

COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT

Can My Child Do This?

It's normal to have some concerns about your child venturing into the world of work. You may find yourself wondering if your child can be employed. You may have questions, fears, and doubts. Let's look at some of those possible fears and talk about possible ways to work through those fears with solutions that lead to you being able to say "YES! My child can be employed in a competitive integrated work environment!"

POSSIBLE FEAR

My child will lose their benefits like Medicaid or SSI.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

You can explore benefits counseling to learn more about work incentives and other programs that protect benefits like Medicaid/SSI. Benefits counseling is a service DARS provides to its clients. Individuals with a DD Waiver can also access benefits counseling as a service under their waiver. Make sure to also check out ABLEnow to learn more about their tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. These accounts can help protect a person's state and federal benefits like SSI and Medicaid.

POSSIBLE FEAR

My child has medical or behavioral challenges.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Customized employment (a carved-out job may be an option). Your child may need a job coach and behavior supports on the job through a supported employment model. If your child has a Medicaid waiver, they can also receive behavioral supports through the waiver. Consider if work colleagues might provide natural supports.

POSSIBLE FEAR

My child doesn't understand what work means or the type of job they want.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

They can engage in discovery activities like volunteering or participate in DARS Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) which can provide job exploration, job shadowing, tours of local businesses, and work-based learning.

WHAT IS COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT?

Competitive: An individual with a disability must receive pay in the same pay range as someone without a disability for the same or similar position. The pay must also be at or above the minimum wage. Also, the individual with a disability has the same opportunities for advancement and benefits as their coworker without a disability.

Integrated - People with and without disabilities work together or interact with each other in a work setting. The person is hired as an individual and not as part of a group.

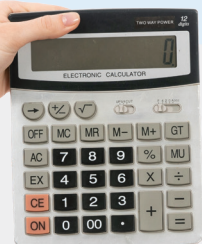
Employment - This means the person hired and is PAID to WORK. This can be full time or part time and can include telework or self-employment.

POSSIBLE FEAR

My child has communication challenges.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

It's important for employers and colleagues to know how your child communicates best—verbally, through pictures, through technology, using sign language, etc. DARS or other support staff can work with employers to ensure that your child's communication is understood and respected.



POSSIBLE FEAR

Transportation is a problem for us.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Transportation issues can be one of the hardest barriers to solve. DARS can provide transportation during training. You and your child's team can explore things like Medicaid transportation, paratransit, ride-share, carpooling, or learning to use public transportation.

POSSIBLE FEAR

My child struggles to fit in or make friends.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Self-advocacy skills and natural supports from co-workers will help. The more your child is included in their work environment, the more comfortable they will feel even if it is just observing vs. actively participating (depending on your young person's preferences). Disability awareness training can be conducted for the staff, so they know the best way to connect with your child.

POSSIBLE FEAR

My child is fearful of new environments.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

DARS may be able to provide job counseling or life skills coaching. Pre-ETS services that provide job exploration or work-based learning can help too. Of course, the support of family members increases your child's confidence and comfort level. Some individuals choose to start off with a small amount of work hours and gradually add more hours as they become comfortable being in the workplace.

POSSIBLE FEARS

Our family has a busy schedule, and I am afraid that will make it tough for my child to have a job.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Scheduling can be difficult especially if parents are working. Many employers are willing to be flexible with scheduling, including accommodating appointments or occurrences like delayed transportation. You can negotiate this with the employer.

WHY SHOULD MY CHILD WORK?

There are many positive benefits to working, being able to have some of their own money, increased control over their lives, and knowing they are included and respected for what they bring to the community. Here are some benefits of being involved in CIE.

- Earn a real paycheck based on real work and be able to buy things they need/want
- Increase independence
- Exposure to new experience
- Fulfill hopes, goals, and dreams
- Enhance self-esteem and confidence
- Build communication and social interactions
- Have an increased sense of fulfillment and self-esteem



www.peatc.org



The content of this factsheet was developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H235F200001 and a contract from the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, #CTR011361. However, its content does not represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume that it is endorsed by the Federal Government. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or representation. Any information contained in this information sheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

www.dars.virginia.gov