

# KICK-STARTING YOUR CHILD'S CAREER JOURNEY

*A guide for families of  
young people with disability*

SUE ROBERTSON 2016

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sue Robertson is the former Managing Director and co-founder of EDGE Employment Solutions, an employment agency for job seekers with disabilities, which has secured 6000 award wage jobs for 2500 workers with disabilities since 1984. Sue has presented at numerous international conferences on employment and disability and has published in international journals on this topic. In 2005, Sue was named Ernst & Young's Social Entrepreneur of the Year for the Western Region. In 2010 she was a finalist in the WA Citizen of the Year Awards (Community Service category). Sue has served on a number of Boards and advisory councils in the sector including the Board of DSC (1999 -2002) and Brightwater Care Group (1998–2006). In 2011 Sue was inducted into the Disability Employment Hall of Fame.

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# A MOTHER'S STORY

When I was a teenager, my big intention was to go to university and become a lawyer. Instead, twenty years after I left school, I still work in a supermarket. My husband's a concreter - neither of us graduated from high school. In fact, no-one in our family has. We know how hard it is to get gainful employment when you've dropped out of school.

My mission for our eldest son Jayden was to keep him in school until he finished year 12. Jayden was first diagnosed with ADHD and learning difficulties when he was 6. Because I fought tooth and nail not to put him on medication, he fell further behind at school every year that I said no.

Jayden struggled academically, but was great with his hands. He wanted to leave school and get an apprenticeship, I figured he needed Year 11 and 12 to try and stay abreast of the paperwork side of things and to mature a little bit. I thought I was doing the right thing. By the time Jayden was in year 11, he was on antidepressants because he was suicidal.

Then his job co-ordinator from his Disability Employment Service, suggested we consider moving Jayden to the Australian Training College. My answer? "Not a chance in hell!"

It was like pushing the proverbial up the hill with a rake, he knew he had a battle ahead. And even the teachers at Jayden's old high school said "if you can get Joanne to agree to this, God help you" 'cos they knew I was going to be standing firm.

But once I realised that Jayden could graduate from high school, as well as completing a pre-apprenticeship, I changed my mind. I had no idea anything like that existed. I was stoked that he wasn't just going to slip through the cracks.

After moving Jayden to the Australian Training College, we saw a difference in him immediately. He buckled down, put his head down, his bum up and got stuck into it. He got a lot more confident, he had teachers feeding back that he was doing the right thing. He knew all along he could do it, but when he got that feedback, that's when his confidence started to soar! The last eight months of year 12, Jayden went from only just scraping through to passing really well.

His job co-ordinator would go to ATC and see Jayden, make sure he had everything he needed, give him a bit of a boost and a bit of a boot sometimes when he needed, just to remind him he's been given an opportunity not a lot of kids are given so don't throw it away.

Jayden completed school, graduating from high school but also nine months ahead of his peers, having completed a pre-apprenticeship in light mechanics. He walked out of year 12, had a month off, and straight into an apprenticeship with City Holden.

I'm so appreciative to his job co-ordinator from the for the hard work he put in - he even came to Jayden's graduation in his own time. He's been fantastic.

*Jayden told me recently that he's happier now than ever before, he feels a real sense of worth and is grateful for the effort everyone has put in for him. We are so very proud.*



BIGW

BIGW

BIGW

MELISSA

# INTRODUCTION

All families, including those with a family member with disability, want their children to lead productive and fulfilling lives. People with disability also share this aspiration. More than 80% of people receiving the Disability Support Pension have reported that they would like to have a job.

However, many families of children with more significant disabilities doubt whether their child is suited to working in regular employment or running their own business. If your child is interested in eventually getting a job, and if you are willing to give them the emotional and logistical support they might need, then they have an excellent chance of finding work and being successful. It is important to know that physical abilities, IQ scores or academic achievement are not essential for getting and keeping a job. Many people with significant disabilities are working productively in regular jobs after having received the proper training and individualised support.

*Often families feel powerless to influence the direction their child's future may take. However, families can do a great deal to develop a career path for their child. In fact, families can be their child's greatest resource in career planning – if they know how to help.*

This guide provides information to help families plan constructively for their child's future employment. Many resources have already been developed for school leavers, especially for those without disability. You are encouraged to use this guidebook in conjunction with the resources listed on the last page, as the information is very applicable.

