

Developing Individualized Career Goals

Helping students with disabilities choose and work toward postsecondary employment goals is an essential component of transition services. In addition to using age-appropriate assessments, Career Pathways, and the Postsecondary Transition Plan (PTP), students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) benefit from specific strategies in order to develop truly individualized career goals. As students gain experience and knowledge about themselves and the world around them, their career goals will evolve.

Strategies to Use:

To Gather Ideas	To See & Try Jobs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Afford opportunities for students to take different classes and be involved in extra-curricular activities• Involve family members in the process to learn about home life, preferences & transferrable skills*• Use one or more assessments & planning tools• Meet as a team to discuss ideas and make a list of employer connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spend time in various community settings doing different activities• Schedule business tours• Set up informational interviews• Arrange for job shadows & trial work experiences• Support short-term volunteer activities• Activities, experiences & jobs that do not go well are part of the goal development process

*Transferrable skills are tasks and activities a student already knows how to do, such as mowing grass, putting away clothes, washing the car, and setting the table, that can translate into work skills.



More Ideas to Consider:

- Use age appropriate assessments designed for students with significant disabilities (see resources section on the back page)
- Review examples of planning activities and tools (see the resources section on the back page)
- Use the free Self-Direct Employment Planning Modules (see resources section on the back page)
- Meet as a team regularly or find other ways to share information during the employment planning process
- Ensure that students have ample time to experience a variety of community and work settings
- Document all experiences and outcomes so the information can be used for goal development
- Check out more tools you can use in the Community Work Experience [link] section of the on-line LGTW Quick Guide on Transition to Employment [link]

Meet Devon

Devon is a high school senior who has had goals in place to work and attend college for the past couple of years. About a year and a half ago, he had the chance to complete a paid work experience at a bank. At the end of the work experience, the bank did not offer him a job, and that was very disappointing. But, Devon and his team did not give up. He worked with his teacher, DVR, and a service provider to try another temporary work experience at a grocery store near his school. He enjoyed the work at the grocery store a lot, but that employer also did not offer him a job. With the help of his team, Devon kept looking for a job. A different grocery



store in a neighboring town offered Devon a chance and he started working there several hours per week. It was not too long before

his team, including Devon, his supervisor at work, and his vocational support agency felt he no longer needed a job coach with him for all of his work time. Devon is narrowing down his goals through actual experience.

He enjoys his job at the grocery store and is looking forward to starting classes at a local community college.

Meet Eddie

Eddie is a high school junior who wants to be an auto mechanic. With the help of his teachers, DVR, a vocational service provider, and his family, he has set short and long-term employment goals. Right now, he is taking classes at his high school that will help him apply to an auto repair certificate program at the technical college near where he lives after graduation. He also set a goal to work as a car detailer for a local car dealer, but through exploration discovered he can't do that until he turns 18. In the meantime, he got assistance to obtain a part-time paid job at a banquet hall to get work experience and earn some cash. Eddie has individualized short and long term employment goals, and a plan to match those.



Additional Resources

[Self-Directed Transition Planning Tool](#)

[Assessing Students with Significant Disabilities for Supported Adulthood: Exploring Appropriate Transition Assessments by Dr. Mary E. Morningstar](#)

[Thought Sauce by Griffin-Hammis Associates](#)

[Individualized Employment Planning Model from the Rural Institute](#)

[Information available through the PACER Center](#)

[Self-Directed Employment Planning Modules](#)