

Is my child "too disabled" ...



...to pursue employment?

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*Many parents are surprised to find that the answer is **no**. The following statements will help dispel some employment myths and highlight the possibilities for people to pursue employment, including those individuals with the most significant disabilities.*

No disability is too significant for someone to pursue employment.

True. *Employment is not only possible; opportunities should be made available for all people. People with even the most significant intellectual and developmental disabilities are embarking on a personal journey toward employment. Everyone’s path is their own with different steps along the way. Some people will move further toward integrated competitive employment than others. More than any specific destination, it is about the benefits of the continuing employment journey and all that can be learned along the way.*

There are two options... a segregated workshop or a paid job.

False. *The path toward employment holds many options along the way such as internships, volunteering, post-secondary courses and much more. Each path must be tailored to the strengths and interests of each person and so it will look different for everyone. Some will pursue volunteer experiences and/or additional education. These experiences can help them grow and open doors to additional possibilities.*

My child can earn income without losing critical benefits.

True. *It is possible to engage in paid employment without losing Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, or Medicaid benefits. Each program has its own rules and income thresholds; however, there are people and tools to help you to understand these rules and maximize your benefits planning. It is best if you contact the Social Security Administration or your local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project before starting employment to understand the options available for your child.*

I should have different employment expectations for my child because of his/her disability.

False. *Planning for Employment First as the desired outcome maximizes possibilities for everyone. We should think about the growth of all children with this in mind. It is not about how far down their path to employment they go. It is about the many benefits to be found along the way.*

A key benefit to being on a pathway to employment is connection and belonging.

True. *The pursuit of employment opens previously undiscovered doors to community groups, activities and relationships. It provides opportunities to take on valued social roles that are so important to all of us. This is critical to our sense of contribution, purpose, self-worth and belonging. Earning money and contributing to the economy can also be important added benefits.*

There is support available to help me face challenges along the way.

True. *There will certainly be bumps in the road, but there are funding sources and organizations to help you think and plan for employment outcomes. Finding the right opportunities takes planning, effort and flexibility for the journey.*

IMPORTANT: See page 4 to learn more about important resources that will help you and your child make the best employment decisions. This includes a helpful timeline on when to do what.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities & Family Support Center of New Jersey Invite You to Free Education & Information Sessions

Lifeline for the Journey

Have you been wondering what the future holds for you and your family member with a developmental disability? At this session you will learn about the different systems that may touch your life, what each has to offer, and what some of the similarities and differences are among them. Come discover what your next steps might be to help your child and your family. Join other families, become empowered and engaged in life's journey!

Parents/Guardians of children from birth to age 14 are encouraged to attend!

Pathways to Adult Life

Attend this interactive training to learn more about transitioning from school to adult life and self directing services for young adults. Be educated about the choices your family will make!

Pathways to Adult Life is a collaboration between the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), the Division of Disability Services (DDS), the Department of Education (DOE), and The Boggs Center (NJ's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities). This session will assist individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Students with developmental disabilities age 14 -19 and their families are encouraged to attend!

Life After 21

Life After 21 is a two part training series addressing the concerns of students with developmental disabilities ages 19 - 21 and their families as they approach the adult service systems. **Life After 21 Part I** - provides skills and tools to plan supports and services based on individual needs. Brief overview of NJWINS, DDD Day Services and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). Resource information regarding DDD Day Program/Day Service options and DVRS contact information will be distributed to participants. This session also includes "The Provider Marketplace" which is an opportunity for families to become acquainted with Adult Agencies/Service Organizations providing local supports and services.

Students with developmental disabilities ages 19-21 and their families are encouraged to attend!