# WORK PAYS IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE!

*Experience has shown that securing a job may bring about significant positive changes in a person's life. They have been found to:*

- ✓ Show greater enthusiasm about life in general
- ✓ Pay more attention to personal appearance
- ✓ Demonstrate a greater appetite for learning
- ✓ Become more talkative
- ✓ Make new friends
- ✓ Become excited about being able to shop and buy personal items
- ✓ Become more independent at home and in the community
- ✓ Become more friendly and outgoing
- ✓ Become more confident
- ✓ Become more self-reliant
- ✓ Feel an increased sense of self worth
- ✓ Feel an increased sense of belonging



## FAMILIES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE

Family and friends have a major influence over the long-term employment outcomes of jobseekers with disability. In a 2014 employment survey of 540 Australians with disability and their families, 81% of participants reported that their family and friends encouraged them the most to work whilst 68% reported that their family and friends encouraged them the most to look for a job.

Other contributors to a successful outcome in employment for a jobseeker with disability are a motivation to work, a job that matches the jobseeker's skills and abilities, and on-the-job support.

*Families are an important contributor to these success factors and the process of building them cannot begin too early in your child's life. Families can begin laying the groundwork as soon as their child starts primary school.*



# IT PAYS TO START EARLY

*If your child is attending PRIMARY SCHOOL, you can:*

- ✓ Be aware of your child's eventual need or desire to enter the workforce.
- ✓ Speak positively about working and earning an income.
- ✓ Point out and talk about jobs people are doing when you are moving about the community - discuss what they are doing and ask them what jobs they might like to do.
- ✓ Give your child specific jobs to do around the house, ensure that they are done on time and pay on completion of a job well done.
- ✓ Encourage physical fitness, where possible, through sport or exercise.
- ✓ Encourage the constructive use of free time and the development of a range of hobbies and interests.
- ✓ Encourage them to take an interest in their personal appearance and to dress appropriately.
- ✓ Be optimistic about their future and share your optimism with family, friends and disability support agencies with which you come in contact.

# IT PAYS TO KEEP GOING

*Once your child starts SECONDARY SCHOOL, you can:*

- ✓ Talk about the importance of getting a job in the future.
- ✓ Regularly talk about what they are doing at school or in the community.
- ✓ Look for opportunities to do community or voluntary work.
- ✓ Look for opportunities for them to participate in community activities.
- ✓ Look for opportunities to do paid part-time or casual work.
- ✓ Obtain references from people for whom your child has worked, voluntarily or paid, and store them in a presentation folder for future job applications.
- ✓ Take photos or brief videos of them doing tasks.
- ✓ Get them involved in vocational skills development activities, such as using computers.
- ✓ Continue to emphasise health, fitness and personal appearance.
- ✓ Continue to encourage them to develop hobbies and interests
- ✓ Maintain your optimism about them entering the world of work.

# THINKING ABOUT FUTURE WORK OPTIONS

*Work can take many forms: full-time or part-time; permanent or casual; working for someone else or starting a small business; being inside or outside; interacting with people or working alone; working day-times or evenings. The following questions will help you and your child paint a picture of what work might look like for them in the future:*

- ✓ What chores or work experiences has my child had?
- ✓ What jobs/activities does my child like?
- ✓ What jobs/activities does my child dislike?
- ✓ What jobs/activities make good use of my child's existing skills/abilities?
- ✓ How important will work be in my child's life?
- ✓ How important will working alongside people without disability be?
- ✓ Would full-time or part-time work better suit my child's disability and/or lifestyle?
- ✓ How safe should the workplace be for my child?
- ✓ How secure will the job need to be?
- ✓ How will my child get to work?
- ✓ What kind of support will my child require to learn and keep a job?
- ✓ How much income will my child need?
- ✓ Will the loss of some or all of any Social Security benefits be a problem?
- ✓ What kind of lifestyle will my child need to finance?



# RAISING AN INTERESTING PERSON

**Employer:** 'And what do you do in your spare time, Jack?'

**Jack:** 'Nothing much - watch TV, play video games.'

**Employer:** 'Do you play any sports or have any hobbies?'

**Jack:** 'Nup.'

**Employer:** 'Thanks for coming in today, Jack...'

We probably all know somebody who is so consumed by their work that they are a dull and boring person to be around. This would equally count against your child if they had no hobbies or interests or social outlets - potentially affecting them finding the job they want.

