Exploring the World of Work

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ARC Statewide Transition Conference
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Agenda

- Importance of work
- Strategies to promote work
- Various types of work
- Supporting youth in preparing for work
The Importance of Work

- Contributes to building self-esteem and developing a sense of independence
- Provides students with opportunities to demonstrate responsibility
- Helps students become contributing members of their communities
- Helps raise awareness of different types of skills and abilities
- Helps students achieve goals financially and socially
- *Is a typical expectation of youth/adults*
Explore Options & Collaborate

• Consider the range of work experiences when developing an employment plan
  • Volunteering
  • Internships
  • Informational interviews
  • Job shadowing
  • Paid employment

• Utilize a collaborative and coordinated approach
  • What do we need to make employment happen?
  • What personal and professional networks can we utilize?
  • What can everyone bring to the table?
    • Student, family, school, adult agencies
Person-Centered Career Planning

- Starts with student’s interests, not job slots
- Many options to help support interest exploration and goal setting
- Interests/skills create blueprint for planning
- Foster student being self-determined and making choices
- Supports the expectation of work
Person-Centered Tools

Five Bold Steps

Person-Centered Planning

Experiential Learning

O*Net Online

Discovery
Developing a Plan for Employment

- What does your child enjoy doing?
- What does your child excel at?
- What is challenging for your child?
- What chores does your child complete at home?
- What recreation/leisure activities are they involved with?
- What types of supports or accommodations will your child need on the job?
- What type of work schedule will be the best fit?
  - Morning, afternoon, weekday, weekend
- What is the goal of the work experience?
  - Ex. Exposure to a work setting
  - Ex. Develop a specific skill set
Job Matching

- Finding a job that is a good fit between
  - the student’s lifestyle
  - the student’s skills
  - the employer’s needs

- A good job match also considers the work environment and the work culture

- Day of the week, shift length, and transportation options are important considerations
Transportation

• Critical aspect of employment planning
• Develop plan for sustainable transportation
• Explore travel training & public transportation options
• Consider Paratransit
  • The Ride, Dial-A-Ride
• Research personal transportation
  • Driver’s license
Job Supports

- Benefits assistance
  - Supplemental Security Income & Social Security Disability Insurance Employment Supports
    - [http://www.choosework.net/resource/jsp/advancedSearch.jsp](http://www.choosework.net/resource/jsp/advancedSearch.jsp)
- Accommodations and assistive technology
  - Checklists, visuals supports, cell phone reminders & alarms
  - Smartphone: visual schedules, task sequencing
- Natural Supports
  - Resources that are already occurring in the environment
Parent Perspective on Employment

http://www.thenytc.org/workearly
Community Work Experiences

Work experience while in school is important

*Just like any other teenager!*

- Volunteering
- Internships
- Informational interviews
- Job shadowing/job tours
- Paid employment
Range of Work Experiences

- **Volunteering/Community Service**
  - Learning the importance of community service
  - Developing critical work (soft) skills including being on time, seeking supervision, working with others
  - Helping student further clarify work interests
  - Providing networking opportunities, potential for future employment references or experiences

- **Resources**
  - Teenlife.com: volunteer, internships, etc.
  - Volunteermatch.org
  - Reach out to community non-profits/religious/fraternal organizations
  - Access career center/guidance counselor for other opportunities
Range of Work Experiences

- **Internships**
  - Continued development of critical work skills
  - Provides opportunity to learn about day to day tasks and reality of working in a specific field
  - Typically a time limited experience
  - Great opportunity to make connections in a field, may lead to a paid position in the future

- **Resources**
  - School based internship programs
  - Individual companies/businesses
Range of Work Experiences

- **Informational interviews**
  - Provides the opportunity to ask questions to a person working in a field of interest
  - Expands network of contacts
  - Builds confidence for actual job interviews
  - Assists in identifying strengths and weaknesses related to work settings
  - Opportunity to research a specific company or employment field
  - Opportunity to put resume in front of employer

- **Resources**
  - Personal contacts, family members
  - Community businesses, Chamber of Commerce
  - Career fairs
Range of Work Experiences

