

NOVEMBER 2013



Collaborative on  
DISCOVERY & INNOVATION  
in Employment

*START EXPLORING NOW  
FOR TOMORROW:*

# A Family Guide for Vocational Planning



Christopher Vatland, Brenda Clark & Lise Fox



This publication was produced by Florida Center for Inclusive Communities with funding from the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc., Tallahassee, Florida (contract #854EM12B).

Sponsored by United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.

Recommended citation:

Vatland, C., Clark, B., Fox, L. (2013). *Start exploring now for tomorrow: A family guide for vocational planning*. Florida Center for Inclusive Communities. Tampa, Florida: University of South Florida.

For more information, please contact:

Brenda Clark at [bclark7@usf.edu](mailto:bclark7@usf.edu)

*Collaborative on Discovery and Innovation in Employment*

is a program of the

FLORIDA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Department of Child and Family Studies

College of Behavioral and Community Sciences

University of South Florida

13301 Bruce B Downs Blvd, MHC 2113A

Tampa, FL 33612

Telephone: (866) 818-4797

[www.flcic.org](http://www.flcic.org)

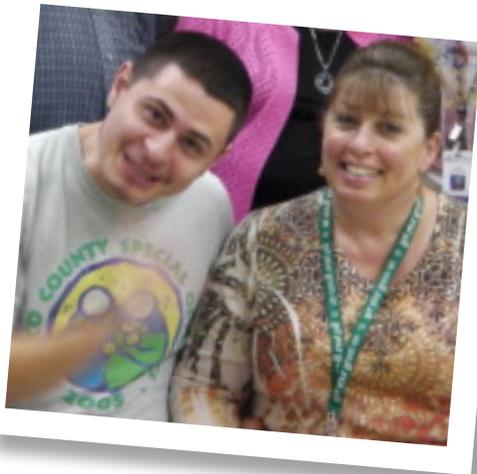


# Start Exploring Now for Tomorrow: A Family Guide for Vocational Planning

## Table of Contents



<b>An Introduction to this Guide</b>	<b>1</b>
What is Discovery? .....	1
What is Customized Employment?.....	1
Self-Determination .....	2
A Note about Person First Language.....	2
<b>How Do We Use the Guide?</b>	<b>3</b>
Ages 10 – 13.....	4
Ages 13 – 15.....	5
Ages 15 – 18.....	6
Ages 18 – 21.....	7
<b>Glossary of Transition &amp; Supported Employment Terms</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Resources for Navigating Transition and Employment</b>	<b>11</b>
Florida Resources.....	11
National Resources.....	13





# Acknowledgements

This work was made possible through the collaboration of important community and school district partners. The authors would like to extend a special thanks to the following contributors:

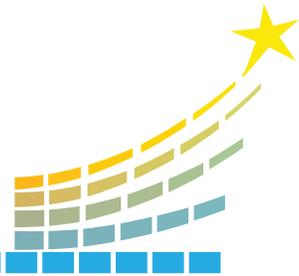
- ★ Robert Davis
- ★ Lisa Friedman-Chavez
- ★ Jamie Sagona
- ★ Patti Sanchez
- ★ Mindy Stevens
- ★ Olga Stirrup
- ★ Ellie Weber

In addition, our gratitude to the students whose photographs appear in the document:

- ★ Lindsay Boilard
- ★ Devin Cannon
- ★ Ahisamac Castro
- ★ Cody Clark
- ★ Pierre-Danny Deceus
- ★ Mattie DePrecker
- ★ Meghan Dorsey
- ★ Kevin James
- ★ Anthony Kingston
- ★ Shelby Louttit
- ★ Lisa Morgan
- ★ Jacob Mullen
- ★ Alexis Ramos
- ★ Rene Rodriguez
- ★ Josh Soper
- ★ Rebekah Vickers



# Start Exploring Now for Tomorrow: A Family Guide for Vocational Planning



## An Introduction to this Guide

Active family involvement is important for preparing your child for life after high school. Formal transition planning in school typically begins at age 16, with pre-planning beginning at age 13. Long before then, however, your child is gaining skills that will be beneficial in future paid jobs and for independent living. At this time, you are also learning more about what sparks his or her interest. This information will be vital when it comes to finding a job that will best match his/her strengths and preferences.