First, they would appear a lot less interesting in the eyes of an employer (like Jack above).

Secondly, it gives the employer less information on which to make a favourable decision. The employer will be looking for evidence of motivation, self-improvement, initiative, getting on with people, sticking at things and trying to get ahead. If an applicant has a limited work history, the things people do in terms of sport, leisure and socialisation become important indicators for prospective employers

Being an interesting person helps in keeping a job. Poorly developed social skills can lead to job losses more often than inadequate work skills. Developing a range of hobbies and interests, becoming involved in teams and mixing with people outside the family are very important activities. They will enhance your child's social skills, clarify job interests and increase job prospects.

# PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

*Strong predictors of regular employment in adult life for people with disability are:*

- ✓ having any experience of paid work during their school years.
- ✓ A school program that focuses on teaching skills that are required in real work settings.
- ✓ Work experience in regular work settings with on-the-job support to build confidence, skills and review job aspirations.
- ✓ The involvement of a Disability Employment Service, or another employment support provider, in finding and supporting work experience placements.
- ✓ The support and positive attitude of the family.

*Work experience in a real work setting is a key component of the school to work transition process, provided:*

- ✓ It is well matched to your child skills and interests
- ✓ Your child receives structured on the job support.
- ✓ The work experience is reviewed and the outcomes are integrated into their transition plan.
- ✓ The family is closely involved and receives regular feedback on progress and outcomes.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL

*The success of any partnership is dependent upon each party recognising their responsibilities and acting on them. So what can families reasonably expect from the school?*

*That the school will:*

- ✓ Teach vocational skills.
- ✓ Educate families about employment and training opportunities.
- ✓ Introduce families to a Disability Employment Service, or another employment support provider.
- ✓ Fully involve you in your child's transition plan.
- ✓ Encourage you to be optimistic about your child's future employment.
- ✓ Work in partnership with employment support providers to secure work experience tailored to your child's skills and interests and offer on-the-job support.
- ✓ Involve you in getting your child prepared and motivated for work.
- ✓ Keep you informed about your child's progress and outcomes.
- ✓ Include you in reviews and revisions to your child's transition plan.

## WHAT THE SCHOOL CAN EXPECT FROM YOU

*That you will:*

- ✓ Assist the school to identify your child's interests and skills.
- ✓ Actively support the teacher's efforts to teach work/vocational skills.
- ✓ Support the school's efforts to secure work experience in regular employment.
- ✓ Help your child find paid or volunteer part-time work.
- ✓ Assist with job support efforts.
- ✓ Emphasise the importance of health, fitness and grooming with your child.
- ✓ Seek information about employment support providers.
- ✓ Meet with Centrelink to discuss your child's future.
- ✓ Choose a Disability Employment Service, or another employment support provider, and inform the school of your choice.

# JOB HUNTING FOR YOUR CHILD'S FIRST JOB

*Having a part-time job after school, during the holidays or on weekends teaches your child work skills, reduces the loss of skills learnt at school, builds contacts for future work and engages them in positive activities. Working also helps them determine the type of job they would like to do after their schooling is completed.*

Parents have an important role to play in kick-starting their child's career journey. These efforts will be assisted by entering into a partnership with a Disability Employment Service or another employment support provider.

*There are several steps to securing jobs:*

## **STEP 1 – SELECTING SUITABLE JOBS**

The job hunting process begins with selecting suitable jobs. involves exploring your child's job interests and developing a short list of suitable jobs based on your child's ability to do each job (given appropriate on-the-job support). You then need to consider the likelihood of those jobs being available in your locality as you do not wish your child to be travelling long distances on public transport or private car.

## **STEP 2 – LOCATING JOBS**

The next stage involves locating the job. Use your network of family and friends to develop a list of employers who might have jobs that match your child's interests. Prior to approaching an employer, ensure that your child's portfolio of education history, work experience, achievements, references, community work or involvement, hobbies and interests is well presented.

