



Preparing Your Child with a Disability for Competitive Employment

Getting a job in the community is an important milestone for young adults. As your child with a disability begins to think about their future, you may be wondering what you can do to help them prepare for getting a paid job. This is a list of ways families can support their child in getting ready for work as they transition to adulthood.

01

Explore Career Options

Start talking about work early! As soon as your child is able to have conversations about work, begin talking about different industries, the skills or education needed for various jobs, the type of environments they might like to work in, and how their interests could translate into a job.

02

Build Job Search Skills

Teach your child how to find job openings, search job postings, obtain applications, and document their skills on a resume. If your child has trouble interviewing or filling out a resume, consider creating a "video resume." This is a short video of your child performing work skills and showcasing their talents. You can find free video resume apps online.

03

Connect with Service Providers

Your child may be eligible to get support with finding and keeping a job. Adult service provider agencies can provide on-the-job training, accommodations, or modifications that help your child be successful. Explore service options for your child before they leave secondary school.

04

Receive Benefits Counseling

If your child receives benefits (e.g., Social Security Disability Insurance) you may be concerned about them earning a paycheck. A Benefits Counselor can help explain the process by which your child can work in the community and still retain their benefits. A Benefits Counselor will go over your individual situation with you and provide guidance.

05

Encourage Work Experiences

Youth and young adults who work during their school years are more likely to be in paid employment after they leave school. This is because they have work skills, built a resume, formed connections, and have professional references to put on applications. Encourage your child to complete internships, get a part-time job, help at a family business, volunteer and complete other work-based learning experiences before they exit high school.



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06

Identify On-the-Job Supports

There are probably strategies your child uses at school that help them be successful. These may include visual cues, schedules, timers, routines, a communication system or other supports. The same strategies can be used to help your child in a work setting. Figure out what your child needs to complete different types of tasks. This information will be very helpful for an employment support provider who works with your child and their supervisor. Already knowing what supports work best can help your child begin work as soon as possible.

07

Promote Self-Advocacy

Encourage your child to begin advocating for themselves. Use daily opportunities to encourage them to ask a store clerk questions, order for themselves in a restaurant, find someone to ask for help in a grocery store, or check-in themselves at a doctor's appointment. Giving your child space to problem solve and get what they need allows them to build confidence and know what to do when situations arise on the job.

08

Require Accountability

Giving your child chores and other responsibilities around the house will help them learn to be accountable for accomplishing what is expected of them in a work capacity. In addition, it will help you determine essential factors that will promote work success, like the best way to provide reminders, how often a break may be needed, or the time of day they are most likely to prefer work completion.

09

Teach Consistent Hygiene

Your child will need to be able to complete essential hygiene skills in order to keep a job. Teach them how to complete necessary hygiene skills on their own (e.g., toileting, brushing teeth, combing hair, putting on deodorant, selecting appropriate clothes). Also teach them monitoring routines or signs that they need to freshen-up.

10

Identify Transportation Options

Transportation is a well-known barrier to employment. Become familiar with transportation options in your community that could take your child to and from work. When possible, teach your child how to use different transportation options. Build networks with other community members who may be willing to provide rides if your child becomes employed near their place of work.

11

Talk to Parent Mentors

The best person to ask for advice is a parent who has already been through the process. Search out parent groups in your community. Network with parents who have a young adult who has already been involved in a work experience through school or become employed in the community.