To improve employment outcomes for your child, it is helpful to take advantage of situations in your home and community to learn from your child and teach your child. Observe your child in various activities. Attend to how frequently and how long your child is engaged by various people and activities. Help your child to see possibilities for life after school. This means more than just asking, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” In addition, talk about what excites him/her and what is appealing about specific activities. Help your child practice and reward skills that will help him/her in future pursuits. Many of these skills and activity ideas related to these skills are highlighted in later sections of this guide.

This guide is rooted in the belief that all children have the ability to find jobs and careers that are not only within the scope of their abilities, but are aligned with their interests, preferences, and priorities. This idea, which is the foundation of the CODIE Model, is based on the principles and values of Discovery, customized employment planning, and self-determination.

### What is Discovery?

Discovery is a person centered planning process that involves getting to know a person before developing a plan for employment. It is conducted by a team that seeks to understand the person’s interests, skills, preferred environments, activities, current skills, and the ideal working conditions that can support the person in achieving meaningful and rewarding employment.

### What is Customized Employment?

Customized employment planning is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job seeker and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based on an individualized match between the strengths and interests of a job candidate and the identified business needs of an employer. The customized employment planning process facilitates employment possibilities for a person who might otherwise not achieve employment.





## Self-Determination



Self-Determination is the ability to take charge and guide one’s own life. As your child grows older, he/she needs to be given many opportunities to become more independent and to make decisions that will impact both current activities and future planning and support. This doesn’t mean allowing your child to make every decision without support, but guiding this process and slowly allowing more freedom as your child learns how to navigate school, home, and the community. There are skills related to self-determination, which will help your child to become more independent. Some of these include:

- Goal setting – learning how to set both short-term and long-term goals
- Self-monitoring – learning how to check progress towards these goals and celebrating the progress made
- Choice-making/decision-making – weighing options, determining and conveying preferences
- Problem solving – learning how to navigate barriers to reaching goals or preferences

Some of these skills will increase with time and experience. You can also help your child by providing him or her with opportunities to make choices and decisions, helping to identify both long term and short-term goals, and assisting to keep track of those goals. These don’t have to all be big decisions, they could involve what restaurant to go to and what to order for dinner. As your child becomes more comfortable with decision-making skills, opportunities should expand accordingly, with your child having more and more of an active role in planning at school, at home, and elsewhere.

## A Note about Person First Language

Every person is unique! Person-first language emphasizes that we are talking about a person first and foremost. A person might have a disability, but he or she is not defined by that disability – nor by another classification, such as curriculum or funding source. With this in mind, we don’t talk about disability before the person, for example “disabled child,” but a child who happens to have a certain disability, amongst other traits. And this particular child has certain support needs not simply because of the disability, but because of how he or she interacts with the world. The difference may seem subtle at first, but the message is big. This change in wording shows that the disability is just an aspect of the person and not all-defining. It certainly doesn’t precede the person’s name.

Another aspect of person-first language is that it emphasizes ability versus inability. A person is not confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair-bound, but “uses a wheelchair for mobility.” The emphasis here is that the person uses the tool, and is not confined or defined by it. Person-first language also promotes high expectations. Be aware of using “is” rather than “has.” For example, instead of saying, “Torrence is learning disabled or LD,” say, “Torrence has a learning disability.” Or describe the specific supports necessary for him to learn such as, “Torrence learns best if the desired behavior is demonstrated by someone else first.”

*In an IEP meeting, a student was asked, “How would you like us to refer to you if not autistic?”*

*She looked at her team and responded, “Julie.”*



Person first language has a direct positive impact on how others perceive a person with a disability. Person first language will encourage others to focus on the person and their unique talents, personality, and contributions versus regarding the person as part of a group that has deficits or is defined by a diagnosis.