## **STEP 3 – SECURING JOBS**

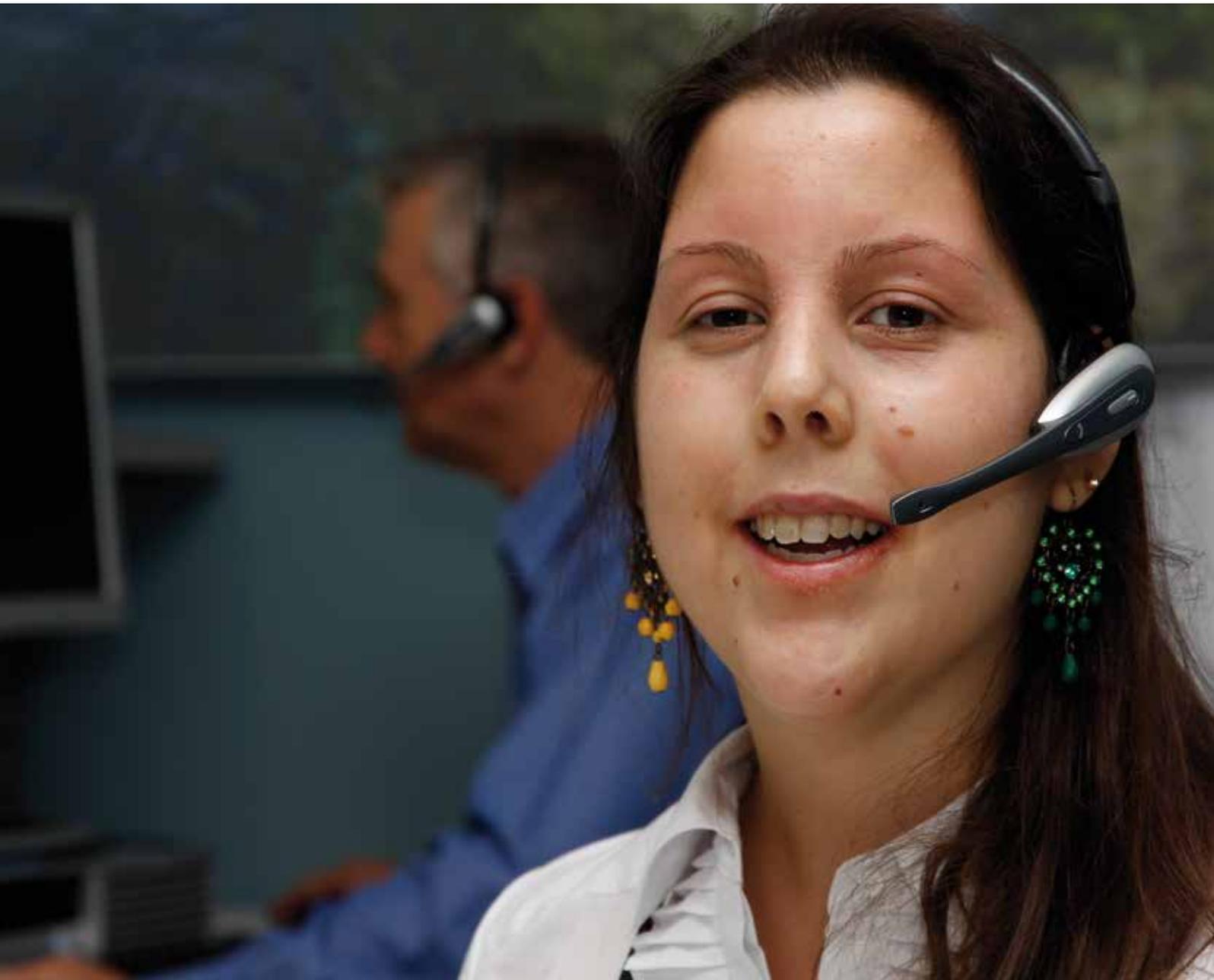
The final stage of job hunting is securing the job. This involves making a direct approach to these employers, determining the employer's interest and identifying suitable jobs that match your child's skills and interests. It is useful to devise a job canvassing letter and also short script covering the things you wish to say to a prospective employer over the phone or, preferably, when you meet them face-to-face.



# DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

*Disability Employment Services can assist your child to identify their skills, determine job aspirations, secure a job that matches their skills and interests, and provide on-the-job support.*

A Disability Employment Service can also assist in the provision of assistive equipment and workplace modifications to ensure that they perform their job safely and at the speed and accuracy the employer expects. Employers who employ people with disability may be entitled to government incentives and wage subsidies.



