

FAQS

1. What are the benefits of early work experiences for students with disabilities?

Having early work experiences increases the odds of getting a job after graduation for all students, including students with disabilities. Those work experiences can help students discover what features of a particular job they may enjoy or dislike, and provides opportunities for them to practice skills they may need on the job.

2. How can I identify what my students' interests and skills are?

During the Career Exploration stage, students are encouraged to gather information on a variety of careers. This may involve administering career assessments to see how a student's interests align with different employment opportunities. When the student is placed at a job site, they can further investigate those interests and see whether what they think they are interested in truly aligns with what career they want.

3. What skills do I need to work on with my students to prepare them for employment?

This will depend on what career field your students are preparing for. In general, all students will benefit from instruction in "soft skills." This may include communication skills or social skills that most employees use routinely in their jobs. Students can practice following a schedule, communicating effectively with employers, and managing their own

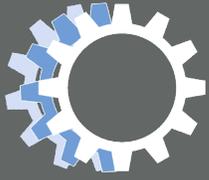
4. What does a teacher need to know about Fair Labor Standard Act?

The Fair Labor Standard Act regulates job sampling. There are seven criteria that must be met to comply with the law. The teacher should familiarize her or himself with them. More information is below:

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/>

5. Can I work with a sub-minimum wage provider when developing employment experiences for my students?

According to Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (commonly referred to as WIOA), schools cannot enter into contracts or agreements with sub-minimum wage providers. Schools currently contracting with agencies holding sub-minimum wage certificates will no longer be able to continue. Across the country, new rules are imposing strict limits on people with disabilities being paid less than minimum wage or working in sheltered work settings. If your students are being paid for work, they need to be making at least minimum wage. However, students may also work in unpaid jobs, provided they do not violate the Fair Labor Standards Act. For more information on Section 511, visit this link: https://transitionta.org/sites/default/files/Section%20511_0.pdf



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6. How do I know what types of early work experiences are best for my student?

There is no one single “best” work experience for all students. There is no one-size-fits-all career pathway. A series of well-planned work experiences over time can help students identify desired post-school employment goals, as well as gain the skills and knowledge and experience they need to achieve it. Though the trajectory of work experiences will look different for each student, all students need a continuum of work experiences that build in intensity over time, some of which occur out in the community. In general, the deeper and more diverse those experiences are, the more the student and team will learn.

Take into account the preferences, interests, strengths, and needs of each individual student. Does your student know the general area they want to work in, but not what particular job? You might consider setting up a job sampling experience. What about a student who wants to work as a welder and is approaching the end of high school? An apprenticeship might be a great way to help this student land a job after high school.

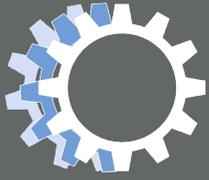
7. What are key factors to a successful career preparation and/or training experience?

Here are some key factors that contribute to a successful and meaningful early work experience:

- a) A well-defined objective. All early work experiences should have a clear purpose and goals for each individual student.
- b) Good documentation. All of these early work experiences should involve documenting each student’s progress and outcomes.
- c) Flexibility. Sometimes, work experiences will not start off smoothly and might require adjustments.
- d) Built-in support. Educators, paraprofessionals, and other school staff can provide support in these various work experiences, but don’t overlook peers and other forms of natural support.
- e) Clear connection to academic work. Specific learning outcomes tied to annual goals and coursework should be established before beginning a work experience.
- f) Variety of work experiences. Students with disabilities will benefit from having a variety of work experiences throughout their transition years.

8. How do I use my students’ career preparation and training experiences to inform his or her IEP development?

Every work experiences provide valuable information in the development of your students’ IEPs. First of all, these work experiences can help students refine what they are really looking for in a job and inform their postsecondary goals. Additionally, with each new work experience and new environment students are likely to discover something new about themselves. Work-based learning experiences can help students with disabilities—and their IEP team—put all the pieces together to form a clear picture of where the student is headed and what instruction and supports are needed to get there. If a student is in a work experience, the skills needed for a job become more apparent and can be built in as annual goals in the IEP. Think beyond job-specific skills to the soft skills that often make or break



employment success.

9. What are some ways I can build in student reflection during and after these experiences?

Reflecting on the work experience is a key way to make career preparation and training more meaningful for students. Here are just a few work products students can develop during and after their work experience: presentation, written article, blog, website, and fact sheet/pamphlet.

