



Letting Go

The bittersweet process of "letting go" allows for time to examine the fears which surround any life change. A willingness to "let go" acknowledges feelings of success as parents, recognizes the rights, abilities, and potential of children and young adults, and sets the stage for future growth and independence.

"Letting Go" is an individual issue. It's natural to have mixed feelings about sons and daughters moving on. The feelings of joy and sorrow, fear and relief are familiar to all parents.

"Letting Go" is an issue common to all parents. When life changes occur, parents and their sons and daughters experience a wide range of feelings. The issues can become more complex and personal when disabilities and/or chronic illness are involved.

"Letting Go" is a logical outcome of normalization. It is what parents have worked on for years. In the days when people with a chronic illness or disability were educated in segregated sites and had fewer opportunities to participate in the larger community, "letting go" was perhaps easier than it is today.

"Letting Go" is parents allowing their sons and daughters to achieve degrees of independence, which is, after all, every person's right. The freedom to have opportunities to increase knowledge and develop skills promotes the growth of personal competence and genuine self-esteem.

"Letting Go" is a continuous process that occurs as children grow and mature into young adults. Believing in the abilities of children and being realistic about potential problems are important to the process. Being optimistic about finding solutions about the future makes the process easier.

When it is time for young adults to move on, parents have earned the right to rejoice in their accomplishments as parents and in the strength and abilities of their children.

Adapted from: 1991 PACER Center, Inc. 4826 Chicago Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 5417-1055; (612) 827-2966