## How Do We Use the Guide?

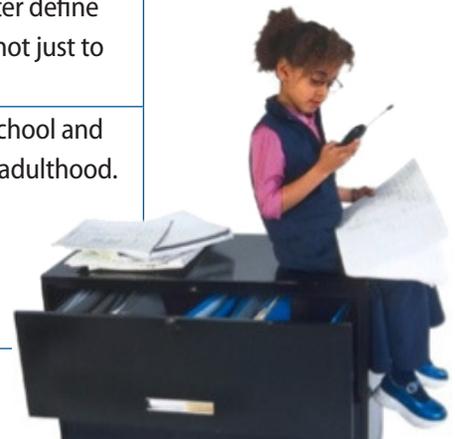
This guide includes suggested activities that families can engage in to help children learn more about careers, improve skills related to goals, and better understand their own preferences. The guide is divided into four age group sections:

Ages 10 – 13	Ages 13 – 15	Ages 15 – 18	Ages 18 – 21
--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

Activities at these age group sections are only listed as a general guide. Every young person is different. Some activities listed in the 13-15 year old age range might be explored with your son or daughter at age 12 or age 16. These activities build on one another to set the stage for future employment.

The list of activities for each age range is organized into four categories, as follows:

Explore jobs & careers	There are many activities that can help young people to explore jobs and careers. At younger ages, discussion might not be so much about what your child might pursue, but could include some discussion about the work activities of specific jobs in the community. At older ages, there should be more specific discussion about careers and how to best prepare for specific types of jobs.
Understand preferences	This category provides examples of activities that might help your child to hone skills related to finding a job, going through the hiring process, and maintaining a job. This category also includes activities that can help your child get along better with others and increase social skills, which are important in both finding and keeping a job.
Improve work skills	This includes suggestions of activities that help you to learn more about your child’s likes and dislikes – and in some cases, help your child to better define his or her own likes and dislikes. The ultimate goal for your child is not just to find any job, but one that will be satisfying as well as productive.
Partnerships	This category describes activities that families might expect from school and other agencies at various stages of the child’s progression towards adulthood. Many of these activities are vital to laying the foundation for future support at home, at work, and in the community. It is important to note here that you are not alone in the process of supporting your child on his or her path to work.





## Ages 10 – 13

At ages 10-13, the foundation is being laid for work skills. There are many opportunities for independence, working on negotiation, choice-making, decision-making, and opportunities to take responsibility. While there will still need to be much support, your child can work to make more decisions and take increasing responsibility to initiate chores, daily living skills, and other activities. Checklists and other items can be put into place to help with this increased independent activity.

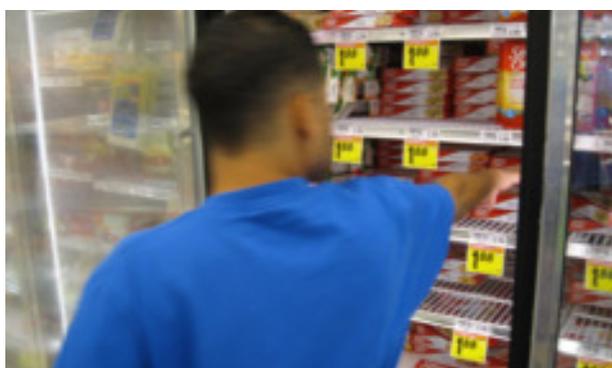
10-13	Themes	Examples
Explore jobs & careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about potential future vocations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore job postings with your child. Talk about the activities that correspond to specific jobs.</li> <li>Start a vocational scrapbook with pictures or information about jobs that are of interest to your child.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involvement in community activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth groups, camps, and inclusive programs (not just specialized programs).</li> <li>Parks and recreation, library.</li> <li>Team sports and group activities.</li> <li>Support your child to engage in volunteer or social service activities through a community group or your faith community.</li> </ul>
Understand preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify your child's preferences and strengths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note potential job skills (e.g., computers, social skills, attention to details, etc.).</li> <li>Note favored people and identify what works well in these relationships.</li> </ul>
Improve work skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use items that might be encountered in the workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visuals.</li> <li>Schedules, telephone, computer.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase responsibility with chores/homework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about chores that cover a variety of skills and environments.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social skill building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to ask for help.</li> <li>Encourage communication with doctors, sales people.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incentives for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage your child with specific feedback.</li> <li>Praise and name the behavior.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of work skills through everyday opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take messages, answer the phone.</li> <li>Make a list.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage your child to make decisions and increase autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pick out clothing, hair styles.</li> <li>Plan meals.</li> <li>Choose room decorations and arrangements.</li> </ul>
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School and home collaboration – share information related to your child's interests, preferences, and what others can do to help your child to be successful.</li> <li>Introduce your child to accommodations and services in the community (e.g., transportation services).</li> </ul>	



