

Career Planning and Preparation

Six Key Messages

Whether a young student, or an individual who has exited school, it is never too late to start planning for employment. By following the steps outlined below, individuals with disabilities can begin career planning and preparation with confidence.

Educators and parents should help students to:

1. Begin early with a proactive approach.

Career planning is a lifelong process of discovery as the student gets older and interests change. Along the way, more doors will open for students as obtaining new skills sets will increase opportunities.

2. Practice self-determination and self-advocacy skills.

There are many alternatives to guardianship that do not require an individual to relinquish critical rights.

3. Explore a variety of experiences based on skills, strengths, and talents.

Exposing students to new opportunities increases their awareness of job possibilities. Job fairs, websites, videos, and tours are just a few ways students can learn more about careers.

4. Set goals and identify a plan of action.

If the student is new to goal setting, start with small goals and gradually build up as milestones are reached. Incorporate these conversations into Individualized Education Planning (IEP) meetings and revisit them often. Parents and educators should encourage trial and error to determine the best method for success.

5. Showcase experiences and talents.

Assist students in highlighting their abilities and accommodations in a portfolio or resume. Be sure to update this at least biannually to highlight new skills and experiences.

6. Identify and utilize all supports.

We all have a support system in our daily routines. From home, school, or in the office, we all count on others to make our lives functional. Create a list of personal connections and community support partners.

Remember, it's never too late to start planning for the future.

Resources

- ✓ [Career Planning Toolkit](#): A Facilitator’s Guide to Supporting Youth with Disabilities Through the Career Planning Process. Center on Transition at Virginia Commonwealth University.
- ✓ [T-Folio](#): National Technical Assistance Center on Transition.

Developed by the Indiana Family Employment First Coalition,
with funding support from the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services’ Bureau
of Disabilities Services, a division of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

Produced by



INDIANA INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY
**CENTER ON COMMUNITY
LIVING AND CAREERS**