10. What are some other ways employers can get involved besides providing a worksite experience for youth?

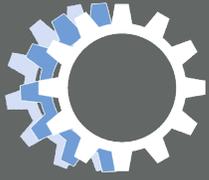
There are many ways that employers can share their knowledge and experiences with students. They may serve as mentors in a variety of roles related to career awareness. In job mentoring, students are paired with an employer who provides them with information related to their career field. Employers can also serve as supervisors for school-based enterprises or for an integrated project that is part of the curriculum. Career fairs or career presentations are a great format for employers to share what they know and provide opportunities for students to ask questions. Teachers can be creative in how they recruit employers to share their knowledge with students.

11. What jobs are prohibited for students?

There are 21 hazardous occupations that are prohibited to minors under code TCA 50-5-106:

1. In or about plants or establishments manufacturing or storing explosives or articles containing explosive components;
2. Motor vehicle driving occupations;
3. Coal mine occupations;
4. Logging and sawmill operations;
5. Operation of power-driven woodworking machines;
6. Exposure to radioactive substances and ionizing radiations;
7. Operation of elevator and other power-driven hoisting apparatus;
8. Operation of power-driven metal forming, punching and shearing machines;
9. Mining elements other than coal;
10. Slaughtering, meat packing, processing or rendering;
11. Operation of power-driven bakery machines;
12. Operation of power-driven paper products machines;
13. Manufacture of brick, tile and kindred products;
14. Operation of circular saws, band saws and guillotine shears;
15. Wrecking, demolition and ship-breaking operations;
16. Roofing operations;
17. Excavation operations;
18. In any place of employment where the average monthly gross receipts from the sale of intoxicating beverages exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total gross receipts of the place of employment, or in any place of employment where a minor will be permitted to take orders for or serve intoxicating beverages regardless of the amount of intoxicating beverages sold in the place of employment;
19. Any occupation which the commissioner shall by regulation declare to be hazardous or injurious to the life, health, safety and welfare of minors;
20. Posing or modeling alone or with others while engaged in sexual conduct for the purpose of preparing a film, photograph, negative, slide or motion picture;
21. Occupations involved in youth peddling.

For more information, visit: <http://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/2010/title-50/chapter-5/part-1/50-5-107>



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12. What should a teacher research when considering businesses to partner with?

A labor market analysis can show you where job growth is or will be heading and exploring transportation options to and from the job site. Ensuring you are training students for positions where there will be openings and ensuring they can get to the jobs from their homes helps to eliminate two of the biggest barriers students with disabilities face.

13. How can I effectively train the para-educator who functions as a job coach to collect data? Instructional procedures should be explicitly stated on the data collection document or format; these procedures could be outlined using a task analysis. Allowing opportunities for direct training and role play may also be effective training methods.

14. What would be my role as a job coach and how do I refrain from overstepping boundaries with other employers/employees?

A job coach's role in the employment process is "to help students learn to perform their job successfully, providing instruction and support tailored to each student's needs". It will be helpful to approach the employer with information about who you are and the supports you will provide to your student. You could also have your student advocate for him/herself to their colleagues or employer if they choose to do so.

15. How do I know where to start with on-the-job training?

Getting to know the student is a great starting point. Establishing a healthy relationship with students may aid in producing better outcomes. After this, use a student job planning tool to assist in finding what supports may be necessary. Collaborate with other professionals to find the student's goals and what may be necessary to help them reach this goal. Make a task analysis for the skills necessary at the workplace, and establish baseline for the student's current abilities. Work off of that and plan for instruction that will help the student be independent in the workplace.

16. How do I transfer to self-monitoring data collection without the stigma?

Be creative in how you format the self-monitoring data collection. For instance, if your student works at a grocery store, a self-monitoring sheet small enough to fit in her/his pocket may be more beneficial than a self-monitoring sheet posted somewhere the student visits frequently.

17. When fading to more natural supports, how can I reassure the employer if he/she appears to be nervous or unsure the student will be successful in the environment?

Collecting and presenting data in a format that is understandable is an important factor in ensuring that your student has the skills necessary to work with more independence. These data can be presented to the employer when you have evidence that your student is able to work with more natural workplace supports. Also, train the employer or someone they have appointed to collect data to monitor your student's success with the use of natural supports.