

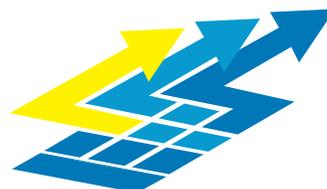
School to Employment Fact Sheet

One of the primary goals of secondary transition is to help prepare students for careers and employment. Research shows that paid employment while a student is still in school is the best indicator of paid employment as an adult (Fabian, 2007; Wagner, 2005).

DDS has adopted an Employment First Policy stating that employment opportunities in fully integrated work settings are the first priority for individuals with intellectual disabilities. (I.C.5. PO.001) Case managers developing Individual Plans for consumers who are 18 through 21 years of age with a Level of Need between one and three will include an employment outcome which contains reference to minimum or competitive wages.

How Can Schools, Families and Adult Agencies Work Together to Assist Students to Obtain Meaningful Employment?

- Presume employability. Ask “how” the student can become employed, not “if”
- Begin planning early (at least by age 15) using person centered planning and age appropriate transition assessments that are updated annually
- Work on “soft skills” such as communication, interpersonal and social skills that will transfer to the workplace
- Support student self-determination and self-advocacy skills
- Empower and enlist families and student support systems
- Include individualized employment goals in the student’s IEP related to achieving real work for real pay.
- Include community based learning such as career exploration, volunteering, on the job assessment, work experience and internship opportunities as transition services in the student’s IEP. These should start early and be based on the student’s preferences and interests.
- Support and encourage students to seek employment opportunities during the summer
- Strive for paid work experience in a job that is a good career match during a student’s last year of public schooling
- Network with school, family and community contacts for job opportunities
- Assist students to apply at age 18 to the Social Security Administration for Social Security Benefits and to the Dept. of Social Services for Medicaid/Title 19 (enroll in “Fee for Service/ Straight). Medicaid eligibility allows student to receive DDS vocational funding upon graduation. Utilize the DDS Helpline to assist with the Social Security Benefits and Title 19 application process.



DDS Employment First Initiative
Real Work for Real Pay

- Connect with DDS as early as possible (at least by age 15). Discuss employment goals with your DDS Educational Liaison or Transition Coordinator and once assigned, your DDS Case Manager.
- Connect with BRS the year prior to graduation or exiting public school. If found eligible for services, discuss employment goals with your BRS counselor.
- Contact the Benefits Counselor in your area to discuss Social Security Work Incentives and the impact of wages on benefits.
www.ct.gov/connecttowork/cwp/view.asp?a=3493&q=414402
- Begin identifying adult provider agencies that offer services and supports for real work and real pay. Ask DDS and/or BRS and your school for information.
- Consult DDS about hiring and managing your own supports.
- Invite all adult agencies to school meetings discussing transition. Scheduled transition meetings, especially during the last year of public school, can help promote collaboration and commitment to employment outcomes.