For more information and to register: Family Support Center of NJ
Phone: 800-372-6510 • Register Online at: www.fscnj.org

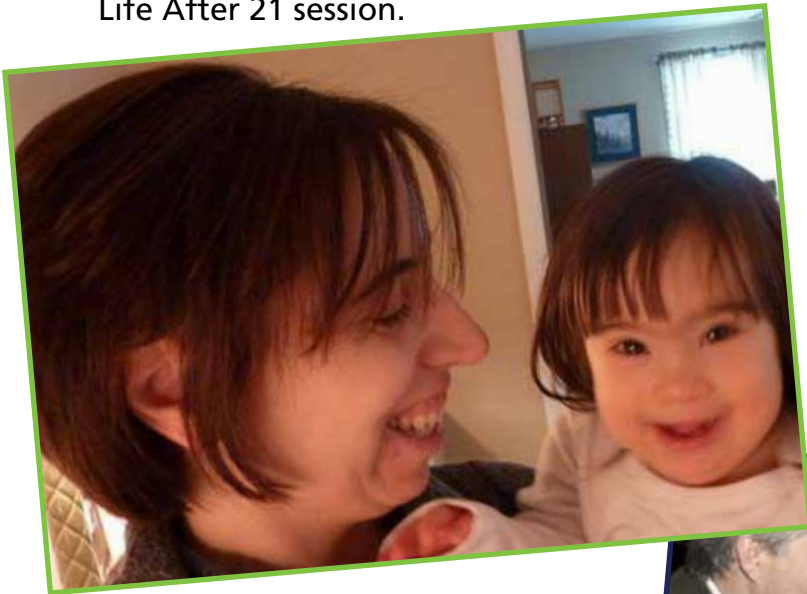
Setting Expectations Early

Parents know their children best. Professionals are only in a position to assist and guide you. While the formal transition process may start as early as age 14, the process of setting expectations begins at home. This journey can be both exciting and overwhelming. Be rest assured you are not alone. Many other families have also gone through this process. As soon as you can, create a long term plan for your child based on their interests and strengths that considers employment and or post secondary education. As your son or daughter moves through their childhood and adolescence continue to plan for their eventual transition to adulthood. Remember to find the support you need as parents.

REMEMBER:

The vocational rehabilitation process should begin at least 2 years prior to high school graduation and Special education programs are terminated once the student fulfills their IEP goals or when they turn 21 years old.

- Have your son or daughter participate in a Community-based Experience.
- Between Ages 16-19, attend DDD Pathways to Adult Life session.
- At age 18, explore the need for Social Security benefits including SSI, SSDI and Medicaid.
- Prior to Graduation of 21st birthday, apply to DVRS and or DDD by attending Life After 21 session.



Mark

Mark is a 39 year old man with a developmental disability. He has been part of a local agency that supports people with disabilities for over 15 years assisting him reaching his highest level of independence in the community. In 2001, he began to pursue supported employment. He also receives support around money management and with creating a life outside of work.

Mark is a security guard at a very large local mall. As a security guard, Mark engages in the same day to day tasks of any other security guard such as patrolling the mall, crowd control and managing hazards. In his role, Mark is responsible for ensuring safety assisting people in distress. He must use critical thinking and communication skills to manage a wide array of circumstances.

Some people stereotype persons with developmental disabilities as having limited employability skills. When Mark assists a patron or store employee in distress, he is not seen as someone who is too disabled to work but rather someone in a position to help.



Marie



Marie is 28 years old and has a full life. She enjoys two paid jobs, volunteering, attending college, and socializing with many of her work and college friends. Marie was born with Down syndrome. Marie loves to be helpful. She is creative and artistic. One of Marie's volunteer experiences turned into employment. Just recently, they offered Marie two days a week of paid employment in their kindergarten as a Teacher's Aide. Marie is a valued member of her team.

According to the kindergarten teacher, "I don't know what we would do without her". Marie helps set up the classroom for learning. As a typical kindergarten aide, she helps the students with packing their book bags, putting on their sweaters, coats, hats, gloves, and teaching them to tie their shoes. When not in school, when Marie sees one of her students at the mall or restaurant, they shout "Mom look – it's Miss Marie." To her students, she is just Ms. Marie, one of their teachers, not someone who is different or too disabled to work.





