

Transition Activities for Employment

Working in **competitive integrated employment** is an important goal for transition-age youth.

Employment can look like a lot of things: *full or part-time employment in a paid job* or *working in supportive employment*. Different degrees of support will be needed to prepare these youth and young adults for the work force. *Job shadowing, job coaching, and supervised work experiences* are all important for employment preparation.

Competitive Integrated Employment means a person with a disability works in a regular job in the community alongside people who do not have disabilities. The job pays at least the minimum wage, offers opportunities to advance, and matches the person's skills, abilities, and interests. The worker is included in the same workplace as others, has the same responsibilities and benefits, and is paid fairly for the work they do.

The following skills should be considered and practiced to prepare youth and young adults with disabilities and special healthcare needs to work as independently as possible.

Organization and Time Management

- **Try making a weekly calendar:** Write down your school, work, and personal plans for the week. Check it each morning or use a computer or application based calendar and reminder system
- **Practice reading clocks:** See if you can tell what time it is on both a regular clock and a digital clock and have someone check if you are correct.
- **Set an alarm for the morning:** Try waking up on your own for a week using an alarm clock or your phone.
- **Try using a timer for tasks:** Set a timer for 15 minutes and see how much of your homework or chores you can finish before it goes off.
- **Write a daily to-do list:** In the morning, try listing three things you want to get done. Cross them off as you finish.



- **Break down a big job:** Next time you have a big task, like cleaning your room, write out each small step. Do one step at a time until each small step complete results in the big task being done.
- **Plan a goal:** Choose something you want to achieve, like getting a summer job. Write down the steps you need to take and check them off as you go.
- **Try a reminder app:** Download a free app if you have a cell phone and set reminders for important things, like taking medicine or leaving for work.
- **Track your attendance:** Keep a log of how many days you arrive on time for school or work. Try to improve your record each week.



Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

- **Learn about your rights:** Read a short article or watch a video about workplace rights for people with disabilities.
- **Practice asking for help:** Role-play with a friend or teacher, asking for help with a task or problem.
- **Spot and report harassment:** Talk about what harassment looks like and practice what you would say or do if you saw it.
- **Make a decision:** Pick a simple choice (like what to eat for lunch) and explain your decision to someone else.
- **Express your needs:** Practice saying what you need, like “I need a break” or “Can you help me with this?”
- **Notice problems:** Think of a time something didn’t go as planned. Talk about how you noticed and what you did.
- **Solve a problem:** Practice solving a simple problem, like what to do if you forget your lunch.



Safety

- **Practice calling 911:** Role-play making a call to emergency services and saying your name and location.
- **Learn to use equipment safely:** Ask someone to show you how to use a tool or machine at work or home, then practice with supervision.
- **Review safety rules:** Read the safety rules for your school or workplace and talk about why each one is important.
- **Know who to contact:** Make a list of people to call if you get hurt at work or school.
- **Plan a bus trip:** Practice planning a trip using public transportation, including reading the schedule and finding your stop.



Financial Management

- **Sort and count money:** Practice counting out bills and coins to pay for something small, like a snack.
- **Make a simple budget:** Write down how much money you will make in a week from your job and what you will need to spend money on that week. See if you can save a little money.
- **Learn about paychecks:** Look at a sample paycheck and talk about what each part means.
- **Fill out a form:** Practice filling out a simple financial form, like a bank deposit slip or a sample tax form.
- **Open a bank account:** Visit a bank (or look online) and learn what you need to open an account.
- **Track spending:** Keep a notebook of everything you buy for a week and add up the total.
- **Learn about getting paid:** Ask someone to explain how they get paid at work (check, direct deposit, etc.).
- **Learn about benefits:** Talk to a counselor or teacher about how working might change your benefits.



Job Seeking

- **Search for jobs:** Use a computer or phone to look up job postings in your area.
- **Write a resume:** Find a template of a resume online. Fill in your information, like your education and skills, then have a teacher or family member look it over for assistance.
- **Fill out a job application:** Practice filling out a sample job application with your information.
- **Write a cover letter:** Draft a short letter explaining why you want a job and what makes you a good fit.
- **Practice interviewing:** Role-play a job interview with a friend or teacher, answering common questions.
- **Pick interview clothes:** Choose an outfit you would wear to a job interview and explain why it's appropriate.
- **Practice hygiene:** Make a checklist for getting ready for an interview (shower, brush teeth, comb hair).



Job Keeping

- **Track your attendance:** Use a calendar to mark each day you arrive on time for work or school.
- **Work independently:** Try completing a task without help and see how you do.
- **Request time off:** Practice writing or saying a request for time off for sickness or vacation.
- **Show a positive attitude:** Write down three ways to show you're positive at work (smiling, helping others, saying thank you).
- **Fill out a time sheet:** Practice filling out a sample time sheet for a week of work. Find a sample online or ask a friend who works what their time sheet looks like.
- **Dress for work:** Pick out clean, appropriate clothes for your job and lay them out the night before.



- **Practice hygiene:** Make a daily routine for personal care before work.
- **Plan your commute:** Figure out how you'll get to work each day and practice your route to ensure you are on time.
- **Use a visual schedule:** Make a step-by-step list or chart for a job task and follow it. Have your boss or coworker assist if needed to make sure you list every step needed to complete the task fully.
- **Practice workplace interactions:** Role-play greeting your boss or co-workers each morning.
- **Practice manners:** Make a list of polite things to say or do at work and try them out.

Communication

- **Ask for feedback:** Practice asking someone, "How did I do?" after finishing a task.
- **Use workplace language:** Make a list of words or phrases that are okay to use at work and practice them.
- **Practice body language:** Role-play making eye contact, smiling, and standing up straight.
- **Practice voice control:** Try speaking quietly indoors and louder in a noisy place.
- **Have a conversation:** Practice starting and keeping a conversation going with a friend or teacher.

Interpersonal

- **Work in a team:** Join a group activity and practice sharing ideas and listening to others.
- **Handle disagreements:** Role-play a situation where you disagree with someone and practice solving it calmly.
- **Show empathy:** Practice noticing how someone feels and saying something kind.
- **Practice professionalism:** Make a list of professional behaviors (being on time, dressing neatly) and try them out.



- **Be friendly:** Smile and say hello to three new people today.
- **Interact with authority:** Practice greeting and responding to a teacher, boss, or supervisor.
- **Respond to requests:** Role-play saying “yes” or “no” politely when someone asks you to do something.
- **Learn about work ethics:** Talk about what it means to be honest and reliable at work.

Personal

- **Practice leadership:** Lead a small activity, like organizing a game or group discussion.
- **Pay attention to detail:** Try a task that needs careful work, like sorting papers or checking your answers.
- **Keep your area tidy:** Spend 10 minutes each day organizing your workspace.
- **Practice soft skills:** Use social media responsibly, show up on time, communicate clearly, and finish your tasks.

Sources

- [Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center](#) Workplace Readiness Training
- [Working Independently, Here We Come! A Checklist for Identifying Skills Needed to Work Independently](#)

Other Resources

- Maryland State Department of Education [Department of Rehabilitation Services \(DORS\)](#)
- Work with the transition team at your school to further practice these skills