

Supporting Families to Expect Employment

Starting in the earliest of years, the actions and attitudes of educators' impact family expectations for the future. Districts that maintain high levels of inclusion throughout the school years and provide community work experiences during high school increase family expectations for employment after high school. Here are some tips for educators to establish a culture of high expectations, develop partnerships, help families learn about options, and strengthen coordination foster employment success for youth with disabilities.

Developing partnerships:

- ⊙ Send a letter at the beginning of the school year with your picture and information about your role in transition.
- ⊙ Open lines of communication by phone, email, and text. Respond to questions and concerns quickly, even if it is just to say you got their message and will respond later.
- ⊙ Engage family members in preparing for the IEP/PTP meeting by providing information about the transition planning and seeking their input on each part.
- ⊙ Ensure information parents receive is positive and strengths-based.
- ⊙ Use motivational interviewing to develop plans with families rather than 'telling' them what to do.
- ⊙ Involve families in the student's Discovery process and ensure their input on the transition portion of the IEP.

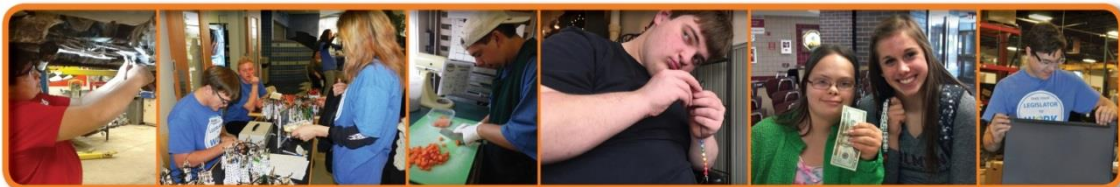
The most powerful force in changing transition outcomes for young people with significant disabilities is not ultimately found in the transition plans we craft, the educational services we offer, the instruction we provide, or the systems we build, but rather in the expectations and aspirations individual parents hold for their sons and daughters.

We carefully considered a number of factors during high school that might influence whether or not students were working for pay in the community during the first two years after high school. And what we learned surprised us. We found that young adults with significant disabilities whose parents definitely expected them to obtain post-school work way back in high school were **more than five times as likely to have paid, community employment within two years after exiting.**

Erik W. Carter *What Matters Most: Research on Elevating Parent Expectations* TASH Town Hall, December 2014

Supporting families to learn about options:

- ⊙ Invite families with students in 7th to 12th grade to annual transition resource fairs.
- ⊙ Consider the time of day of your parent information events. It may be that events held during the daytime have better attendance from families.
- ⊙ Offer employment planning activities for youth while parents attend information sessions on transition.
- ⊙ Share student stories and videos from the LGTW website before families complete the Post-Secondary Transition Plan (PTP).
- ⊙ Organize an employer panel for parents.



Strengthening coordination for success:

- ⦿ Work to develop a strong, collaborative relationship with the local Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselor through regular communication about students and encourage families to advocate for their youth in the employment planning process.
- ⦿ Ensure that the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) and Individual Employment Plan (IPE) are being shared and discussed as a team with the family.
- ⦿ Encourage families to ask DVR how they can be part of the job finding process and discuss those ideas as a team.
- ⦿ Remind students and parents to touch base with DVR about progress on a regular basis and provide assistance as needed.



[Watch James' Video](#)

At first, James's family was reluctant to have him work in the community and they did not want to apply for DVR services. School staff continued to encourage the family to consider community employment for James. The family agreed to let the school's transition coordinator set up a work experience with a local American Family Insurance office. [DVR Youth On-the-Job](#) Training was used while James learned the job. The match has been a success and James' parents' expectations for his future have changed dramatically.

Additional Resources

[Erik W. Carter *What Matters Most: Research on Elevating Parent Expectations* TASH Town Hall, December 2014](#)

[What's After High School Family Education Video Series](#)

[Self-Directed Employment Planning Modules](#)

[LGTW Self-Directed Transition Planning Tool](#)

[Families as Partners Fact Sheet](#)

