ Reminds Us of the Big Picture

Daily life has a way of burying us under the tyranny of the regular routine, the unavoidable crises and the pressing obligations. In all the busyness and emergency, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture and what really matters. A written vision is a reminder to what is worth fighting for and an inspiration to aim high and persevere.

➤ Helps with Decision Making

Having a vision is a good start to setting some clear, positive goals to aim for. It can also help you make decisions about particular directions to take and opportunities to pursue or decline depending on how they align with the vision for the future.

➤ Can Be Shared with Others

A written vision can be shared with family and friends, or be developed with their input. Sharing it with others can initiate people into the positive future you foresee for your family member and help develop some supporters for the journey.

It can also be shared with people who will have a key role in your family member's life so that they can begin to appreciate what things are of upmost importance for their life and future. Some families have shared their vision with teachers, principals, doctors, coaches, children's workers, paid support workers etc. to clearly communicate high expectations for an individual's inclusion in everyday life and to inform them why you are choosing a particular direction.

Example Vision Statements

Our family's vision for Alex consists of three main aspects:

1. Identity. That Alex will be known individually. People will get the opportunity to know the quirky, joyful, loving adult he is. Instead of only being seen in terms of his disability, he will be seen in terms of his individual identity. He will retain a strong sense of his own identity.
2. Connection. That Alex will have many levels of connection with people, from passing everyday transactions and regular acquaintances through shared activity and places to enduring and satisfying friendships and family ties.
3. Enrichment. That his life has variety, personal interest, authentic community engagement, fun, skill development and other learning opportunities, risk and security in balance.

OUR VISION FOR MEGAN

We envision Megan being with her peers throughout her education and being valued alongside them.

We see Megan having a sense of belonging within her class and this being reflected in her physical space and her participation in the same activities as her peers. We see unlimited potential in Megan and expect more of her rather than less, we assume she can do something and see, rather than she can't, which results in her missing out.

We envision Megan leading a happy and fulfilled life immersed in the community, being recognised and respected for whom she is and what she has to offer.

We envision Megan working in a practical role, where she can be approached by the community and share her skills and characteristics.

We envision Megan living with her family and friends and the people she loves. She will have choice and freedom to develop her own daily life, hobbies and routine.

Our Vision for Jacob

1. To grow in our family as a happy and healthy person both in mind and body.
2. To be included in all aspects of life, be it school, socially or the workplace.
3. To reach his full potential and achieve this working alongside his peers.
4. For other children to see Jacob's worth and who he really is and want to get to know Jacob as a friend, as a result of seeing that worth.
5. As Jacob's parents we want him to be a little boy, adolescent and adult first and have Down's Syndrome second.
6. For Jacob to continue to show us just what he can do and be given every opportunity to try.
7. Our long-term vision for Jacob is that he will graduate from mainstream inclusive schooling. Having been given the tools he needs, then go on to enjoy a full and happy life in the workforce and have the independence of choosing which way his life will go.
8. Above all we envisage that Jacob will be 'one of the gang' and not much different to each of us who have hopes, fears, aspirations and a love of life.

Jack's Vision

Jack is an important member of his local community where his presence is welcomed and known, where he is missed when he is not around and where he is loved.



As Jack moves through his teenage years we want him to continue to be a vibrant part of his local community where he continues to develop relationships, make contributions that are appreciated and broaden his roles that are typical for his age. For example, being a friend, brother, year 7 student, sports fan, soccer player, Jujitsu student, swim club member are roles that are important now. We want Jack's education at his local school to be rich in learning through being a true member of his class and the broader school community.

We see school to be a place where Jack's friendships will flourish and his academic education in line with the National curriculum will be supported. We want school to be a place that nourishes Jack's confidence, where he experiences success, learns from disappointments and grows alongside his peers of the same age without a disability.

We envisage Jack will hold valued roles with an understanding of the responsibilities associated with the role. This will help Jack develop the skills and competencies in preparation for adult life.

We see this year to further progress Jack's reading skills. Being a competent reader will contribute to Jack's chances of attaining his driver's license, gaining the independence to navigate the community and open up options for future employment.

When Jack becomes a young man he hopes to get his first job at the local café or as a lifeguard, he is keeping his options open. Jack also dreams of pursuing a career in business. Jack aspires to attend university or complete a trade that will open doors for his future. We are confident Jack will continue to be an active and curious young man with many interests and broad life experiences that will see him

well through his enthusiasm for life.

We envision Jack initially living the single life, flatting with other University students, enjoying the nightlife, actively involved in his community. This may lead to a life of marriage and living in a home of his own that Jack dreams will be by the beach.

Whatever Jack decides, we will support him to have the kind of home and work that is meaningful, that upholds his hopes and dreams that encapsulates the good things of life. Jack's future is full of possibilities – the world is his oyster; he just needs to dive deep with our support to grasp it with both hands. We are looking forward to watching Jack's future unfold and discover where he makes his mark in the world.

Things to Consider

1. Involve the person with disability in the development of the vision to the extent possible.
2. Involve other people, especially the person's family and friends, to create more ideas and build support for the vision for the person's life.
3. Write the vision down as it clarifies thinking, can be referred and can be shared with others.
4. Review the vision and update it. Especially at key transition points in a person's life i.e. starting school, starting high school, leaving school, moving into their own home etc.

Considering the Person

To get some ideas flowing about what to incorporate in the written vision for your family member, it is good to reflect on who they are as a unique individual.

The vision is all about them and the life they will lead, so considering their interests, likes and dislikes, gifts, qualities and contributions is the best place to start when beginning to draft a vision.

To get started, write your family member's name in the title space and answer the following questions.

Who is.....?

Who are the most important people in their life?

What are the positive qualities and gifts that they have?

What things do they like?

What things do they dislike?



What makes them happy?



What makes them unhappy or anxious?



What are some of the good things in their life that could be developed and explored further?



What things would they like to learn or develop skills in?



What are their most valued possessions?



What are their hopes and dreams?



Adapted from Sullivan, Belonging Initiative, 2010

Considering the Good Life

What would the good life be for? (*Insert the person's name*) Consider the typical things that other people their age enjoy and experience. For example, a typical ten-year-old likes; friends, play dates, new experiences, things to learn in music, sports, dance, art, excursions, having friends over and joining in with others at school.

List the typical things that people.....age enjoy and experience?

List 5 to 10 things that you would like to see present in the everyday life of.....

What would you like other people to know about.....
in-order for her/him to experience a good life?

[Empty dashed box for writing]

If you were to give a message to.....about his/her future, what would the message be?

[Empty dashed box for writing]

What are they key things you would hope would continue inlife if you were no longer around?

[Empty dashed box for writing]

Adapted from Sullivan, Belonging Initiative, 2010

