

# Tips & Steps for Job Coaching Students with Disabilities

Job coaching is often needed when a youth with a disability begins a new job. The degree and amount depends on the individual student and the job. There are several steps that can be taken to optimize the effectiveness of job coaching and foster increased independence. Successful job coaching actually begins before a student's first day on the job.

Remember, the ultimate goal of job coaching is independence. A new job situation should be set up for success. Job coaches should not be promised on a full-time or permanent basis to employers. Think of job coaches as teachers and employment consultants; they are there to facilitate learning and foster on-the-job problem-solving.

## Step 1: Exchange information with the employer before the first day of work.

<p><b>Information to get from the employer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written job description and work schedule</li> <li>▪ New employee handbook/policies and procedures</li> <li>▪ Training protocol description</li> <li>▪ Decision about job coach attendance at training (is it ok with the employer?)</li> <li>▪ Date(s) and times to report for training and who to see upon arrival</li> <li>▪ Name(s) and contact information for supervisor</li> <li>▪ A list of items the student/employee should bring on the first day (documentation, identification, name tag, uniform)</li> </ul> <p><i>*Once obtained from the employer, this set of information should be provided to the student, her/his family, and those who will be involved in job coaching.</i></p>	<p><b>Information to provide to the employer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relevant information about learning and communication styles of the student</li> <li>▪ Information about job coaching, including the intention to teach, coach, and fade</li> <li>▪ Name(s) and contact information for people anticipated to be coaching at the business</li> <li>▪ A written description of the job coaches' roles and responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Request for one or more job coaches to observe and conduct a job site analysis</li> <li>▪ A formal request for one or more job coaches to participate in training with employee</li> <li>▪ Time and opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and set boundaries for coaches</li> </ul>
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## Step 2: With the employer's permission, conduct analyses to lay the groundwork for success before the first day of work (analyses might include gathering/exchanging some of the information listed above or verifying it)

<b>The three types of analysis that should be completed before the student begins the job:</b>	
<b>Worksite Analysis</b>	Used to write-up a "lay of the land" description of the workplace and identify potential barriers to success on the job (e.g. a corner that might be tight for a wheelchair, a soda machine in a break room that could prove a distraction, an area of the workplace that is very noisy).
<b>Job Analysis</b>	Used to create the list of required tasks, materials needed, the order the employer wants tasks completed, and then start development of steps for each of the discrete tasks (preliminary task analysis) to be used for systematic instruction. *Job and Work Site Analyses can be combined.
<b>Task Analysis</b>	Used to list <u>all</u> steps required for each job duty. This can be accomplished by using specific task analysis forms, checklists, a job duty notebook, or electronic software such as used with an iPad or iPod Touch.

### Important tips for conducting these analyses:

- During **Worksite and Job Analyses**, coaches can start to consider potential points within the work routine where simple adaptations might be useful (e.g. pictures of work materials or stages of work completion, a basket or shelf to hold a particular set of materials, color coded signs or bins for different types of work materials). Any ideas for making work tasks easier should be discussed with both the employee and the employer for approval before implementation.
- The key to effective **Task Analysis** is to start off with enough detail so the employee learns each small part of the job task correctly and in the right order. Steps are then combined, or collapsed as the employee learns them. For example, the initial task analysis for folding a towel might include 15 steps, but go down to 5 as independence is achieved.

Examples of forms that can be used or adapted to conduct work site, job, and task analysis, as well as examples of adaptations, can be found at [Link to: LGTW Implementation Guide/Effective Community Work Experiences].

### Step 3: Implement systematic instruction to teach multiple job tasks.

Through the new employee training, and then with job coach assistance, the steps of each job task are modeled for the new employee. Using the task analysis information created for each part of the job, the coach determines the lowest level of prompting/support needed by the employee for each step. Documenting the level of support provided to complete each step allows the job coach to avoid over-supporting and effectively reduce support in increments toward the goal of independence.

### Step 4: Support natural workplace communication.

Job coaches can encourage the employee to ask questions and interact directly with his/her supervisor and co-workers rather than going through them. Job coaches can also model effective ways for co-workers to speak and communicate directly to the employee. The stronger the employee's relationships are at work, the better the chances of the job situation working out in the long run.

### Step 5: Step back from direct teaching and coaching.

As the student/employee learns the job tasks and develops working relationships on the job, coaches spend less time directly in the environment, while remaining available for consultation and problem-solving.

## Additional Resources

- [The Roles of a Job Coach](#)
- [Job Coaching in the Workplace](#)
- [Job Coaching Strategies](#)