# CHOOSING AN EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROVIDER

*It is recommended that you approach a number of Disability Employment Services, or other employment support providers, to determine the capacity of the service to meet your child's and the family's needs before you register. Remember that you have choice and control over who provides support to you and your child and you can change to another provider at any time, without question.*

Here are some questions you may want to ask in relation to your child's services:

- ✓ How will their skills and interests be respected in the job search process?
  - ✓ How will we be involved in decision-making?
  - ✓ What role will we play in searching for work?
  - ✓ How will you keep us informed about your efforts in finding a job?
  - ✓ How will they be supported at work?
  - ✓ For how long and how frequently will they be supported at work?
  - ✓ How will they be supported to fit in socially at the workplace?
  - ✓ How will you keep us informed about how things are going at work?
  - ✓ How will you manage any issues that may arise?
- ✓ What will happen if they lose their job?
  - ✓ What happens if we have any concerns?
  - ✓ What type of jobs have you previously secured for jobseekers with disability?
  - ✓ What type of jobs have you previously secured for jobseekers with the same disability as my child?
  - ✓ Can you provide us with any feedback from families who have used your service previously?

Once you have chosen a Disability Employment Service, it is important that you seek their support to undertake the required Centrelink assessment to determine your child's eligibility for assistance.

At this time, you can also discuss the possible impact of employment on your child's pension or benefits. It is important to note that working in regular employment rarely significantly affects your child's Disability Support Pension payments or other benefits.

Some students with disability in their final years of school may be eligible to register with a Disability Employment Service, without being assessed, if they meet certain other criteria. However, it is important to check with the school and your chosen Disability Employment Service to determine your child's eligibility as an Early School Leaver.

Also, if your child is already working, and is experiencing difficulty keeping the job, you and their employer may directly contact a Disability Employment Service to provide the required support to ensure the job lasts as long as possible. An assessment is not required in this instance.

# CREATING A JOB

Some people with disability find it difficult to compete with their non-disabled peers for a job. If your child has a more significant disability, an innovative way to secure employment is to create or customise a job to match their interests and abilities.

This approach gives you a greater chance of negotiating with the employer about the tasks to be performed. It starts with asking the employer about what tasks need to be done in the work place, but which might be being ignored and left undone by the current employees. Such tasks may include keeping kitchen areas tidy and clean, collecting and distributing mail, photocopying, collating,

filing, replenishing stores, cleaning and sorting cutlery, preparing rooms for meetings, preparing name tags, or envelope filling. The approach may involve re-arranging tasks performed by co-workers to construct a list of tasks that your child can perform for the employer. Jessica (pictured below) was employed using this strategy and undertakes a wide variety of tasks listed in her job description (see next page).

It is very important that the tasks match the skills and interests of your child as your child must be motivated to do them for the approach to be successful.



