

Informing Families

Building Trust

A Partnership for Better Communication
on Developmental Disabilities Issues in Washington State

January 6, 2010



Looking Ahead: Life After 21

Tips for Finding Work *Before* Graduation

Now more than ever, all young adults need help from their parents in order to find work. For individuals with developmental disabilities, it might take more effort and early planning, but it is possible. Regardless of disability, your son or daughter *can* find employment.

If your son or daughter is not enrolled in a Division of Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver, he or she will most likely not receive any paid support to prepare for and find a job after high school. Even if he or she is on a HCBS waiver, it's important to begin planning for those post-high school transition to employment years as early as possible.

TIPS FOR FINDING A JOB BEFORE AGE 21

1. Start thinking about life after school, long before your child enters a high school transition program. Help your child start thinking about it at a young age, too.
2. Address work related goals in your child's IEP early. Be clear about wanting the school to participate. If your son or daughter is over 18, involve and include the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), DDD and the local county DD office.

Examples of work related goals:

- ⚙ Identifying job skills and preferences
- ⚙ Gaining work experience
- ⚙ Learning how to use transportation
- ⚙ Learning how to write checks and handle money



A JOB POST-SCHOOL OUTCOME is the key phrase to use in making sure IEP goals are related to employment.

3. Enlist friends and relatives in the job search.
4. Encourage different work experiences to find the right fit and build a resume.
5. Reinforce work-related skills at home, such as: finishing regular family and personal chores, helping neighbors, going over the family budget and shopping.
6. Make sure that your son or daughter is a full and meaningful participant in his or her IEP and life goal setting, career planning and decision making process.
7. Push hard to assure your son or daughter has a job *before leaving school*.