



# Key Steps for Creating a Job for your youth or Adult

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# My assumptions about work

- ▶ Everyone deserves the opportunity to work....given the right environment and supports.
- ▶ Your youth is ready to work NOW!
- ▶ Job creation takes effort, planning and commitment.
- ▶ Forget work stereotypes; open up your mind to new possibilities.

# What are the advantages to working?

- ▶ Money and benefits
- ▶ Social interactions and opportunities
- ▶ Feeling of self-worth
- ▶ Routine, reason to get up in the morning
- ▶ Learning new skills
- ▶ Making a contribution

# What are the challenges to working?

- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Behaviors and social skill issues
- ▶ Motivation
- ▶ Limits on parents time, effort and resources
- ▶ Lack of public resources and supports
- ▶ Staying eligible for SSI and Medicaid

# What are the kinds of work?

- ▶ **Competitive work:** working for a business or other organization that might have workers with and without disabilities
- ▶ **Supported employment:** working with the accommodations and supports needed on the job.
- ▶ **Self-employment:** being your own boss, way to gain experience and learn what you are good at.
- ▶ **Volunteering:** offers a great way to get experience and improve skills that might lead to future employment

# Out-of-the box paths to employment

- ▶ **Apprenticeships**--Registered Apprenticeships are jobs, provide learning a skilled occupation through paid on-the-job training
- ▶ **Internships**--work experience offered by an organization for a limited period of time, in a wide range of placements within businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies. Paid or un-paid.
- ▶ **Web-based sales and services and Self-employment**—selling a service or what you make on-line. Examples: jewelry, art, popcorn; trip planning, computer and cell phone maintenance, web design, buying for client

# Step 1: use public school years

## Who can help?

- ▶ First find your district TED (Transition and Employment Designee); go to [www.esc18.net](http://www.esc18.net) and search for “TED.” Can inform you about your district’s pre-vocational programs. Ask who does job placement and who does job coaching.
- ▶ VAC = Vocational Adjustment Coordinator
- ▶ Career Centers
- ▶ 18+ programs and Project Search

# Public school tools

How can school prepare students for work?

- ▶ Employment and transition assessments
- ▶ School-based planning and brain-storming sessions
- ▶ Relevant, directed IEP goals
- ▶ Pre-vocational curriculum
- ▶ On-campus work experience (recycling, cafeteria, office, delivery)
- ▶ Off-campus work experience (elementary schools, pet stores, churches, non-profits, pizza restaurants)

# Off campus experience

- ▶ #1 factor predicting post-school career success is work experience during school: be sure your youth gets relevant work experience during school (Community-Based Vocational Instruction or CBVI)
- ▶ Higher expectations in real-life situations
- ▶ Learn from failures as well as successes

# Tips

- ▶ Find your allies, create a team
- ▶ Encourage student participation in IEP meetings
- ▶ Emphasize how important work is to your student and 2-3 places where your youth wants to work
- ▶ Have a goal of graduating with a paid job
- ▶ An example of a school-based planning tool:  
[texasprojectfirst.org/VTPTemplateAdapted.pdf](https://texasprojectfirst.org/VTPTemplateAdapted.pdf)

# University opportunities

- ▶ Student must prepare to enter 4-year universities on his or her own merit, there is no IDEA in college; might use Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ▶ Visit campus student services to ask about accommodations available on campus
- ▶ Plan by 9th grade what credits and testing will be required for college eligibility
- ▶ [Thinkcollege.net](http://Thinkcollege.net)

# Post-secondary programs for students with disabilities in Texas

- ▶ Steps Program, Austin Community College
- ▶ E4Texas: Educate. Empower. Employ. Excel, UT Austin
- ▶ Postsecondary Access and Training in Human Services (PATHS), A&M
- ▶ Strive, Alvin Community College
- ▶ VAST Academy, Houston Community College
- ▶ Where the Learning Continues, West Texas A&M University
- ▶ UT Informal Classes The University of Texas at Austin
- ▶ [thinkcollege.net](http://thinkcollege.net), click on State of Texas