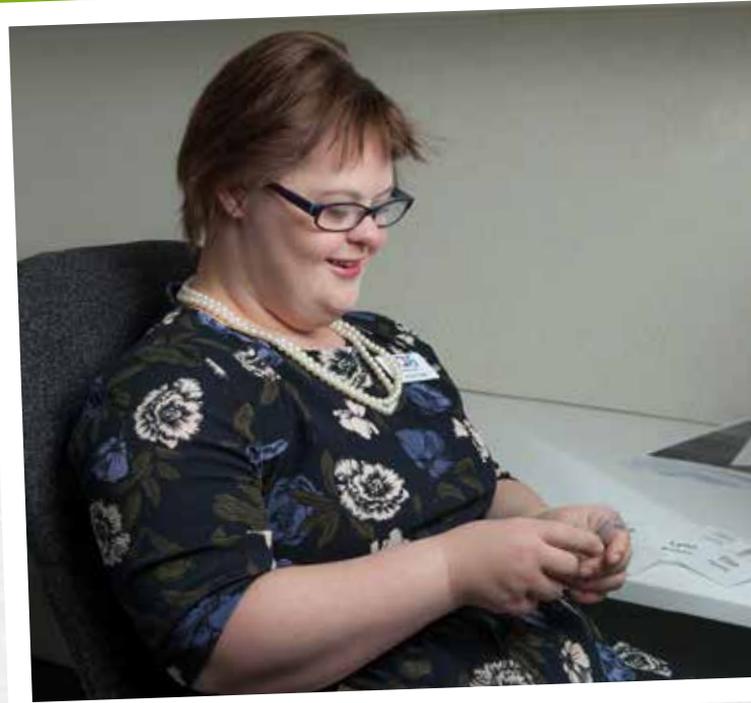
# Jessica's Job Description

**Job Name:** Office Assistant

**Where:** City West Lotteries House,  
West Perth

**Hours:** Part time (8 hours per week)

**Who is the Boss?** Office Manager



## Jessica's Task List

### DAILY

- ✓ Turn on the photocopier and refill with paper.
- ✓ Collect the mail from the building reception, open, and stamp with the date then put the mail in the mail tray log.
- ✓ Log mail into Correspondence In on computer.
- ✓ Type address labels for mail.
- ✓ Wash and dry any dishes. Put dishes away in the cupboard. Tidy kitchen.
- ✓ Buy coffee at the coffee shop on the Delhi street for staff when asked.
- ✓ Make tea or coffee for staff when asked.

### WEEKLY DUTIES

- ✓ Put name labels into badge holders for people coming to events.
- ✓ Empty recycle bins to the paper and cardboard wheelie bins.
- ✓ Check fridge and remove food that is out date out of date. Tidy up.
- ✓ Check supplies of tea/coffee/sugar and let staff know if supplies needed.
- ✓ Tidy stationery shelves and put items in their right place.
- ✓ Take the flyers from the whiteboard that are finished and put in Event file.
- ✓ Clean microwave.
- ✓ Take newspapers to recycling

### FORTNIGHTLY

- ✓ Fold up any mail outs and put into envelopes, seal and label.
- ✓ Check event tubs are fully stocked with supplies.

### MONTHLY

- ✓ Water plants, dust and cut off any dead leaves.
- ✓ Remove items from one desk each month and wipe down. Clean computer screen, keyboard and telephone with alcohol wipe.

### OCCASIONAL

- ✓ Help set up tables, chairs, food and drinks for events and pack away afterwards
- ✓ Help with other office tasks when asked.

# CREATING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

With the assistance of family, friends and perhaps a support worker, your child could run their own small business. Self-employment offers the opportunity to arrange the working day to suit fitness and concentration levels and works best when the activity closely matches hobbies or interests that could be converted into income generating enterprises.

Good examples include: car washing, laundering tea towels, dog washing, dog walking, jewellery manufacturing, dog biscuit/soap manufacturing, card making, couriering, collecting mail for businesses, document shredding, flower arranging, being a companion to an older person when the family goes out.

## DYLAN'S STORY

*"I have my own Business called D Shredding Man, and I really LOVE shredding. I am a Man Now."*

Those are the words of seventeen year- old Dylan, who has significant disabilities, including Down syndrome and Autism. His business has given him new opportunities to take part in the workforce, earning money, building social skills and feeling like he belongs in his community.

Dylan and the people supporting him, including his Mum and Dad, his service provider and his support network, helped customise his business around his passion for shredding. As his mum, Natalie, said "Dylan would sit around home and shred all day if he could. He just loves it." The family recalls how many people, providers and schools said that Dylan was too challenging to ever work. Dylan's mum was also told the best thing for her to do was to put him in a group home. But this advice just made her more determined.

Dylan is paid above the minimum wage for his shredding and, with on-the-job support from his support worker, conducts his business from a number of worksites, including National Disability Services, where he shreds six bags of papers every Friday and delivers them to the RSPCA for animal bedding. This allows NDS staff, who otherwise would have to spend time shredding papers themselves, to focus on their other work duties.

Thanks to some creative thinking, and identifying a job that would suit his skills and interests, Dylan does real work, for real pay – just like the rest of his family.

# SCHOOL-BASED TRAINEESHIPS

If your child wants to go straight into the workforce after school, but you would like them to develop some more work skills and have these formally recognised whilst they are still at school, you should discuss the possibility of doing a school-based traineeship with the school or a Disability Employment Service. A school-based traineeship is a combination of school and part-time, paid work for an employer

who is willing to allocate time to teach your child new work skills on-the-job. It is a great way for your child to gain nationally recognised skills and develop a more impressive resume. A school-based traineeship will also give them a better insight into the world of work, help determine future goals and increase their chances of securing a work-based traineeship or apprenticeship after they leave school.



