



Importance of Employment

Think about the things that are most important in life, for example:

- o Health and Safety
- o Power and Independence
- o Status and Purpose
- o Acceptance and Relationships
- o Contribution and Respect

Employment can provide all of these things!

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Expectations

- o "What do you want to be when you grow up?"
- o At a young age, individuals are expected to grow up and work towards employment.
- o The same should be expected for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- o Employment has often been considered just an "option," if at all for some people.
- o By changing the expectations, outcomes will change.
- o Students with disabilities are 3.6 times more likely to be in paid jobs after graduation if the family reported that they **expect** the individual to work upon graduation

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New Jersey's Employment First Initiative

- o Announced by Governor Christie on April 19, 2012
- o "Competitive employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred post education outcome for people with any type of disability."
- o Presumes that people with disabilities can and should work.
- o Provides a fundamental change in philosophy, policy, and resources related to employment of people with disabilities.

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Starting Out

- o Start by having a conversation with students or family members.
- o Identify Interests
- o Identify Role Models
- o Focus on person's abilities, not disabilities.
- o Identify available work experience opportunities.
- o Identify possible employment barriers
- o Use community resources.

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Empower Yourself

- o Ensure schools are providing the following assistance for transition:
 - o Coordination of Transition Services
 - o Community Based Experiences
 - o Person-Centered Career Goals in IEP
 - o Classes that are inclusive
 - o Collaboration between school and agencies (DVRS, Supported Employment Providers, Community Supports)

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Programs

- o Many schools recently, or in the past have implemented transition programs within the school.
- o It is important that these programs include skills that are developed not only in the classroom, but also in the community.
 - o Skills built in community based programs transfer directly into the community, ultimately developing sustainable job skills.
 - o Community based employment programs also give a more realistic experience to build off of.

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Community Based Vocational Assessments

- o Provides the opportunity to observe the student's skills, abilities, strengths, preferences, challenges, support needs, etc. and can be particularly helpful in identifying these areas with student's who have limited or no work experience or do not communicate verbally.
- o CBVA is vital in directing appropriate employment goals related to performance level and provides a more person-centered experience while the student is still in school.

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Examples of Community Based Experiences

- o Tours
- o Career Exploration
- o Job Shadowing
- o Job Sampling
- o Interviews
- o Volunteering

These options open up the skill training to include socialization, appropriate behavior, personal appearance, responsibility as well as traditional job skills.

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Value of Experience

- o Students with disabilities who have had paid work experiences in school are 2-1/2 times more likely to be in paid jobs after graduation.
- o Work experience makes a job candidate more desirable to an employer.
- o Allows a smoother transition from school to competitive employment.
- o Develops lasting skills essential for successful long-term employment.

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Employment Resources

- o Networking:
 - o Networking is the most valuable and available resource for employment.
 - o Students and Families should use connections already established within their communities to explore possible work options.
 - o Consider: Where do you shop? Who do you know? What transportation options are available in your area?
 - o Use resources naturally available in the community.

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Employment Resources

- o Division of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services (DVRs):
 - o Provides services that enable individuals with disabilities to find jobs or keep their existing jobs.
 - o DVRs Counselors from each local office are assigned to secondary schools to function as the liaison between the schools and DVRs. Counselors collaborate with Child Study Teams and other school personnel in regard to students' transition plans and offer in-service trainings to school staff, students and parents.

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Employment Resources

- o DVRS Con't:
 - o Students may apply to become a DVRS participant up to 2 years prior to exiting the secondary school system. Before that time, once a student turns 14, DVRS counselors upon request can provide consultations to the student, his or her parents and the student's school. Such consultations could consist of:
 - o providing information about DVRS
 - o vocational planning
 - o the disability related services that may benefit the student.
 - o School districts typically make the referral to DVRS although students of age or others on the student's behalf may do so as well.
 - o See DVRS website for steps on the process
<http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/dvrs/disabled/Transition.html>

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Employment Resources

- o One-Stop Career Center: Provides consumer employment and training services for eligible individuals with disabilities.
- o Centers for Independent Living: Community-based, consumer-driven organizations that provide information and referral, peer counseling, skills training, advocacy and a variety of services based on individual needs.

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Employment Resources

- o Divisions of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
Employment Services and Supports
 - o Supported Employment- small group
 - o Supported Employment- individual
 - o Career Planning
 - o Prevocational Training
- **Please Note:
 - o Individuals should access employment services through DVRS before utilizing DDD for these services
 - o An individual can access DDD services when s/he is receiving employment services through DVRS

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Employment Resources

- o Supported Employment Agencies
 - o Perform job assessment that include: sampling, shadowing, exploration, job preparation
 - o Job Development: applications, interviews, appropriate job match, etc
 - o Job Coaching: onsite and offsite job task training and coaching assistance
 - o Long-term Follow Along: follow up assistance onsite or offsite until services are no longer needed
 - o Many agencies located state-wide, usually referred by DVRS.

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Being Successful

- o Keys to Successful Employment:
 - o Person Centered Planning
 - o Starting Early
 - o Experiencing paid work while still in school
 - o Community based experiences
 - o Using all available resources
 - o Support (family, school, community-based, natural supports, supported employment, etc.)
 - o Advocacy
 - o Maintaining Expectations
 - o Do not give up

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Contact

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Works Cited:

Go Wise: <http://www.gowise.org/technical-assistance>

Wisconsin BPDD:

<http://www.letsgettoworkwi.org/index.php/lgtw-project-resources/trainings/>

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