

Considerations for Employment

Presented By: Albuquerque Public Schools, Transition Services

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify some of the challenges/issues faced by individuals with ASD as it relates to entering into the workforce
- Understand the importance of forward planning for youth while still receiving federally-mandated school services
- Increase knowledge of possible support strategies to maximize job performance and social integration related to workplace settings.

What is Autism?

- DSM-5 2013: challenges in social communication; repetitive behaviors including sensory issues
- Impacts development throughout the person's life
- Appears in very early childhood and does not go away
- Spectrum-- significant to mild functional limitations
- Probably genetic

What traits might affect employment?

- Sensory issues
- Social communication differences: non-verbal processing: abstractions: social rules
- Late stage developmental delays
- Routines and rituals
- Special interests or "fixations"-hyper focus

Zosia Zaks M. ED, CRC, Montana. Autism

Finding the right work is like discovering your own soul in the world.

Thomas Moore

Possible Support Strategies:

- Always start with the person by understanding their unique interests, gifts, talents through
- **The Discovery Process**
Conversation/Observation/Exploration/Interviewing/Profile

An Employment Planning Meeting looks at:

- 1) Conditions (essentials)
- 2) Preferences
- 3) Contributions to Employer
- 4) Concerns (can address the issues and the strategies/supports/ interventions /solutions for social communication, social interaction, environmental demands, predictability, routine, sensory organizational structure, etc.)
- 5) Job Tasks
- 6) Potential Employers

Ongoing follow up is crucial until the job is secure!

Behind every dreamer stands an army full of true believers

Chris Burkmenn

Collaboration

- Job Seeker
- Family Members
- School Personnel
- Employer
- DVR Counselor
- Employment Agency

Agency services and supports

- Department of Labor
- Social Security Administration
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Developmental Disabilities
- Mental health services

Agency services and supports

- **Blended** funding-- moneys are blended into 1 lump sum or divided into budget categories
- **Braided** funding -- more than 1 funder authorizing their dollars to be included in an individual budget. Each maintains control of its dollars, keeps track of expenditures and evaluates return and investment

Job Development

- Ongoing long –term support to the employer and the employee
- Job matching, job analysis, negotiations
- Coach- Train- Educate

The Process

- After Discovery is complete collaborate with entire team
 - Focusing on the individual
- Maintain realistic goals
 - NEVER over sell!
- Prepare
 - Provide mock interviews, resume prep, etc.

**Who you are tomorrow
begins with what you do
today**

Tim Fargo

Nancy Kendall
 Transition Specialist, Vocational
 Assessment Specialist & Family Member

The story of my nephew

- Diagnosed as Asperger's at 3 years and is gifted
- Has a host of problems including
 - Type I diabetes
 - Visual convergence problems
 - Balance & coordination issues
 - Dysgraphia
 - Social awkwardness
- Raised by his mother alone after the death of his father

He's 21 years old --what is going on now?

- NOTHING
- He stays up all night and sleeps all day
- He relies on his mother for everything– food, laundry, medication management, etc.
- He doesn't work
- He doesn't go to college or any other kind of training
- He has no friends
- He spends most of his time on the couch

How did this happen?

- No planning!!
- No expectations, other than graduating from high school (which he did)
- No support from outside agencies & groups
- All suggestions from Auntie were rejected

So, what do I suggest?

- Start planning early, like really early, like when the child is born/diagnosed.
- Set goals well past the end of public school.
- Make sure that what he needs in order to meet those goals is being taught/trained
 - Example: Nephew wouldn't wear shoes. Wasn't a big deal when he was little or even in high school when we got him into slip-on sandals (dorky but acceptable). The problem is, virtually no employer is going to let you do that, so it IS a big deal and needs to be learned.
 - Less silly examples: Learning to manage his insulin, time management, cooking & laundry skills, money management, work skills, communication, using technology for work, etc.

What else?

- Don't pass up opportunities for support
 - Apply for services that may be needed as an adult. If you don't need them you can give them back.
 - Join support groups— both the individual & caregivers
 - Work with your school personnel to insure your child is getting the most out of his education. Don't assume that he is being taught everything he needs.
 - Listen to the Aunt!

It is often the tiny steps that define the big moments in our dreams.

Chris Burkmenn

You can't start too early

- Apply for services: DD waiver, SSI, Medicaid, etc.
Guardianship or POA by age 18
- Employment should be an expectation just like any other typically developing child
- Continually work on skills in the areas of independent living, communication, time management, organization, social behaviors, self determination
- Help them develop techniques that help reduce stress and anxiety
- Remember: High School is not the end.
- Spock would say that we want our family member to "Live Long and Prosper"

We may be born equal but we do not prepare equally...

Garrett McCoy

Preparation:

- Visual resume
- Informational interview
- Tours
- Visual supports
- Accessing the Workforce Development Center to acquire basic job and employability skills training
- Community work assessment

Networking:

- Worldwide web
- Email
- Social media
- Job try out
- Social events, groups, organizations
- Volunteering

Job Retention:

- Video modeling
- Social stories
- Co-workers as mentors for social inclusion
- Low/High technological supports
- Visual organizers
- Daily schedules
- Systematic instruction
- Task sequences

Self-employment or remote site employment could also be considerations

Resources:

- www.cdd.unm.edu Center for Development and Disability (CDD), Programs, Partners for Employment: Families and Job Seekers, Employers, Educators and Providers, and School to Work Transition
- www.do2learn.com/jobTIPS Student online program.
 - Determining Interests
 - Finding a Job
 - Getting a Job
 - Keeping a Job
- - www.dol.gov/odep ODEP Publications for order and download, Youth in Transition, "Skills to pay the Bills, Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success", Video Series, and Discussion Guide
- - www.ncwd-youth.info "The 411 on Disability Disclosure, A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities"

References:

- www.autismspeaks.org Family Services Employment Tool Kit Employment Planning for People with Autism Spectrum Disorders (2013)
- - www.dol.gov/odep Office of Disability Employment Policy, US Department of Labor:
- EARN= Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion
- JAN= Job Accommodation Network
- NCWD= National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
- PEAT=Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology
- - www.DisabilityInfo.gov, University of Massachusetts Medical School
- - www.pacer.org, PACER Center, (Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center), Programs: National Parent Center on Transition and Employment (NPCTE), Learning Center and Resource Library