# Post-secondary training

- ▶ **Apprenticeships:** process of learning a skilled occupation through paid on-the-job training under the supervision of professional
- ▶ **Internships:** an employment program offering real-world experience for early career professionals in an occupation and can range from several weeks to several months; way to gain relevant workplace experience
- ▶ <https://twc.texas.gov/students/training-education-opportunities-students>

# Step # 2: Use TWC

- ▶ **TWC** = Texas Workforce Commission, the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers.
- ▶ **Texas Workforce Solutions** gives customers local access to statewide services at numerous Workforce Solutions offices and five Tele-Centers.
- ▶ **Vocational Rehabilitation**, TWC program that helps people with disabilities prepare for, find or retain employment and helps youth and students prepare for post-secondary opportunities.
- ▶ <https://twc.texas.gov/offices/vr-general-services.html>

# TWC in public schools

**Pre-Employment Transition Services:** Receive core services to help prepare for post-secondary education and employment. Services include:

- ▶ Counseling in job exploration and post-secondary training opportunities
- ▶ Counseling on opportunities for post-secondary education such as college, vocational schools, etc.
- ▶ Work-based learning experiences, including internships and on-the-job training
- ▶ Training in workplace and employer expectations
- ▶ Training in self-advocacy and social skills
- ▶ Plus more, go to [www.twc.texas.gov](http://www.twc.texas.gov)

# TWC after graduation

- ▶ **Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services** for people with disabilities to help them prepare for, obtain, retain or advance in employment.
- ▶ **Eligibility:** Have a disability which results in substantial barriers to employment and are able to obtain, retain or advance in employment as a result of services
- ▶ **Services include:** Vocational counseling and guidance, on-the-job training, occupational or speech therapy and applied behavioral analysis, rehabilitation devices, including hearing aids, assistance with college education or trade certification

# How to access TWC services

- ▶ Talk to your school staff
- ▶ Contact your nearest TX Workforce Solutions –VR Services Office
- ▶ <https://www.twc.texas.gov/>
- ▶ Call 800-628-5115
- ▶ Email [customers@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:customers@twc.state.tx.us)

# Step #3: other resources

Public funding for job supports:

- ▶ Medicaid Waivers all have Employment Assistance and Supported Employment to help the individual locate paid employment in the community.
- ▶ Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority (LIDDA) provides Supported Employment to a person who has paid employment to help him or her sustain that employment. It includes individualized support services, supervision and training.

# Network with local organizations

- ▶ Parent and local organizations in your community.
- ▶ Organizations by disability, such as [texasautismsociety.org](http://texasautismsociety.org) and Down syndrome organizations.
- ▶ Local disability organization, such as Arcs and Independent Living Centers
- ▶ Ask about scholarships, services, networking, work opportunities, local initiatives,

# Learn from the internet

- ▶ [Navigatelifetexas.org](http://Navigatelifetexas.org)
- ▶ [Txp2p.org](http://Txp2p.org), Pathways to Adulthood, Life after Graduation
- ▶ <https://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/employment/>

# Step #4: now make it all about your youth!

Inventory—get input from your youth and others who know him. Gather information on SPIN:

- ▶ Strengths—what's your youth good at?
- ▶ Preferences—what does she like doing?
- ▶ Interests—what does she actively pursue?
- ▶ Needs—what supports does he need to do something?

# Some ways to learn more about your youth's SPIN

- ▶ What chores does he do at home?
- ▶ Does he collect anything in his room?
- ▶ What does he spend most time doing?
- ▶ What are his regular activities/routines?
- ▶ Where does he go in neighborhood and area?

# Keep asking...

- ▶ Does she prefer Indoors or outdoors, quiet or busy, with people or alone
- ▶ When's the highest energy level?
- ▶ For how long can this person work at one time?
- ▶ In what settings does youth best communicate?
- ▶ What supports are needed in these situations?
- ▶ What places are best to avoid?

# Now look over your answers

- ▶ Identify 2-4 major themes
- ▶ What employment areas do the themes suggest?
- ▶ What specific jobs are available in these employment areas?

# Gather data in your community

- ▶ Identify places where people with similar interests work.
- ▶ Have your youth visit a few of these places, with a supporter.
- ▶ Record responses to each place.