# JOSHUA'S STORY

*It might not have been the most conventional career path, but it's worked for Joshua*

Joshua's first position came when he was still at school. He worked in the operating theatre of St John of God Hospital in Murdoch. For the son of doctors, it was a nice twist to get to wear hospital "scrubs" while working on the tasks required to complete a Certificate 2 Business Administration Traineeship.

Joshua worked two days a week supported by his school and Disability Employment Service. After finishing high school, Joshua used the skills he'd learned at the hospital in a new role as a filing clerk in the People Services section of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. Joshua's mother, Nichola, credits Joshua's Disability Employment Service job co-ordinator with the fact that he has gone from requiring full-time on-the-job support to being an independent employee, working three days a week. She has helped Josh so much."

Joshua happily outlined his responsibilities. "Filing, making new files, working for wages!" It's amazing!"

As well as the work skills, Josh's mum says the Disability Employment Service also helped Joshua to gain important life skills. Joshua was taught to catch buses to and from work, the job co-ordinator accompanying him on journeys until he was confident he could do it alone. He now can even book a cab online "Josh is very competent, very organised," says his mum. "And once he's taught how to do things, he'll do it forever."

Joshua continues his studies, attending literacy and numeracy classes at Central TAFE, as well as computing and music sessions at Challenger TAFE. In his spare time, he plays Australian rules football in an all-abilities, integrated team for Christian Brothers College. This year, his team won their division. They also travelled to Melbourne, where they were given a tour of the MCG and even took on some interstate teams. Nichola says her son has a full and happy life – and the support of a Disability Employment Service allows her to concentrate on being Joshua's mum, rather than his constant advocate. "It takes the pressure off me having to support him in every single way," she says. "If there's a problem with work, the Disability Employment Service sorts it."

# WORK-BASED TRAINEESHIPS

A work-based traineeship is a full-time or part-time paid training arrangement. During the course of a traineeship, your child will get paid, gain work experience and learn new skills in a hands-on environment and, on successful completion, gain a nationally recognised qualification.

If your child wants to undertake a work-based traineeship, you may benefit from using the supports available through a Disability

Employment Service and/or Group Training Organisation in your area. These types of services can work in partnership to provide trainees with disability with a comprehensive array of registration, assessment, traineeship matching, induction, marketing, placement, and on-the-job support services. You can find out the names and contact details of these services by contacting your nearest Centrelink office, Apprenticeship Centre or asking your child's teacher.



## MITCHELL'S STORY

*Mitchell didn't need anyone's help to answer an advertisement for a job as a Horticulture Trainee at the Shire of Kalamunda. After spotting the vacancy online, he made his application.*

Mitchell's enthusiasm for horticulture was ignited when he was still at school. His Education Support Coordinator encouraged him to complete a Certificate 2 in Horticulture at Leederville TAFE, when he was still in Year Twelve.

The reason Mitchell enjoyed the work so much is simple. "I just love horticulture because I like to work outside. I don't like to work inside. Inside gets boring! "

As a Trainee at the Shire of Kalamunda, Mitchell now spends every day outside. Duties include mowing lawns, trimming hedges, planting trees and maintaining the parks. Mitchell's also discovered a new talent – for fixing reticulation. "Love my retic. It's the best!" he says. "In summer, you don't get all hot and sweaty cos you've got water going everywhere, keeps you nice and cool."

Mitch's Disability Employment Service secured funds to buy him prescription safety glasses and organised a tutor to help him with his studies for a Certificate Two in Horticulture at Polytechnic West.

"I struggle with school work, so that helped me a lot," says Mitchell.

"The combination of school and a Disability Employment Service have set him up for life," says Megan, Mitchell's mum. "It's fantastic. It's a weight off my mind knowing that if there are any problems at work that he doesn't want to talk to mum about.... it's a relief knowing he's got that support."

Megan also credits the Shire of Kalamunda. "His workplace is really good. They made him feel welcome from day dot. They've really taken him under their wing. It's been such a great opportunity for him and he loves it."

The Team Leader of the Horticulture Section at the Shire of Kalamunda says he hopes Mitchell will become a permanent member of staff when the twelve-month traineeship is completed. "I'll certainly go into bat for him. I would give my hundred per cent support!"