## Ages 13 – 15

Ages 13-15 can be a pivotal time in honing skills related to independence and self-determination. Your child might take a more active role in his or her IEP meeting; even helping to run the meeting or expressing interests and preferences. There are opportunities for your child to engage in self-advocacy skills and take more responsibility in other activities (e.g., showing independence and responsibility). Encourage your child with specific feedback and praise when you see your child initiate or take responsibility by commenting on what you observe. Saying, "I like the way you got your stuff together and into your backpack this morning," will tell your child specifically what he or she is doing well and not just that she is doing a "good job!"

13-15	Themes	Examples
Explore jobs & careers	• Talk about potential future vocations	• Look through trade magazines, explore job matching activities on the internet (visit <a href="http://www.fyitransition.org">www.fyitransition.org</a> that provides information specifically designed for youth and their families).
	• Volunteer activities in the community	• Faith community, Rotary Club, United Way, community clean-up day, fund-raisers.
	• Job shadowing	• Bring your child to work day, opportunities with neighbors or friends.
Understand preferences	• Continue to explore your child's preferences and strengths	• Talk about what vocations appeal to your child and what aspects of the job are appealing. • Link current preferences to required continued education and preparation.
Improve work skills	• Increase life skills	• Help with dinner preparation, cleaning, doing laundry. • What do I need to know when I'm alone? • How to ask for help.
	• Increase independence in organizations	• Help your child to take on responsibilities outside of home; with structure and support.
	• Incentives for work	• Provide a wage tied to chores or other activities (e.g., feed the pets, weed, clean the garage, organize a cabinet, fold clothes).
	• Budgeting and money management	• Increased involvement in grocery shopping; including making lists, estimating costs, and the transaction with the cashier.
Partnerships	• IEP begins to explore topics related to transition. • Discussion with school about diploma options. • Discussion about services for adults with disabilities for support at home, work, and community.	

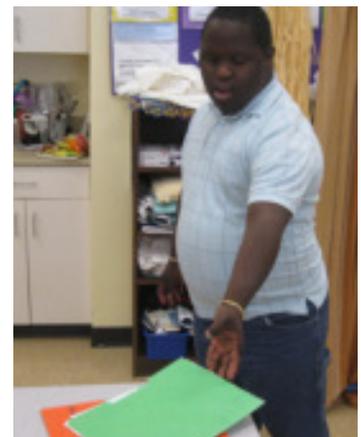




## Ages 15 – 18

At ages 15-18, there are many changes that occur and much that has to happen to prepare for adulthood. Transition services for this age group should be customized to your child's interest, preferences, and priorities. During these years, you and your child will also learn more about rights and responsibilities, health care benefits, social security benefits, and options to consider that will impact your decisions.

