



Top 10 Tips: Supporting secondary students with disability to think about work



Tip 1: Create a Vision with work as an expectation

Put pen to paper! Document the clear and positive idea of what is wanted for the young person's life, including meaningful, community-based employment at award wages or higher. Start developing your Vision Statement by utilising this [Creating a Vision Statement](#) resource.



Tip 2: Think Typical Opportunities

Focus on a 'typical life' for your young person. It helps to safeguard against a 'specialised' life that is usually separate from others in the community. Focus on the person having new opportunities and experiences, just like their similar-aged peers without disability. 'Thinking typical' supports the person in their ongoing personal development, building on their strengths and understanding the person more fully.



Tip 3: Initiate Conversations & Make Observations

Start talking to the young person about work! These informal conversations can start when sitting at the dinner table or driving in the car. Consider discussing the benefits of work; how you found your first jobs; or the observations you make of others in their work roles around the community.



Tip 4: Identify Household Jobs

Identify 'chores' or 'jobs' for the young person to complete at home! This is vital in building their understanding of contribution, responsibility and accountability. Start by focusing on tasks that match the person's interests and contributions – creating that shopping list for dinner cooking; caring for family pets for those interested in animals; or working on the household budget for those interested in numbers.



Tip 5: Discover the Person

Take time to better understand the young person through the Discovery Process! Discovery focuses on three key areas: (1) interests related to work; (2) conditions for success – meaning what needs to be in place for the person to be at their best; and (3) contributions/skills – acknowledging that we all can make a contribution. Discovery is a common-sense process that involves getting to know people, or helping people get to know themselves, before developing employment plans. It involves spending time with a person one-on-one and learning 'Who is this person?', instead of testing, assessing or evaluating the person.

[Click here to view our Discovery Record resource.](#)



Tip 6: Look to Community

When identifying potential work opportunities, start by looking to your community and the connections you have with the people around you. Initial opportunities often come through connections, and we can sometimes underestimate how many people we interact with on a daily basis! Intentionally building relationships with specific people in the community can also prove helpful, so when the time comes, you can reach out to those individuals.

Our [Developing Community Connections resource](#) provides a step-by-step approach to supporting your family member to build their connection to the community.



Tip 7: Identify Volunteering Opportunities

Volunteering can provide a valuable opportunity for a young person who is thinking about work, building their skills and connecting them to their community! All communities have opportunities to volunteer, both through informal channels such as helping an elderly neighbour, and formal channels, for example through a not-for-profit organisation. While volunteering is valuable to the community and the individual themselves, consider how volunteering roles can develop into a paid role in the future, or how the volunteer role can be balanced with a paid work role.



Tip 8: Identify Work Experience Opportunities

Having access to work experience is a vital step for young people as they consider their employment futures! It is often one of the first formalised experiences that a young person may have. Work experience often takes place through school, usually in Year 10; however, it can also be organised by families outside of the school curriculum. Remember to think typical! A meaningful and suitable experience that focuses on the young person's interests, contributions and conditions for success will be the most valuable.



Tip 9: Include NDIS Employment Goals in the Plan

If the young person is eligible for the NDIS and has reached employment age (meaning 14 or 15 years old), it is essential to include an employment-related goal in their plan! A good place to start thinking about employment is to refer to the young person's vision (see Tip 1). From there, a goal can be developed. Examples of goals include:

'During the period of the plan, I want to build on my skills so I can start looking for a job.'

'This year, I'd like to explore what type of jobs might best suit me and find some part-time work.'

'I'd like to earn money and take part in the community.'

From the goals, the relevant supports can then be determined. Take time to understand the supports that are available through the scheme so that you can be clear about the support that is required.



Tip 10: Capture the Learning

When any work opportunity is explored – whether it's a conversation with the young person, a work experience opportunity or Discovery activity – consider implementing a system or method to capture the learning! Support the person to identify what they enjoyed about the experience and why they enjoyed it, or, if they didn't enjoy the experience, what they didn't enjoy and why. What input can others involved in the experience contribute to ensure a well-rounded understanding is captured?

Learn more about these vital steps and more by accessing our [Securing Futures through Employment](#) resource.

Looking for more information?

For more useful resources and information, visit our websites at www.family-advocacy.com or www.ric.org.au

Contact us:

If you would like to discuss any of these tips or explore further ways to support your family member in accessing meaningful employment, contact us at:

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