

What is Supported Employment?

The goal of supported employment is to assist persons with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining community integrated competitive employment.



Everyone, regardless of disability, has the right to work.

The vision of supported employment can be characterized by a customer-driven approach, and includes several critical best practices, as follows:

Choice: The opportunity for a person with a disability to make choices concerning employment, living arrangements, and recreation.

Control: A person with a disability is a customer of supported employment and must be in a position to not only choose the service provider and employment specialist but to have a measure of control over the services that he/she seeks. A person should have the ability to freely act upon his/her choices and decisions without fear of reprisal.

Careers: Career development is an important consideration for any adult seeking employment. The customer-driven approach to supported employment places an increased emphasis on the individual spending time with a direct service provider to identify goals for long-term career development.

Full Community Inclusion: Full community inclusion calls for a vision of society in which all persons are viewed in terms of their abilities and are welcomed into the mainstream of community life. Assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain full inclusion in the work setting will facilitate a new vision of community where all members are valued.

Long Term Supports: Long-term supports should be designed to assist the customer in the identification and provision of supports and extended services that maintain and enhance the person's position as a valued member of the work force.

Retention and employment satisfaction must be planned for from the beginning.

Community & Business Supports: Supports provided by individuals such as co-workers and employers who are not hired by a human services organization should be found both at the employee's place of work and in the community. The employment specialist should be spending less time delivering a support and more time assisting a person with a disability in accessing different support options and strategies.

Continuous Quality Improvement: Providers must listen to the wishes and desires of persons with disabilities to determine the agency's mission, goals and objectives. People with disabilities who are participating in supported employment should be assisting in developing and evaluating services,

Assistive Technology: Technology has opened unlimited employment opportunities for persons with disabilities who at one time faced enormous barriers concerning accessibility, communication, and mobility.

Person-Centered Planning: Person-centered planning seeks to support the contributions of each individual in his/her local community by building a support group around the individual. This support group functions together to assist the individual in obtaining his/her goals.

In New Jersey, transition planning must begin by the school year in which a student will be 14. (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(3)(11)). All students with disabilities should receive transition planning as part of their IEP meetings. The student and the IEP team create a vision for the future, and each year specific goals and services are identified to work toward that vision.

For students interested in employment after high school, transition planning should focus on:

- Vocational evaluation
- Career awareness
- Structured learning experiences
- Community-based work activities
- Connecting with community agencies

Transition planning is individualized, because each student is different. Students are vital to the process because it's their life and future!

Remember, it's never too early to start helping your child prepare for a successful future.

For additional information about your child's transition, please contact:



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Graduating into Employment

(Including Supported Employment)



Transition Planning

In High School can
Make a
Difference!

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