- **Job shadowing/job tours**
  - Learn about day to day responsibilities of a worker
  - Opportunity to observe a typical work environment
  - Identify aspects of work culture
  - Observe a variety of jobs at one site
  - Increase awareness of jobs in their community
  - Can create an opportunity to “try out” a job

- **Resources**
  - Personal contacts, family members
  - Community businesses, Chamber of Commerce
Range of Work Experiences

- Paid employment
  - Application of critical work skills
  - Must meet expected work criteria
  - Access to other benefits (vacation time, health insurance)
  - Provides structure, reinforces responsibility taking, supports the development of a strong work ethic
  - Creates opportunities to discuss financial responsibility
    - Save money to use towards goals
    - Promotes independence, independent lifestyle

- Resources
  - Family members, friends who are working
  - Community contacts
  - Internet job postings
  - One-Stop Career Centers: www.servicelocator.org
Focus on the Process

• Consider the goal of the work experience
  • Ex. Career specific tasks
  • Ex. Developing a work ethic
  • Ex. Refining soft skills

• Reflect on the entire work experience, starting with interview prep

• Monitor skill acquisition, successes, and challenges
  • Adjust and refine supports as necessary
Focus on the process

• Track information to prepare for future work experiences
  • Transferable skills
  • Environmental factors
  • Identify “best fit”

• Maximize independence
  • Stakeholders identify natural supports and develop job coach fading plan
  • Gather input from student, employer, school, and family
Career Development Process

**Student Name:** ______________________________

**Date:**

**Self-Exploration**
*Understand yourself*

- List your interests, skills, & important factors to think about when considering jobs

**Date:**

**Career Exploration**
*Explore your options*

- List potential jobs, work experiences, and/or informational interviews you want to complete

**Date:**

**Career Planning**
*Take action!*

- List your goals, educational or training requirements, and next steps
Preparing for Employment

What families can do

- Talk about careers and jobs in the community
- Assist student with identifying interests/vision
- Support student participation in IEP meetings
- Maintain expectation of work
- Assign paid or unpaid chores
- Support leadership, taking responsibility, and choice
- Take public transportation together
- Use networks to identify job opportunities!
- Reinforce positive work behaviors
  - (e.g. hygiene, being on time, “working” with others)
Preparing for Employment: what schools can do

- Refer to adult system & transfer information in a timely manner
- Assist student with identifying interests/vision
- Support student participation in IEP meetings
- Provide vocational preparation
- Develop resumes, complete applications
- Identify job fairs/community opportunities
- Create job shadow experiences
- Coordinate volunteer and/or work experience
Additional Team Efforts to Promote Employment

- Support the student in understanding his/her learning style/disability

- Discuss the student’s vision with him/her: where do you see yourself in 5 years, 10 years, as an adult?

- Discuss short term job goals and long term career goals

- Build in experiences that help youth develop a work ethic
Approaches to Supporting Transition-Age Youth

- Encourage self-determination and the development of self-advocacy skills
- Make direct connection between tasks/skills and future goals
- Communicate effective strategies that promote independence across settings
Resources

- **School Days to Pay Days** An employment planning guide for families of young adults with intellectual disabilities.
  - Department of Developmental Services publication
  - [www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dmr/employment-support-school-days.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dmr/employment-support-school-days.pdf)

- **My Next Move**
  - Interactive, online tool for job seekers and students to learn more about job options
  - The site has tasks, skills, salary information, and more for over 900 different careers
  - [http://www.mynextmove.org/](http://www.mynextmove.org/)

- **The Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston**
  - Provides many useful publications and resources to help individuals, families and support providers to understand and utilize person-centered planning methods for finding employment for individuals with disabilities
Resources

- National Youth Transitions Center
  - Collaborative learning community provides publications, videos, and resources on a range of transition topics
  - [http://www.thenytc.org/workearly](http://www.thenytc.org/workearly)

- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
  - National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth provides information about employment and youth with disabilities
  - [http://www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info)

- Think College
  - Information, activities, videos and resources to support planning a college life for students with intellectual disabilities
  - [http://www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)