



Getting and Keeping the First Job

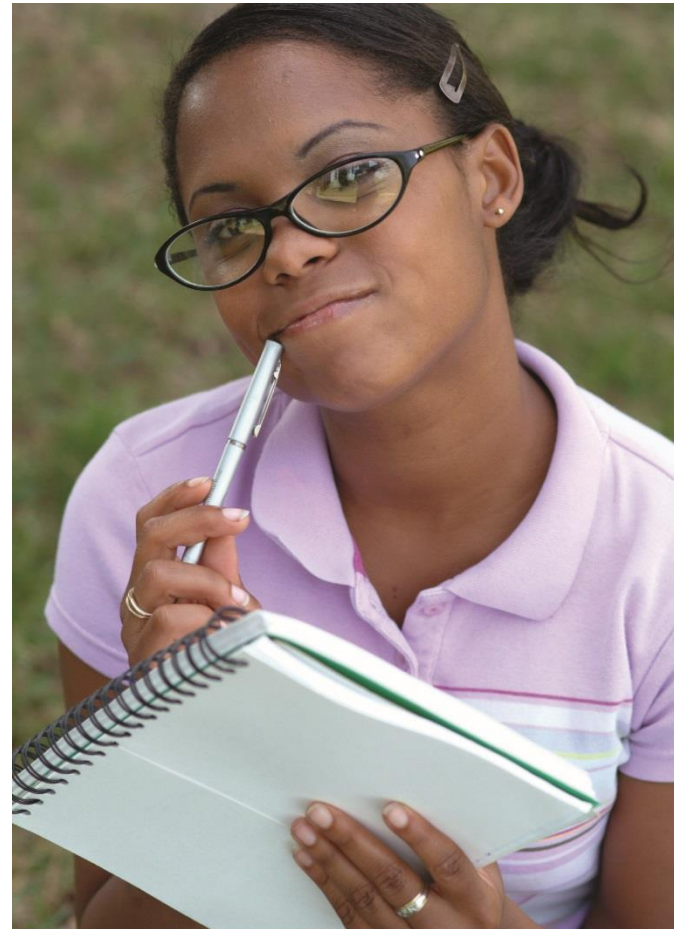
A curriculum created by the
National Family Advocacy Support and Training (FAST) Project, a
project of PACER Center: fastfamilysupport.org

Session Agenda

- What you need to know about employment
- Accommodations, disclosure and interviewing
- The employer's perspective
- Questions, comments & evaluations

What You Need to Know

- Self-awareness
- Career planning
- Role of families
- Building a resume
- Disclosure and job accommodations
- Interview tips
- Self-employment
- Other nuggets



It All Begins with Self-awareness



- Many youth don't know what their disability is, or haven't practiced telling others about it.
- It is crucial that youth know how their disability affects them in school and on the job.

Career Planning

Before youth begin looking for a job, ask:

- “What is your dream job?”
- “What do you need to know to do that job?”
- “What classes in school can help you learn the skills you need?”
- “Do you like to work inside or outside?”
- “Do you have good times of the day and bad?”

Why Career Planning?

- Helps avoid poor job matches
- Helps improve transition or employment plans such as the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Helps youth begin thinking about work in productive way
- Helps youth see a realistic, step-by-step plan to reach long-term career goals

How Families Can Help



Positive family involvement with youth leads to employment and academic success.

How to help:

- Identify strengths of youth
- Catch early signs of problems at work
- Work on “soft skills” at home
- **Maintain High Expectations of Youth**

Using Personal Networks

- Relationships, not want ads, provide the most job opportunities.
- Everyone has a network within the community they can use.
- Use your network to find opportunities.
- Tell service providers, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, about them.
- How did you find your first job?

The Resume



- Do we expect youth with disabilities to follow the same process as others to find employment?
- Every job seeker needs a resume.
- Be creative about what's listed. Paid employment is not the only example of work experience and skills.

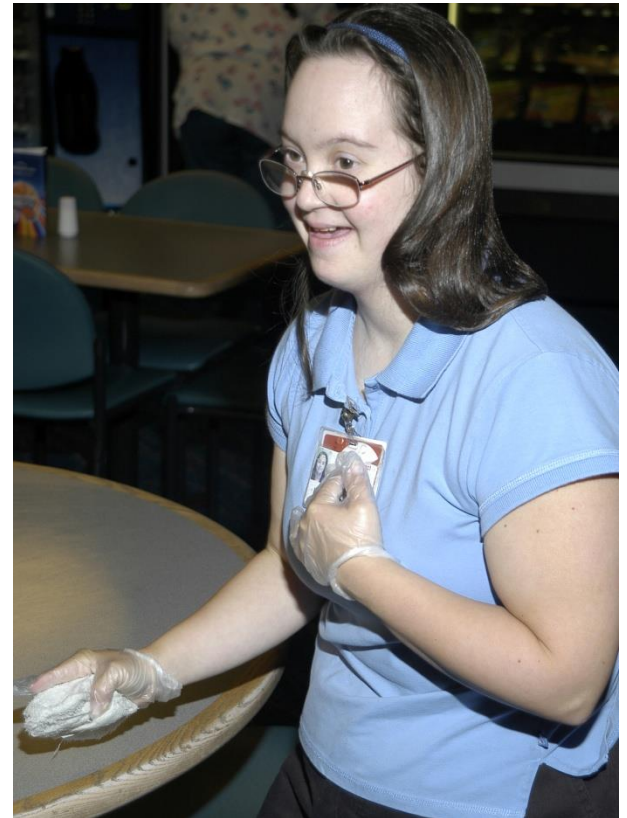
Volunteering

Use volunteer experiences to build work skills and improve a resume.

- Volunteering is not a long-term solution to paid employment
- Volunteering shows employers that youth want to work despite lack of paid employment
- Try several experiences so youth can explore different types of jobs

Job Accommodations

- Allow person to perform “essential functions” of a given job
- Are usually inexpensive and simple to put in place
- Can lead to a positive experience for youth
- Identifying potential accommodations
- Can be used to demonstrate initiative to employers when youth know what they need



Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

- Use fact sheets and accommodation examples from JAN during interview process.
- JAN includes helpful information for employers about complying with a law called the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

www.askjan.org

Disability Disclosure

- It may be necessary for a youth to disclose a disability during the interview process
- It's only necessary if accommodation is needed
- Disclosure is a personal choice
- Youth should practice answering interview questions, including questions that are illegal to ask
- Resources include: 411 On Disability Disclosure (NCWD-Youth)

http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/411.html

The Interview

- Practice the basics
- Never stress the disability, only strengths
- Avoid giving too much information
- Coach young person on responses to disability-related questions
- Know that although they may be allowed to participate, parents or service providers have no legal right to take part in the interview



The Employer's Perspective

Employers are looking for :

- A good attitude about working
- Honesty
- Punctuality
- Good communication skills
- Reliability
- Appropriate behavior
- Willingness to learn new things

Keeping the Job

Teach youth to:

- Show up
- Take direction and work well with others
- Be flexible



Families Can:

- Build support system at work
- Communicate regularly with employer and service staff
- Know that sometimes it just doesn't work and that's OK

Additional Advice

- Practice filling out job applications
- Plan for transportation
- Consider disability management
- Encourage postsecondary education

Remember, the first job should not be the last job. Never stop expecting great things!

Contact Information

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and Training (FAST) Project:

fastfamilysupport.org

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