

# PREPARING FOR WORK

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Entering the work place can be particularly challenging for young adults with disabilities. With planning, preparation, and self-advocacy, individuals can find work that is both meaningful and enjoyable.

## START EARLY

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- Encourage your child to think about what he or she is interested in doing for a living, and to research those jobs and speak to people in similar fields of work.
- Identify your child's strengths and weaknesses and consider how they play into his or her career interests.
- Put together a resume and consider what might be useful to add before seeking employment.
- Develop interview skills by role playing with potential questions an employer might ask, and questions to ask potential employers.
- Identify and practice asking for accommodations your child might need on the job. You may also want to consider supported employment programs for individuals with disabilities.
- Discuss the importance of self-presentation, including hygiene, dress code, punctuality, and appropriate behavior.
- Seek out internships and volunteer opportunities in school and in your community.

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## ACCOMMODATIONS

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Employers are legally required to provide certain accommodations to people with disabilities. If you anticipate a few difficulties once on the job, you can be prepared with practical solutions. Common issues and possible solutions include:

- **DISTRACTIONS:** Wear headphones or request a work space away from busy, noisy areas.
- **CONCENTRATION:** Break tasks down into small parts, or consider requesting that tasks be assigned one at a time.
- **STAMINA:** Take all allowed rest breaks. Consider working part time.
- **MULTITASKING AND TIME MANAGEMENT:** Meet regularly with a supervisor to prioritize assignments. Keep a daily to-do list, agenda book, or online calendar to help stay on task.
- **INTERACTING WITH OTHERS:** Find a buddy or a mentor for support with challenges.
- **EVALUATIONS:** Ask the supervisor to clearly identify both strengths and areas for growth. Request private time to absorb the evaluation.

## SUPPORT

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Find or continue counseling and/or therapy, which is an appropriate setting to discuss job-related issues or anxieties.

Engage in social and recreational activities in the community to find support and relief from the stress of work.

Try to stay focused on the benefits of employment: financial security, independence, and fulfillment.