

# MyFILE - Educators

**Take Charge. Be Prepared. Develop Independence.**

## **What is MyFILE?**

Keeping records is an essential part of life. MyFILE is a compact, portable organizer for personal records. This tool can assist in a variety of ways—organization of important records, accessing services, and learning the value of keeping important documents. MyFILE is designed for having current information available as youth/individuals go to appointments, apply for a job, keep track of medications and many additional activities.

*The MyFILE is in a messenger bag for several reasons:*

- Important records need to be protected and securely fastened.
- Assists in accessibility and ease of transfer. It can be carried across the body so hands are free, strapped to a wheelchair or walker, or carried as a briefcase.
- Having information in one place is time-saving, reassuring and builds independence.

*An important note about confidential information:* Protecting confidential information and records is a very important skill for young adults to develop. Parents and professionals are understandably concerned about a young person disclosing or losing confidential records. Use of the MyFILE provides ongoing opportunities for youth to have discussions regarding confidentiality issues, practice maintaining safety and privacy of documents, and rehearse responsible and appropriate disclosure of confidential information -- all with coaching and support from the adults in their life.

## **Why was MyFILE created?**

MyFILE was created to encourage independence for youth with special health needs. MyFILE is designed for youth preparing for transition to adulthood to begin to take responsibility and be engaged in the tracking, handling and organizing of important information about his/her life.

MyFILE was developed through collaboration with families, youth in transition and professionals to address a need for tools to teach self-advocacy and independence.

MyFILE is an adaptation of the Folder of Information of Life Experience (FILE) recordkeeping tool for families that South Dakota Parent Connection has been distributing to families for many years.

## **Structure of MyFILE**

Eighteen separate folders have a suggested list of papers, copies, records that may be kept in each folder. The list may be altered to fit the individual's life. Three blank folders will assist the user to customize the folders to specific topic areas important to him/her. Most everyone shares common categories, but personal life topics may be different. Each folder contains a business card holder to note and keep track of individuals who have been helpful. Often times, it is more comfortable to deal with the same professional in repeated interactions to establish a relationship. It is important to get in the habit of asking for business cards.

## **Some tips in developing content for MyFILE**

We recognize that youth who use MyFILE may need assistance and support learning self-advocacy and independence. Establishing the habit of putting materials into the MyFILE will take practice. Once routine is established, the ease and accessibility of having MyFILE available will assist the youth to take initiative to add necessary information. As you incorporate the use of MYFILE in your curricula and teaching, it will be a source of reference and assist with self-advocacy.

Begin with one or two folders of current interest and need for youth in your class.

Share personal real-life examples of times you have needed some of the papers or copies listed on the folders. This will help youth plan for life experiences and times when MyFILE will be useful.

Discuss changes in systems and services that youth will face in transition to adulthood. Although youth may not recognize the importance of each item on the checklist right now, the discussion and use of MyFILE will start the thinking process.

Provide the big picture first. This will help youth know the overall purpose of MyFILE. Discussing the reason for keeping certain documents and information may make it easier for youth to identify what they should be looking for, asking for, and keeping.

It is helpful to use the same process for completion of each folder/topic area since this repetition will help the youth to generalize the information and build competency in the use of their record keeping system.

It is important to engage families or others who can support youth to practice using MyFILE—parents, grandparents, foster parents, counselors, and general education teachers—depending on the support a youth may need to reach independence. Practicing will assist youth to understand the personal benefit through experience.

Providing support for the initial use of MyFILE is important. Encourage youth to utilize MyFILE on their own to help develop initiative and independence. Emphasize the importance of adding new information to MyFILE as soon as it is received. This will assist in establishing a pattern or habit that will keep MyFILE current.

Emphasize the importance of taking MyFILE to the doctor, appointments, emergency room/hospital visits, work, school, or other meetings that may require some of the documents and information it holds.

## **Folders in MyFILE**

*This recordkeeping system helps sort and retrieve information related to these topics:*

### **High School**

- Business card holder
- Current Class Schedule
- High School Course Planning Records and Information
- School-Related Activities Records (ex: sports, music, clubs)
- Most Recent Health Plan/504 Plan/IEP
- Diploma/Transcript
- Final Assessment and Evaluation Reports (ex: ACT, SAT, WAIS, ICAP, etc.)

