Pathway from School to Employment
Creating a Path to Employment

**Create a Team to Walk the Path**
- The Youth is the Team Leader!
- The Family is a Major Player
- School Transition Specialist coordinates the team
- County Board of Developmental Disabilities is an important member for ongoing support
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency focuses on community employment
- Other team members can represent additional agencies, family members, therapist, employers, adult service providers and more!
- Involve all team members in early and ongoing planning, either formally or informally.
- Communication among team members is key!
- Create a shared vision for a meaningful adult life with and for the youth
- Decide at what point in the path the youth will graduate

**Make Timely Connections Early and Ongoing along the Path**
- Refer for Eligibility: Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency
- Refer for Eligibility: County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Explore other agency eligibility requirements and potential support for the journey along the Path
- Make application to Medicaid
- Make application for Supplemental Security Income
- Get on waiting lists for Medicaid Waivers
- Make Employer Connections-Visit local businesses
- Get to know and connect with Adult Service Providers

**Discover More about the Youth to Guide the Path!**
- Use formal and informal methods to discover the youth’s PINS (preferences, interests, needs, skills)
- Plan Transition Assessment: Decide what types of activities will help the team discover valuable information to plan and achieve successful adult outcomes. Think outside the box!
- Include agency partners to support a creative and ongoing assessment process
- Support the youth to participate in self-assessment
- Interact and interview youth and his/her family and friends
- Observe youth in community settings
- Observe youth in work experiences, including after school and in summer
- Discuss youth’s strengths, interests and preferences with a multi-agency team
- Complete individualized Community Based Assessment
- Complete Interest Inventories and use results to explore community jobs
- Use formal assessments that may provide meaningful information to help plan the Path
- Compare current youth skills to needed adult life skills. Where are the gaps?
- Select services, supports and activities to ‘fill the gap’ as the youth moves along the Path.
- Align high school coursework to areas of potential employment
- Explore career-tech high school options
- Develop youth self-determination and independence skills
- Consider the use of assistive and mobile technology as a support
- Assess social and employability skills
- Use assessment data to review decision about the target graduation date

**Identify Services, Supports and Activities to Build the Path**
- Possibilities are endless, but can include:
  - Plan with a Multi-agency team
  - Invite Multi-agency team representatives to attend IEP meetings
  - Teach youth to participate in and/or lead his/her planning and IEP meetings
  - Arrange Volunteer Jobs
  - Apply for Summer Work Experiences
  - Provide Work experiences, Internships and Mentorships - Paid and Unpaid
  - Use Job Shadowing as an assessment to determine work skills, interests, environmental and sensory supports
  - Practice applying previously learned skills in the community
  - Attend Transition Fairs, Job Fairs
  - Learn about other people’s “successful path to community employment”
- Include environmental supports and accommodations in the IEP. Assure these supports and accommodations maximize independence!
- Identify and use mobile technology to promote independence and success
- Provide travel training in the community where youth will be living as an adult
- Review and refine adult outcomes for community employment, continuing education and community living
- Ensure youth has an effective communication system and communication supports… and access to each!
- Consider a Special Needs Trust and whether or not guardianship is appropriate
- Obtain a Driver’s License or State ID

**Explore, survey, and investigate multiple elements of adult life that require ongoing decision-making and planning such as:**
- The desired community setting for adult living
- Selecting adult physicians and dentist
- Fitness activities and routines
- Adult recreation and leisure activities
- Volunteer opportunities that enrich life
- Time and access to friends and family
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Resources to Assist in Planning Transitions Along the Path to Employment

Ohio Employment First  
www.ohioemploymentfirst.org  
Information and resources to support community employment for people with developmental disabilities

Planning for Secondary Transition  
www.edresourcesohio.org/transition/  
The Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children website

Career One Stop  
www.careeronestop.org  
Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. Provides resources and tools for job seekers, students, businesses, and career professionals.

OCIS- Ohio Career Information System  
www.ocis.org  
A subscription service that offers comprehensive materials and resources for career development and planning for users from elementary school to adulthood.

Zarrow Center  
www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html  
Resources for Self-Determination

Youthhood  
www.youthhood.org  
A dynamic, curriculum-based tool that can help young adults plan for life after high school.

Customized Employment Guide  
www.ocali.org/project/customized_employment_guide  
Strategies used in Customized Employment and links to more information and resources

Institute for Community Inclusion  
www.communityinclusion.org  
Information to supports the rights of children and adults with disabilities to participate in all aspects of the community.

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center  
www.nsttac.org  
NSTTAC provides technical assistance and disseminates information on transition

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth  
www.ncwd-youth.info  
A source for information about employment and youth with disabilities

Red Tree House  
www.redtreehouse.org  
Online community for Ohio families and professionals to explore resources to help children and young adults

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)  
www.askjan.org  
Free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues

Person Centered Planning Education Site  
www.personcenteredplanning.org  
Free online courses from Cornell University

JobTIPS  
www.do2learn.com/JobTIPS/  
A free program designed to help individuals with learning differences explore career interests, seek and obtain employment, and successfully maintain employment

OCALI Transition to Adulthood Guidelines  
www.ocali.org/center/transitions  
Online booklets. Resources and information on transition

Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success  
www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/  
Curriculum developed by ODEP focused on teaching “soft” or workforce readiness skills

Office of Workforce Development  
jfs.ohio.gov/owd/WorkforceProf/OJT.htm

Employment First Taskforce Agencies

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities  
dodd.ohio.gov

Ohio Department of Education  
education.ohio.gov

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
jfs.ohio.gov

Ohio Department of Medicaid  
medicaid.ohio.gov

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency  
od.ohio.gov

Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services  
mha.ohio.gov

Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council  
ddc.ohio.gov