15 – 18	Themes	Examples
Explore jobs & careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spend time in a variety of vocational settings</li> <li>Explore possible continued education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work experience might be with school and/or outside of school hours.</li> <li>After-school activities, part-time jobs, school-based enterprises.</li> <li>Whether looking at supported employment or self employment, continued education is an option for honing job skills and for self-enrichment.</li> </ul>
Understand preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matching preferences and strengths to future vocations</li> <li>Considering barriers and opportunities for access to favored job settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss and use online and other resources, follow up from discussions at school regarding future plans.</li> <li>Note access to transportation, access to accommodations, access to people who can assist with potential work-related challenges.</li> </ul>
Improve work skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase familiarity with work-related concepts</li> <li>Interview skills</li> <li>Increase self-determination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about and observe work place environments and expectations (e.g., what people wear, how they take breaks, how they greet and talk to each other).</li> <li>Cleaning up area and putting materials away.</li> <li>Work on mock application/interviews.</li> <li>Provide ample opportunities for making decisions regarding daily activities.</li> <li>Discuss concept of social reciprocity, support of friends and significant others.</li> </ul>
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Discovery (e.g., person-centered planning) to determine preferences and needed supports.</li> <li>Discussion about eligibility for adult housing services and/or supported employment.</li> </ul>	





## Ages 18 – 21

At 18, your son or daughter, like everyone else at this age, is still gaining skills to further independence and increase employability. He or she may be thinking about enrolling in classes after high school (e.g., technical school, community college), getting a job, or continuing high school through a modified diploma program. Regardless of the path your son or daughter chooses to take, supports and services should be tailored with his or her needs and preferences in mind.

18 – 21	Themes	Examples
Explore jobs & careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue discussion about current and future fit of employment and other resources</li> <li>Increasingly independent involvement in community activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate with those supporting employment; what is working well and what needs improvement.</li> <li>Celebrate successes in job and other pursuits.</li> <li>Provide support when needed, but allow for mistakes that are not major health or safety risks.</li> </ul>
Understand preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased familiarity with rights and laws</li> <li>Increased self-advocacy</li> <li>Reinforce attributes that are valued in work and social settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about guardianship and rights and responsibilities of being an adult.</li> <li>Problem-solving skills (e.g., issues around transportation, health care, benefits planning, and finances).</li> <li>Stating preferences.</li> <li>Evaluating options and making decisions.</li> <li>Join self-advocacy organizations.</li> <li>Discuss commitment to work, commitment to others, and commitment to self.</li> </ul>
Improve work skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued exploration and refinement of preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for independent exploration work settings.</li> </ul>
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential continued support with school until 21.</li> <li>Developing partnerships – DD services, Vocational Rehabilitation, One Stop Career Center and others.</li> <li>Advocacy organizations such as APSE, FSAA, FL SAND.</li> <li>Other advocates as determined by your son/daughter.</li> </ul>	





# Glossary of Transition & Supported Employment Terms

The following are some terms used by people who support career exploration and employment planning. Please be sure to discuss your understanding of the terms being used with your child's team of supports to ensure everyone has the same understanding of the actions and expectations to address your child's employment goals.

**Accommodation:** Modification or adjustment to the work environment that supports a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential functions of the position, or enables the person to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as other employees without disabilities in similar situation, or to the application process that enable a qualified applicant with disability to be considered for a desired position which he qualifies for.

**Action plan:** A plan developed by the child and his team consisting of the goal, one or more actions to move to the goal, identifies who is responsible for each action, expected time to complete the action, and keeps record of the status or result of each action.

**ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act:** The ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination in employment, government services, and public accommodations.

**APD - Agency for Persons with Disabilities:** The state agency supporting persons with developmental disabilities in living, learning, and working in their communities.

**Apprenticeship:** A process of training and supervision by a skilled professional in a work setting.

**Assistive technology:** Devices that assist people with disabilities to perform a tasks, behavior, or communication activities.

**BEES:** The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services administers programs for students with disabilities. Additionally, the bureau coordinates student services throughout the state and participates in multiple inter-agency efforts designed to strengthen the quality and variety of services available to students with special needs.

**Benchmarks:** The standards or points of reference used by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to determine the progress made towards maintaining employment. Payment of the employment support provider is tied to the benchmarks.

**Benefits planning:** Analysis of the effect that work and other life situation changes have on public and private programs benefits. Benefits planning is completed by a certified work incentive consultant who meets with the individual with disabilities and the family.

**BLN – Business Leadership Network:** A national non-profit organization comprised of business representatives that is focused on the value of including employees with disabilities in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace.