### **Medical**

- Business card holder
- Copies of Health Insurance Cards (ex: Medicaid)
- Family Health History
- Copy of Immunization Records
- Records of Illnesses, Injuries, Surgeries
- Dental Records and Information
- Vision and Hearing Records and Information
- Durable Medical Equipment Records and Information
- Other Papers (ex: prior authorization)
- Outline Health Records Information (ex: account name and password)

### **Medication**

- Business Card Holder
- List of Current Medications
- History of Medications, including side effects
- Pharmacy Records and Information
- Allergies
- Assistive Technology Records and Information (ex: medication minder)

### **Therapies**

- Business Card Holder
- Instructions from Therapists
- Appointment Cards or Schedule

### **Housing**

- Business Card Holder
- Housing Agreement
- Housing Insurance
- Copies of Applications
- Housing Reference

- Letters/Emails Received and/or Sent

### **Financial**

- Business Card Holder
- Bank Information/Account Numbers
- Pay Stubs
- Copies of Applications
- Letters/Emails Received and/or Sent
- Financial Assistance Records (ex: SNAP, energy assistance, etc.)

### **Employment**

- Business Card Holder
- Work and/or Volunteer History
- Current Resume/Cover Letter
- References and Recommendations (personal, professional)
- Interest Inventory Results
- Employment Related Evaluations
- Job Coach/Employment Specialist Information
- Self-Employment Information
- PASS Plan Information

### **Transportation**

- Business Card Holder
- Driver Education Certificate
- Insurance Information
- Vehicle License, Registration, Title
- Accessible Parking Permit Records and Information
- Vehicle Modification Records
- Gas and Mileage Logs
- Vehicle Maintenance Records
- Public Transit Schedules, Information and Training
- Accessible Transit Records, Applications, Approvals and Denials

### **Post-Secondary Education and/or Training**

- Business Card Holder
- Application Information and Records
- Grant Information (ex: FAFSA)
- Disability Services Information/Application Records
- List of Accommodations
- Certificates/Diplomas
- Transcripts

### **Emergency Preparedness**

- Business Card Holder
- Emergency Call Numbers
- Emergency and/or Disaster Plans
- List of Weather Alert Resources (phone, radio, TV, internet)
- Personal Emergency Response System Records and Information

## **Current Bills**

- Business Card Holder
- Calendar of Payments Due/Made
- School/Training
- Phone
- Car
- Insurance
- Housing
- Cable/Internet
- Utilities
- Other Bills

## **Support Providers**

- Business Card Holder
- Independent Living Center Records and Information
- Family Support 360/PLANS Records and Information
- Community Support Provider Records and Information
- Other Program Records and Information

## **Social Security**

- Business Card Holder
- Copy of Application
- Records of All Communication To/From Social Security

## **Community**

- Business Card Holder
- General Information on Community and Volunteer Activities
- My Community and Volunteer Activity Records
- Library Information

## **Personal**

- Business Card Holder
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copy of Photo ID (ex: driver's license, state ID)
- Copy of Social Security Card
- Family Contact Information
- Copies of All Cards Kept in Wallet
- All About Me Card

## **Tax Return/Legal Papers**

- Business Card Holder
- Tax Information/W-2 Forms
- Voter Registration Document
- Selective Service Registration Card (men only)
- Records of Power of Attorney
- Advance Directives
- Will
- Marriage License
- Guardianship/Conservatorship Records

## **Pets**

- Business Card Holder
- Pet Records and Information
- Pet Care/Pet Training Class Records and Information
- Pet License and Rabies Vaccination Records
- Companion Animal Certification

## **Family Services**

- Business Card Holder
- Childbirth and Parenting Class Records and Information
- Child Records and Information (birth certificate, vaccination and health records)
- Childcare Provider Information
- Birth to Age Three Records and Information
- Pre-School Records and Information
- Elementary to Grade 12 Records and Information