# APPRENTICESHIPS

*An apprenticeship is a full-time employment-based training program that provides your child with the opportunity to learn all aspects of a trade. Group Training Organisations also employ apprentices and then place them with one or more host employers during the apprenticeship to ensure the apprentice gets an opportunity to learn all the skills involved in a trade. Apprenticeship training involves practical experience at work with off-the-job training with a Registered Training Organisation.*

You may find it beneficial to register with a Disability Employment Service that is experienced in placing and supporting apprentices with disability, especially if that agency also works in partnership with Group Training Organisations. These services can help find a supportive employer in the many different trade areas as well as work with a Registered Training Organisation to sign them up and monitor their on-site and off-site training.

With the right support, your child will have a good chance of completing an apprenticeship in one of many trades, including: auto mechanic, auto panel and paint, boilermaker, carpenter, joiner, cabinet maker, chef, electrician, hairdresser, mould and core maker, plasterer, plumber and horticulturalist. There is not a trade in Australia that has not somewhere been successfully completed by a person with disability.

# DALE'S STORY

Dale has his teacher, his Disability Employment Service, and his own strong work ethic to thank for landing his dream job. Dale is an Apprentice Chef at Crown, Perth. He earned the position after successfully completing months of both paid work and work experience.

*"This is it," says Dale. "This is what I'm going to be doing for the rest of my life!"*

Dale's first job at Crown was working as a Kitchen-Hand, but an apprenticeship was always his goal. The Apprentice Chef Coordinator at Crown said that Dale was determined to undertake an apprenticeship from the very beginning of his career journey.

"Every single day he came to work, every time he saw me in the corridor, he came up to me and asked me if he could have that opportunity. That's what he really wanted to do, he wanted an apprenticeship. He wore me down completely!" she laughs.

So struck a deal with Dale. "I said to him, let's have a look at your skills and what you're actually made of. I asked him if he was prepared to come in one day a week for twelve weeks of work experience in a kitchen and be assessed each day, which he did." "He basically proved to me that he was willing to do the job, and capable of doing the job."

Indeed, neither a learning disability, dyslexia nor ADHD have prevented Dale from pursuing the position he's coveted since he first started cooking classes at school.

"About four weeks into Home Economics I fell in love, and that was it, I decided I wanted to be a Chef." said Dale. His love of cooking was encouraged by his Education Support Coordinator, who arranged a one-day a week work experience for Dale at a local café.

"Then I got him into a Disability Employment Service and his first work placement was probably the best thing. It started him off, driving that passion. He then completed a Certificate 3 in Hospitality, followed by another six months as a kitchen-hand at Crown Perth. "I proved myself by doing that," says Dale.

Crown Perth's Apprentice Chef Co-ordinator agrees. "Everything I've asked him to do, he's taken on board. He's "teachable," she said. "His attitude far outweighs any disability he might have. He comes in each day, he's on top of the world, he loves his job. He thinks it's absolutely fantastic. He's got this opportunity. He loves going to TAFE, he's fantastic with the other staff, he's helpful with the work experience students – he's actually quite a good mentor."

Dale's grandmother says the focused and determined seventeen year-old is very different from the "sometimes really naughty" child who'd regularly disrupt lessons at school.

"He always wanted to be a chef, he wanted to be cook. He just got all this help," "I always say to him, Gee Dale, I'm so proud of you!"

# NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

With the progressive roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, people with disability and their families will have more choice and be able to exercise more control over how their employment support providers are delivered in the future. Services need to fully involve you and your child as partners in the planning and delivery of employment support. Services will be expected to tailor supports to your child's individual needs.

Government support of the NDIS is based on the expectation that many more people with disability will be able to take their place

in the workforce and pay taxes. As a result, support for your child to locate, secure and maintain employment is expected to become an integral part of your child's NDIS Plan.

There are currently two types of NDIS trial operating in WA: one managed by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the other managed by the WA Disability Services Commission (WA NDIS).

You may need to contact the NDIA or WA NDIS to determine your child's eligibility for their support.



# SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN NDIA TRIAL SITES

Your child's NDIS Plan can include 150 hours of support (up to \$8,169 over a 12-month period) to help prepare for work and community life. The support is available to any student in Years 10 to 13, regardless of the severity of their disability, who live in the Local Government Areas of Swan, Kalamunda and Mundaring. From October 2016, this support will be extended to students living in Bayswater, Bassendean, