



Work is for All



Individuals with developmental disabilities can have real jobs and make good wages, work alongside people without disabilities, and contribute to their communities.

Introduction

Work is central to the quality of life for everyone.

Living life as a productive community member who has choices about employment is a goal applauded by all people, including individuals with disabilities who can and want to work.

Good jobs lead to confidence, self-reliance and more income. As important, working expands social networks and opportunities to contribute to the greater community as valuable employees who also pay taxes and use buying power to support the well-being of society.

Currently, individuals with developmental disabilities are significantly under-represented in the workforce, despite decades of employment and pre-employment services. With only a small percentage of working age individuals with developmental disabilities in competitive or supported employment, it is time to confirm employment as an option for all people.

Work is for All

This booklet will help everyone recognize that individuals with disabilities can and do work in their communities as successful members of society. You will read about Miguel, Nick and Alison. With visions for their futures, each one is a decision-maker building social networks to find meaningful employment alongside fellow community members.



Miguel

“I believe there is a job in the community for everyone.”

Miguel works as a job developer and coach who assists individuals with developmental disabilities to find good jobs in their communities. He recognizes how important it is for job seekers to think about what they want and make decisions in their lives, especially about employment.

Miguel works closely with individuals so they recognize their natural supports — friends, family and neighborhood associations — and identify people, places and activities that can lead to employment.

Individuals with disabilities are important partners in all efforts to build community connections and find good jobs.



“It’s how most people get work.”



Miguel Lugo

Miguel also builds relationships with community businesses and organizations to explore employment prospects that point to competitive work. Together with the job seeker and community employer, Miguel helps find a good fit in the right job.

He encourages young people with disabilities to make sure they have work experience opportunities during school years, like other young adults. Miguel knows that early employment preparation can make a big difference in success after high school.

Learning about local resources and having a school or college transition plan with work experience are keys to better jobs for all people.

Nick

“Work is for all.”

Nick attends East Los Angeles Community College. He is employed at a day care center, and uses public transportation to carry out his busy schedule.

His activities in the community, starting with Boy Scouts at an early age, taught him how to work with others and perform various jobs. It helped break down barriers, build relationships and prepare for responsibilities in the future.

Young people with disabilities can develop skills and build natural supports to help find and keep good jobs while in school and after.



“I know what I am supposed to do in my community.”



Nick Tanita

Nick makes important choices about his life. Attending college is central to what he wants for his future. He knows that it will help him go out into the world more self-assured with the capacity to earn money.

By beginning his volunteer experience at age 13, Nick was preparing for success. He not only gained skills and confidence, he learned that he had talents to share.

Beginning at an early age assures individuals with disabilities are successful employees, college students and contributors to their community.

Alison

“I have my own voice.”

Alison is an intern at the Superior Court building in the city of Alhambra. She is also enrolled at Pasadena City College with her eye on attending the University of California, Los Angeles.

By building on family and community connections, Alison's early experience in her father's medical office prepared her for competitive employment in the future.

When children and young people learn how to participate in decisions that affect their lives, they become self-determined confident adults.



“It makes money for your future
and is good for your mind.”



Alison Liou

Alison is creating her own path with a vision of accomplishment and autonomy.

As a determined young woman, Alison knows success at Pasadena Community College and finding a good job means a prosperous future. It's a dream within reach.

Building connections and experience as a valued member of her community are important steps on the road to achievement.

Strong transition planning, community work experience and a vision for an inclusive future are fundamental to self-determined lives.

Work is for everyone, it's a choice, it's a right.



Keith

(People First of California)

"Family and natural supports help young children set up

patterns for future work and living in the community."



Robert

(Department of Developmental Services, Consumer Advisory Committee)

"Education is the

backbone for us to learn about work and being a responsible community member so we can get good jobs."



Cindy

(Department of Developmental Services, Consumer Advisory Committee)

"There are low expectations of

persons with developmental disabilities. There's a difference between choosing to work and being prevented from working."



Liz

(Self Advocacy Board of Los Angeles County)

"You have to start early with different work experiences

and speak up for what you want. People want real jobs, earn good wages with accommodations, if needed."



Michael

(State Council on Developmental Disabilities)

"Real community inclusion is the

foundation for everything."



Lisa

(State Council on Developmental Disabilities)

"Independence is more than just being

in an apartment, a job and included in the community — it's a state of mind, you have to believe you can do what you choose."

Resources on Employment Services

<http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/>

Disability 101 helps workers, job seekers and service providers understand the connections between work and benefits.

<http://www.ssa.gov/redbook/>

General reference about employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals, and counselors.

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/pass.htm>

General information on Social Security Administration's Plan to Achieve Self-Support or PASS, an SSI provision to help people with disabilities work.

<http://www.rehab.cahwnet.gov/index.htm>

California Department of Rehabilitation works in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living and equality for individuals with disabilities.

<http://www.dds.ca.gov/>

[VocationalSvcs/SupportedEmployment.cfm](#)

Department of Developmental Services provides general information about Supported Employment, Work Services and Work Activity programs in California.

<http://www.edd.ca.gov/>

Employment Development Department – connecting job seekers and employers with information, job opening posts, an array of employment and training services.

<http://www.apse.org/>

National organization with an *exclusive focus* on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/

Department of Education provides information on programs and services available to students with disabilities, publications, training and technical assistance opportunities, and recruitment resources and materials.

www.semel.ucla.edu/opendoors

Tarjan Center provides information about higher education options for students with intellectual disabilities and autism, including a directory of programs, student stories, resources on services and supports, and tools for program development to assist students, families, and professionals.

www.thinkcollege.net/

Consortium for Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities provides information for transition students as well as adults attending or planning for college, including resources, news and links to training events.

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