DVRS MYTHS & FACTS

(Information for Transition students, families, & schools)

MYTHS

FACTS

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| A Student must be rejected by DVRS in order to receive DDD services. | A Student may receive services from both DDD and DVRS at the same time if determined eligible with DVRS. |
| If interested in DVRS services, the student registers with DVRS and is then entitled to receive services. | A student may apply to DVRS and then must be determined eligible in order to receive services. |
| A student is eligible for services if they have a disability. | A student may be determined eligible with DVRS if due to their disability they have difficulty working without specific services and/or accommodations. |
| Eligibility for DVRS "cost services" is determined by criteria used for welfare or other government poverty guidelines. | Cost services include specific services such as tuition funding and therapies. Funding eligibility is based on family size and income, or if the student receives SSI. |
| DVRS can make direct referrals for jobs to a "bank of employers," similar to an employment agency. | DVRS assists graduated students in finding suitable employment based on student's abilities and vocational goal. |
| DVRS always provides transportation to school or work. | DVRS does not have its own transportation system. For students made eligible for cost services, DVRS may assist with transportation costs on a time limited basis. |
| DVRS can communicate and/or share information about student/parent with DDD and other agencies. | DVRS will only communicate or share information with others if student/ parent/guardian have given written consent. |
| DVRS counselors must attend IEP meetings. | DVRS may attend IEP meetings if invited and deemed appropriate. |
| Students can only be seen by a DVRS counselor and receive DVRS services at age 18 or above. | Students can be seen by DVRS with permission of parent/guardian if under 18 years of age. |
| DVRS counselor does not provide any services while the student is still in school. | DVRS reviews records, provides vocational rehabilitation counseling, and recommends services for students ages 14 and over. |
| Students should not be referred to DVRS until senior year or after graduation. | It is recommended that students be referred to DVRS at least two years prior to graduation. |
| DVRS only works with classified or special education students. | DVRS serves students with all types of chronic and/or permanent disabilities. Students covered under 504 Plan may qualify for DVRS |
| Students have to apply for and receive DVRS services in the county where they live. | Students may choose to receive services from DVRS at any of the local 18 DVRS offices across the state. |
| DVRS provides financial aid for college and training programs. | DVRS may provide full or partial tuition funding based on financial eligibility and other assessments. |
| A student's case with DVRS cannot be opened up until DVRS has received school records. | DVRS can open up cases without records but needs documentation to determine eligibility for services. |

Resources

DDD Main Line: 1-800-832-9173

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/home/index.html>

DDS Main Line: 1-888-285-3036

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/home/index.html>

DDD Life Line for the Journey:

Contact the Family Support Center of New Jersey at 1-800-372-6510

www.fscnj.org

DDD Pathways to Adult Life:

Contact the Family Support Center of New Jersey at 1-800-372-6510

www.fscnj.org

DDD Life After 21:

Contact the Family Support Center of New Jersey at 1-800-372-6510

www.fscnj.org

DVRS Main Number: 1- 609-292-5987

<http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/dvrs/DVRIndex.html>

DOE Main Line: 1-877-900-6960

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/>

DOE Office of Special Education: 1-609-292-0147

<http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/>

Disability Rights New Jersey: 1-800-922-7233

<http://www.drnj.org/>

The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities: 1-732-235-9300

<http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/>

NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities: 1-800-792-8858

<http://www.njcdd.org/index.htm>

NJWINS: 1-866-946-7465

<http://www.njwins.org>

Social Security: 1-800-772-1213

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network: 1-800-654-SPAN

<http://www.spannj.org/>



ALLIANCE FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

REAL JOBS—IT'S EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

NJ Alliance for Full Participation Members



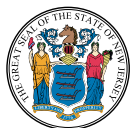
NJ DIVISION OF
DISABILITY SERVICES



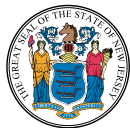
NJ DIVISION OF
VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION
SERVICES



NJ BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP NETWORK



NJ COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES



NJ DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



NJ DIVISION OF
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES



Statewide Parent Advocacy Network



values *into* action New Jersey