

# The Road to Independent Living

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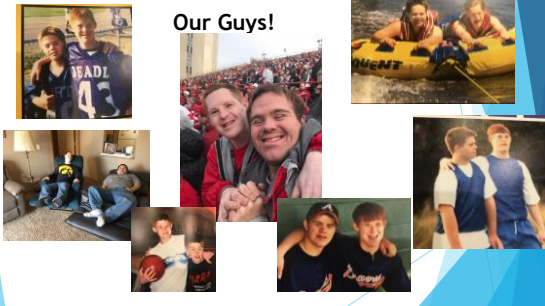
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## Our Guys!



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## We are not Super Moms or Super Families

- ▶ We are just two Moms who have cried together, fought battles together and just enjoy being together.
- ▶ Our sons are your typical adult with Down syndrome. The school system sure didn't think they were outstanding. (More on that later)
- ▶ Nothing has been easy. Perseverance is everything.
- ▶ Trial and Error!!!
- ▶ Common sense suggestions for children and adults with I/DD to help them eventually live an independent life.
- ▶ Maybe apartment living is not your goal, however these common sense ideas will help make your child a more responsible member of your family, an EFH (Extended Family Home), Group Home etc.
- ▶ Learning responsibility will also help your child have a competitive job.
- ▶ Example: At an IPP Jerus said his goal was to live in an apartment. When his service coordinator asked why he wasn't living in an apartment, he replied "My Mom".

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### Could they do it?

- ▶ We had no idea if the guys could live independently
- ▶ Initially we only had a 3 month lease. If they failed we would only have 3 months of rent for the parents to pay.
- ▶ Be willing to take the risk of failure. We let our typical children do it. Sometimes we learn best from our mistakes.
- ▶ Rule #1 - living together could not change Jerus and Justin's relationship
- ▶ Rule #2 - our sons living together could not change Janell and Kim's relationship

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### Jerus Story

- ▶ Prenatal diagnosis.
- ▶ Typical kindergarten vs. Self Contained Classroom
- ▶ Repeating kindergarten at a different school
- ▶ Moving again in elementary to Rohwer
- ▶ Learning the alphabet and reading
- ▶ Middle School PE
- ▶ Middle School Cooking
- ▶ Middle School Lunch
- ▶ Changing Middle Schools
- ▶ Inclusion works even later in life

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### Justin Story

- ▶ Eats Lunch with his winter coat on.
- ▶ Will never talk and be understood by anyone except his immediate family.
- ▶ Might get hurt in a typical PE class - elementary school
- ▶ Sight words only, no phonics
- ▶ Little practice with writing until middle school
- ▶ PE class - middle school
- ▶ We've never had a student manager with I/DD - middle school
- ▶ Cannot go on a typical 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip
- ▶ Cannot go on 8<sup>th</sup> grade Outdoor Education Trip
- ▶ Falsifying IEP/Mayo

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### Start Them Young - Elementary or before

- ▶ Treat them like their siblings
- ▶ Setting the table.
- ▶ Picking up toys
- ▶ Putting dirty dishes in sink
- ▶ Emptying the dishwasher
- ▶ Vacuum - hand held step vacuum
- ▶ Vacuum - large vacuum
- ▶ Match socks - buying different brands
- ▶ Folding laundry
- ▶ Weather - what are you going to need?

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### Middle School

- ▶ Leave home alone for 15 minutes and keep increasing
- ▶ Prepare a simple lunch
- ▶ Dusting
- ▶ Cleaning mirrors in bathroom
- ▶ Order their own meal in a restaurant
- ▶ Making bed
- ▶ Microwave - popcorn
- ▶ Backpacks ready for school
- ▶ Sharp knife to cut food
- ▶ Weather - clothes to wear

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### High School

- ▶ Checking Account - Debit Card - writing checks
- ▶ Seeing a movie without adult supervision
- ▶ Getting a snack at high school football or basketball game w/o parent
- ▶ Expanding the number of hours staying home by their self
- ▶ Grocery shopping
- ▶ Empty Trash
- ▶ Take trash to the curb
- ▶ Recycle
- ▶ Fill medicine dispenser
- ▶ Pop top lids - Can Opener
- ▶ Use cell phone
- ▶ Alarms Clock - getting up - watching clock for rides
- ▶ Carry wallet
- ▶ Independent walking, getting home from school etc.

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**Transition**

- ▶ Buying own food at the grocery store for lunch at transition with SSI money
- ▶ Packing own lunch every day
- ▶ Washing and drying own clothes
  - Socks and Underwear - new every year
- ▶ Staying home over night alone
- ▶ Changing Sheets on bed
- ▶ Responsibility for RX
- ▶ Use a house key vs. garage code
- ▶ Order and pay for food at fast restaurants
- ▶ Practice using Metro Bus line
- ▶ Clean own room and bathroom
- ▶ Weekend alone

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**21 - out of school and falling off the face of the earth**

- ▶ Developmental Disabilities Adults Day Waiver - DDAD
  - Adult Companion Services & Adult Day Services
  - Day Habilitation Services
  - Respite Services
- ▶ Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities Waiver - CDD
  - Everything listed under DDAD
  - Homemaker
  - In-Home Residential Habilitation in your private home
    - Jerus Story
    - Don't EVER turn this down
  - Residential Habilitation in a provider-owned home
    - Justin Story

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**Apartment Skills**

- ▶ Following slides are from a presentation that Jerus and Justin have done for Project Search Individuals.
- ▶ Just because your child cannot do all of these skills, does not mean they cannot move into an apartment.
- ▶ Staff can help them develop these skills.
- ▶ Consistent staff.
- ▶ It takes a long time to learn some skills.

