

Transition to Adulthood: Employment (Work)

General Information

At age 14, you should be starting to think about where you will live when you are an adult or when your parents will no longer be taking care of you. You may feel a need for independence as you grow older. However, you may need extra time and support to learn and practice the skills you will need to live away from home.

How can the IEP help?

If you have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), public schools are required by law to include and carry out a transition plan at age 14. This plan includes activities to help prepare you for life after high school. It is important that you take part in the IEP process.

If your goal is to work after high school, IEP goals and activities should help you:

- Express yourself. This is called self advocacy.
- Explain your needs (accommodations).
- Learn and practice work-related behaviors that help you find and keep a job.
- Find agencies, services, and resources in your community that can help you find a job.

What are my employment options?

It is important to remember that **all** people can work when the right help is in place. Many work place choices are offered for people with disabilities. Some common ones include:

- **Volunteer work.** This can help you improve work skills and identify your interests and talents. It also gives you a chance to socialize. Volunteering does not always lead to paid employment.
- **Competitive employment.** Working in a job that an employer is filling. You compete with all other job applicants for the job. You are paid and get benefits typically provided for that job.
- **Customized employment.** Working at a job an employer creates for you. It matches their unmet needs with your skills and abilities. You are not competing with other applicants for the job.
- **Self employment (or Micro-Enterprise).** Owning and operating your own business. Normally this is done with support from an adult service agency.
- **Facility-based employment (Sheltered Employment).** Working in a community group setting under close supervision. Employees are paid based on piece rate or productivity.

Who can help me reach my goals?

Most counties in Wisconsin have employment agencies. They are designed to provide supports and services that help adults with special needs meet their employment goals. These agencies will help you:

- Find information about your interests, skills, abilities and needs.
- Develop job skills.
- Look for jobs in the community.
- With on-the-job training and support as you learn your job.
- Understand various employment benefits which may assist people with disabilities who would like to work and still receive SSI or SSDI. This is called work incentive benefits counseling.

For more information about employment:

- Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/children/RegionalCenters/index.htm>
- Request Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction's publication *Opening Doors to Employment: Planning for Life after High School* from your teacher or download it for free at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/tranopndrs-employmt.pdf>
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR): <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/>
- Waisman Center Healthy & Ready to Work Fact Sheets: I Want to Work!: <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/hrtw/YFS.pdf>
- Wisconsin Employment Agencies and Services by County: http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/pdf_files/service_providers.pdf

If you do not have a computer or internet access, you can use a computer in The Daniel M. Soref Family Resource Center on the first floor of Children's Hospital. Your local public library might have computers as well.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.