# Consider what supports are needed

- ▶ Write down where, when supports are most needed
- ▶ Ask what resources are available to assist with those support needs.
- ▶ Any personal connections in the community, family and friends who can provide assistance?

# Finally...

- ▶ Focus on 1 area of interest
- ▶ Write a goal for that area of interest
- ▶ Write a few steps that might help get to the goal....a plan!
- ▶ Share your plan with a few others and see who can help.
- ▶ Take one small step first...

# Step #5: Plan for your youth

## Meet Fred and Jane

- ▶ Fred says he takes out the trash and mows the lawn in the summer but really likes to fix breakfast on Sundays. He loves to greet people at the church door. He has several elderly friends in the neighborhood that he likes to visit. He prefers to take out their trash more than the trash at home!
- ▶ Jane states her strengths are art, dodge ball, science, and health. She states that she prefers to be outdoors and active. She states that her interests are participating in physical activity, computers, internet, and animals (especially dogs, she itches around cats).

# What vocational themes emerge?

- ▶ Fred—
  - ▶ 1. Church
  - ▶ 2. Cooking
  - ▶ 3. Interacting with people, elders
  
- ▶ Jane—
  - ▶ 1. Work outdoors and active jobs
  - ▶ 2. Animals
  - ▶ 3. Computers

# Focus on an area

Choose the place/job theme that seems to stand out.

▶ Fred—

- ▶ 1. Church: talking to church staff about jobs there
- ▶ 2. Cooking: helping mom in the kitchen, cooking for neighbors
- ▶ 3. Interacting with people, elders: Senior center, nursing home

▶ Jane—

- ▶ 1. Work outdoors and active jobs: lawn work, summer camps
- ▶ 2. Animals: pet care, dog walking, zoo, vet practice, pet store
- ▶ 3. Computers: data entry, pursue tech skills, help neighbors with computers and phones

# What places and jobs emerge from themes?

- ▶ Fred—
  - ▶ 1. Church: office work, set-up for events, greeting visitors, church kitchen
  - ▶ 2. Cooking: cooking for neighbors, bakery, fast-food, cafes
  - ▶ 3. Interacting with people, elders: Senior center, church greeter, neighborhood
- ▶ Jane—
  - ▶ 1. Work outdoors and active jobs: lawn work, summer camps
  - ▶ 2. Animals: pet care, dog walking, zoo, vet practice, pet store
  - ▶ 3. Computers: data entry, pursue tech skills, help neighbors with computers and phones

# Write down goals and steps to achieve them

- ▶ Fred will pursue a job at his church preparing the Wednesday night dinner.
  - ▶ Fred will cook meals for 2 elders in his neighborhood 2 nights per week.
  - ▶ Fred will investigate what skills are needed to become an aid in a nursing home
- 
- ▶ Jane will pursue a job at the local zoo.
  - ▶ Jane will create a job for herself walking dogs in her neighborhood.
  - ▶ Jane will investigate classes or programs where she can add to her computer skills

# Supports

- ▶ Fred and his mom will make an appointment with the church pastor to talk about volunteering at the church.
- ▶ Fred takes time to learn new skills. He will see if a volunteer at his church will walk him through the food preparation routine for the first few months on Wednesday nights.
- ▶ Fred and his dad will talk to 2 neighbors to see if they would like him to deliver a cooked meal once a week; he will charge for the ingredients.
- ▶ Fred will ask the TWC counselor at his school about the program at UT Austin to get credentials to become a care provider.

# Supports

- ▶ Jane doesn't drive → she will need transportation assistance to the zoo. She hopes to learn to ride the bus.
- ▶ Jane stresses about encountering new places and people. She will need help with first contacts with dog owners. A friend who has a cat is glad to help
- ▶ Jane will need guidance in investigating computer classes after she does her own on-line research.
- ▶ Jane plans to contact TWC and ask for a vocational counselor: can TWC will help pay for computer classes?  
Provide bus training?



# You never really get “there” but you always gain experience!

- ▶ Use what you learn from failures and getting fired!
- ▶ Take pride in what you are accomplishing, even little steps.
- ▶ Connect with other families going through this process.
- ▶ Create a team to help.