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**Can you do the following in your current home?**

- ▶ If you are currently living with your parents, you should be able to do all of the following things.
- ▶ Why? Because you are familiar with the house you are currently living in.

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**Do you wash and dry ALL of your clothes without any help from Mom or Dad?**



- ▶ Yes? No? Need to improve?

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**Do you fold and put away your clothes? Ironing clothes for work?**



- ▶ Yes? No? Need to improve!

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### Do you vacuum and dust?

► Yes? No? Need to improve!



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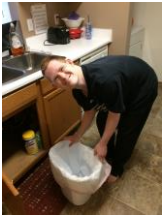
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### Do you know how to clean up a mess? Do you empty trash?



Yes? No? Need to improve?



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### Do you wash dishes? Can you use a dishwasher?



Yes?  
No?  
Need  
to  
improve



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Can you clean your toilet? Your sink?  
Your shower? Your mirror?



Yes? No? Need to improve!

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Can you put the sheets on your bed?  
Can you make your bed?  
**Too Hard?**



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Can you use a can opener? Open a pop  
top lid? Use a knife?



Yes? No? Need to improve?

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Can you fill your medicine dispenser?  
Can you take your medicine by yourself?



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Can you use a debit card? Can you write a check? Can you budget?



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Can you make a grocery list?  
Can you shop for your own groceries?



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Can you make yourself breakfast?



Be sure to eat breakfast!

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Can you make yourself lunch or dinner?



Eat Healthy!



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Can you use a microwave?  
Can you use the oven?



Yes? No? Need to improve!

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Can you use the cooktop on a stove?  
Gas or electric stove?

**This is HARD!**



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Can you go for a walk by yourself in  
your current neighborhood?



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Do you know what to do during a  
Severe Thunder Storm? Tornado?



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Have you spend at least one night home all by yourself?



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Have you spent SEVERAL nights home home alone by yourself?



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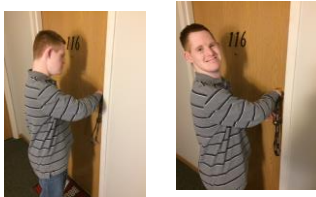
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Can you use a key to lock and unlock a door?  
Use an Intercom?



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### Finding an apartment

- ▶ Looked at corridor from 120<sup>th</sup> to 144<sup>th</sup> along Center St.
  - Need to be on a Metro bus line
  - Accessibility to other services
  - Washer and dryer in apartment
  - Secure entry
- ▶ Moved in January 4, 2014
- ▶ Jerus has had the same staff since 2011
- ▶ Justin had the same staff from 2011- August, 2018. New staff now
- ▶ Unheard of in the I/DD Community to have this staff continuity
- ▶ Social Security
- ▶ Kim cried everyday for 2 months

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### What to look for in an apartment



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### Secure Entrance where someone buzzes you to get to your apartment



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Make sure your apartment and patio are not on the first floor



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Washer and dryer in apartment



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Separate bathrooms and bedrooms if you have a roommate



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Is there a tornado shelter in the apartment building?



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Can you walk to get groceries? Eat Out?



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Need to be on the Omaha Metro Bus line for transportation and MOBY.  
Need to live within ¼ mile of a bus route.



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### Roommate Rules!

#### ROOMMATE RULES

- Clean Up After Yourself
- HAVE RESPECT
- Be Friendly
- Laugh Often
- Help Each Other
- Stay Up Late
- Work & Study Hard
- Have Fun & Make Memories
- Be Who You Are

#### HOUSE RULES

1. If you open it, close it.
2. If you turn it on, turn it off.
3. If you unlock it, lock it.
4. If you break it, fix it.
5. If you can't fix it, call someone who can.
6. If you borrow it, return it.
7. If you use it, take care of it.
8. If you make a mess, clean it up.
9. If you move it, put it back.
10. If it belongs to someone else and you want to use it, get permission.
11. If you don't know how to operate it, leave it alone.
12. If it doesn't concern you, don't mess with it.

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### Funny Moments and Some Not so Funny Moments

- ▶ Basketball cookies
- ▶ Mom it was a tough day
- ▶ Bedroom & bathroom boundaries
- ▶ Smoke Alarms & Batteries
- ▶ Spilled food on the stove burners
- ▶ Plugged sink due to neighbors 10 p.m.
- ▶ Plugged toilets
- ▶ No electricity
- ▶ Intestinal Illnesses - 4 a.m.
- ▶ Mom has the apartment key
- ▶ Hoarding food

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### Questions




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### Other Resources

Transition Tools For Nebraska Educators  
Independent Living Tab then Life Skills Inventory  
<http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1871072>

Life Skills Inventory Independent Living Skills Assessment Tool  
[http://weldre4.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_3055979/File/Life%20Skills%20Inventory.pdf](http://weldre4.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3055979/File/Life%20Skills%20Inventory.pdf)

Life Skills Checklist - pages 15-20 (which is pages 23-28 in PDF)  
<http://www2.waisman.wisc.edu/cedd/wrc/pdf/pubs/THCL.pdf>

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Good Luck! You can do this!



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