INSPIRING POSSIBILITIES

Set an Employment Destination and Map a Course to Get There

People usually plan journeys with a specific destination in mind and map the way accordingly. Your young adult needs a place to start, but parents need to also help their son or daughter realize that it's okay to change the destination and select a different job. Many people change careers several times in their lives.

Takeaways from this handout

- Parents can help their son or daughter find a place to start exploring employment opportunities.
- It's okay to change your mind and set a new employment destination or goal.
- The school and other agencies may be able to help.

Set an employment destination

When helping to plan for your child's "journey" to employment, you will need to decide on a specific "destination" or goal, and then map a clear course of action to reach that goal.

You can use all the information you gather from the activities and suggestions on **PACER.org/transition** to determine that "destination" or job goal. Think creatively about your child's interests. Keep in mind that your child's interest in an area increases the likelihood of his or her success in that career field. For example:

- If your child talks about being a professional football player, ask if he or she can volunteer at the local stadium.
- Perhaps being a cross-country truck driver is not feasible, but working at a truck stop could fulfill your child's interest in trucks.
- Has your child always talked about being a novelist? If so, look for a part-time job in a bookstore that invites local writers to read from their books.

Here's another way to find a specific job goal. If your son or daughter, for example, expresses interest in working at a nearby YMCA:

- Help him or her call to see what types of jobs might be available there.
- Talk these over with your child to determine which jobs would be best suited for his or her abilities and interests.
- With that "destination" in mind, find ways for your child to learn the skills needed for that job.

Map a course

Once you have some future employment goals, you can develop a plan for how to achieve them. The plan will need to address questions such as:

- How can we provide support for my son's needs?
- What support services, such as workplace accommodations, transportation, or technology, will my daughter need?
- How can my son obtain the training he needs?
- How can my daughter receive job placement services?

As you map your course, you may want to use additional steps along the way:

- Find out if your child can volunteer at a possible place of employment.
- Encourage your child to seek summer employment or part-time employment to develop work experiences.
- Help select specific classes that will support your son or daughter in reaching long-range goals.
- Work with the team to incorporate career interests into the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Work with the IEP team to build work-readiness, reading, math, and computer skills.
- Practice basic interview questions with your child.
- Practice completing online job applications.

For some students, there may be other agencies to help "map the course."

They may be eligible for services from public agencies, such as the following (see list in the resource section of this website for more information):

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Day Training and Habilitation (DT&H) programs are licensed services designed to provide supported employment, work-related activities, and training in independent living skills for eligible individuals with developmental disabilities or a related condition who are 18 years of age or older.
- American Job Centers (sometimes called Workforce or One-Stop Career Centers) are a national network of neighborhood centers that house programs and services to help both youth and adults identify training programs, gain skills, and find jobs in growing industries (**jobcenter.usa.gov**).

Trying some of these strategies and exploring these resources can start you and your youth on the way to an employment destination.