**CBTAC – Certified Business Technical Assistant Consultant:** The Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant is a program of Florida Vocational Rehabilitation, in partnership with The Center for Social Capital (part of Griffin-Hammis Associates) for vendors wishing to offer self-employment services to individuals with disabilities.

**CBI - Community Based Instruction:** Vocational instruction and hands-on experiences provided to the student in the community instead of on the school campus

**Cost plan:** Planning the type, duration, frequency, service provider, and cost of services authorized for implementation.

**Customized employment:** See page 1.

**CWIC – Community Work Incentive Coordinator:** Trained expert that provides in-depth counseling about benefits and the effect of work on SSI and SSDI benefits. Focused on helping beneficiaries who desire to work understand their federal and state work incentives programs.

**DEAM – Disability Employment Awareness Month:** a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues, held through the month of October each year.

**Disability navigator:** Designated employee in the One Stop Career Centers that provides support to other employees in supporting job seekers with disabilities. Disability navigators facilitate the improvement of employment outcomes, self-sufficiency and quality of life for jobseekers with disabilities.



**Disclosure:** A person with a disability decides to share information about his disability with the hiring authority for the purpose of requesting an essential accommodation in the workplace.

**Discovery:** See page 1 in this guide.

**DMD – Disability Mentoring Day:** A nationwide effort to promote career development for students with disabilities designated for a specific date in October annually.

**DRF – Disability Rights Florida:** The statewide designated protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in the State of Florida

**DVR - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation:**

Provides services that enable individuals with disabilities to find jobs or keep their job.

**EEOC – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:**

A federal law enforcement agency that enforces laws against workplace discrimination

**Employment consultant:** A person who support job seekers and employees with disabilities prepare for, find, and keep employment; provides training and education to employers/hiring authorities/ and others in a workplace related to staff development, awareness and, support to effectively work with employees with disabilities. This person is sometimes referred to as a job coach.

**Follow along phase:** The time of support provided to a person to keep and maintain their job.

**IEP – Individualized Education Program:** A plan that outlines school support and academic goals that are specific to the student, as mandated by IDEA. This plan is revisited annually – at a minimum – or whenever requested by any member, including the parent. The school system is required to provide all services that are written into the plan.

**Internship:** Fixed limited period of time spent within industry to gain practical experience for a position and job duties in the workplace.

**IPE – Individual Plan for Employment:** Written plan prepared to identify the actions of supports and services implemented to reach the employment goals.

**Job coach:** The job coach is a person who supports job seekers and employees with disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep employment. The job coach may also provide training and education to employers and others in a workplace related to staff development, awareness, and support to effectively work with employees with disabilities. This person is sometimes referred to as an Employment Consultant.

**Mentee:** Student and or job seeker with disabilities being advised, trained, or counseled by a mentor.

**Mentor:** Someone who teaches and provides help and advice to a new employee, intern, or trainee.

**On the job training (OJT):** Job training that allows a person to understand the demands of the job at the actual work site.

**One Stop Career Center:** Employment services and support for both job seekers and employers that offer seamless access to services under a variety of employment, training, and education programs

**Phase one:** The first stage in the process of employment services and supports to job seekers with developmental disabilities for finding, getting, and learning the job.

**Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS):** Plan to help reduce the impact of earned income on Supplemental Security Income (SSI). It allows the recipient to set aside income and or resources towards a work goal for a specific period of time.

**Profile summary:** This document details the job seeker's contributions, ideal conditions to be successful in specific work environments, and qualities, characteristics and experiences of the job seeker.

**School-Based Enterprise (SBE):** A school-based enterprise is a set of entrepreneurial activities undertaken by students that provides an economic, social, and educational return to the student, school, and community.

**Self-advocate:** The action of the persons with a disability representing themselves or their views, perspectives, or interests.

**Self-determination:** The ability and opportunity for a person to make decisions based on his/her own preferences. See page 2.



**Situational vocational assessment:** A tool for assisting a person with a disability to make choices about the types of jobs and work environments that they would enjoy through experiences of job tasks in a variety of actual work environments in the community.

**Social capital:** Relationships and social ties that can expand one's choice-making opportunities, increase one's options, and lead to a more enriched quality of life.

**SSA – Social Security Administration:** The SSA administers and oversees social security to all eligible citizens.

**SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance:** SSDI pays benefits to an insured person ("insured" meaning a person who worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes) and certain members of their family.

**SSI – Supplemental Security Income:** SSI pays benefits based on financial need.

**Social Security Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) (or work incentives):** Special rules that allow individuals with disabilities to work and reduce the impact of those earnings on Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

**Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA):** A level of earnings used by Social Security Administration to indicate the performance of work for pay or profit.

**Support coordination:** Support coordination is the service of advocating, identifying, developing, coordinating and accessing supports and services on behalf of individuals or assisting individuals and their families to access supports and services on their own.

**Supported employment:** Paid competitive employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support for individuals with the most severe disabilities.

**Transition:** A change from one state or condition to another. This term is often used in schools to refer to planning and preparation for life after high school.

**Trial work period:** The nine month time period that an individual can earn over the SGA limit and not have it affect their ability to receive a disability check.

**Visual resume:** This typically refers to a graphic resume. This resume often includes pictures showing the person engaged in activities that would be applicable to the job.

**VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) counselor:** The VR Counselor helps people with disabilities live fuller, more independent lives by assisting them in securing and maintaining gainful employment.



# Resources for Navigating Transition and Employment

## Florida Resources

### Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)

The APD works in partnership with local communities and private providers to assist people who have developmental disabilities and their families. APD also provides assistance in identifying the needs of people with developmental disabilities for supports and services. The Agency Supports Persons with Developmental Disabilities in Living, Learning, and Working in their Communities. <http://apd.myflorida.com/customers/application/>

### Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES)

The mission of exceptional student education in Florida, a committed alliance for the development of the unique gifts of each exceptional person, is to ensure the achievement of each and every individual's extraordinary purpose by expanding opportunities through collaboration of families, professionals, and communities who guarantee highest expectations and individual success.

<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/parent/>

### Business Leadership Network (BLN)

The primary purpose of the Florida Business Leadership Network (FBLN) is to promote diversity policies that include people with disabilities and hiring practices that target candidates with disabilities.

<http://www.abletrust.org/fbln/>

### Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)

The Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD) provides support and assistance with the goal of optimizing the potential of people with autism and related disabilities.

<http://www.florida-card.org/index.htm>

### Center for Independent Living (CIL)

A consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private, nonprofit organization designed and operated within a local community by persons who have disabilities to provide an array of independent living services.

[http://www.rehabworks.org/cil\\_map.shtml](http://www.rehabworks.org/cil_map.shtml)

### Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM)

Florida Disability Employment Awareness Month/ Disability Mentoring Day (DEAM/DMD) is part of a national event highlighting career paths and participating businesses to students, job seekers, and veterans with disabilities through hands-on career exploration, on-site job shadowing and ongoing mentoring potentially leading to internship and employment opportunities.

<http://www.floridamd.org/>

### Disability Rights Florida

To advance the quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and freedom of choice of persons with disabilities through collaboration, education, advocacy, as well as legal and legislative strategies.

[http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/our\\_work/services](http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/our_work/services)

### Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Florida Department of Education (DVR or VR)

The School to Work Transition program helps students with disabilities train for a job, continue their education, or find a job after high school.

<http://www.rehabworks.org/stw.shtml>

### Florida Association of People Supporting Employment First (FL APSE)

A chapter of the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

<http://www.flapse.org/>

### Florida Center for Inclusive Communities at the University of South Florida (FCIC)

FCIC engages in a variety of research, training, technical assistance, and policy projects and programs that affect the range and quality of supports and services available to enhance the lifestyles of individuals with disabilities, persons who may be at risk, and their families. The web site offers numerous materials including materials focused on job development and employment.

<http://www.flcic.org>



### **Florida Developmental Disabilities Council**

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council helps plan individual and family-centered supports for persons with disabilities in Florida. The Council offers numerous resources related to programs for individuals with disabilities and information that help individuals with disabilities and their families improve the quality of their lives.

<http://www.fddc.org/>

### **Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FLDRS)**

FLDRS Parent Services provides information, training, and support to districts and families, in order to promote effective parent participation in the education of children who are exceptional and/or have special needs.

<http://www.fdlrs.org/parent-services.html>

### **Florida Self-Advocates Network (FL SAND)**

A statewide association led by self-advocates who are united and active in speaking up for themselves, promoting rights, advocating for system change and creating community inclusion and awareness of its members.

<http://flsand.wordpress.com/>

### **Florida Self-Advocacy Alliance (FSAA)**

The Florida Self Advocacy Alliance serves to be a bridge of information and resources for self-advocates across the state and provide information on issues effecting people with disabilities, professionals, and families.

<http://floridaselfadvocacyalliance.org/>

### **FYI Transition**

Parents learn more about transition, planning, who can help you in Florida, success stories, employment or self-determination and there is also a link to a discussion board where parents can ask parents or transition experts questions.

<http://www.fyitransition.com/>

### **One Stop Career Centers**

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity promotes economic opportunities for all Floridians through successful workforce, community, and economic development strategies. The Division of Workforce Services partners with Workforce Florida and the state's 24 Regional Workforce Boards to strengthen Florida's business climate by supporting employers and helping Floridians gain employment, remain employed and advance in their careers.

<http://www.floridajobs.org/Search?q=youth%20employment%20supports>

### **Project 10**

Project Transition Education Network assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes. This site contains information for students, families, and educators on employment options and strategies for students with significant disabilities.

<http://www.project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=128&PageCategory=Employment&PageSubCategory=Employing%20Youth%20with%20Significant%20Disabilities>

### **Students for APSE**

A national movement to empower transition aged students to take a stand, effect change, learn from others and stay on the cutting edge of Employment First. Members learn about working in their community and how to teach others they can do it too.

<http://www.apse.org/members/students.cfm>



## National Resources

---

### Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/>

### How work affects your benefits

<http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069>

### Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

Provides individualized technical assistance, consulting, and mentoring services to individuals with disabilities, families, and service providers including referrals, accommodations, and self-employment/small business development expertise.

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>

### National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD for Youth)

Navigating the road to work making the connection between youth with disabilities and employment.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>

### National Gateway to Self-Determination

A national consortium and clearinghouse for resources, training, and information on promoting self-determination.

<http://ngsd.org/families>

### Social Security Administration for youth and families

Here you will find what every youth and parent should know about Social Security. This site provides materials for children and parents to learn about Social Security and why it is important for families.

<http://www.ssa.gov/kids/>

### Social Security Work Incentives

General information of work incentives for SSDI and SSI beneficiaries.

<http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/generalinfo.htm>

### A guide for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

<http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11015.pdf>

### Social Security Benefits for children

<http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10085>

### Ticket to Work - Youth in Transition

Ticket to Work is a voluntary incentive program for SSI recipients 18 and older who want to transition to work. Incentives include keeping cash benefits and medical coverage during the transition and restarting SSI payments if recipients find they cannot work. Youth receiving SSI will receive a "ticket" when they reach their 18th birthday. Site includes a directory (searchable by zip code, city, county, or state) of Employment Networks that administer Ticket programs.

<http://www.yourtickettowork.com/youth>

### Think College! College Options for People with Intellectual Disabilities

A national organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disabilities. They have collected some resources from around the web for families who want more information about transition planning and participating in postsecondary education.

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/>

### Working While Disabled

<http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10095.pdf>



*Collaborative on Discovery and Innovation in Employment*

is a program of the

FLORIDA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES  
Department of Child and Family Studies  
College of Behavioral and Community Sciences  
University of South Florida  
13301 Bruce B Downs Blvd, MHC 2113A  
Tampa, FL 33612  
Telephone: (866) 818-4797

[www.flcic.org](http://www.flcic.org)

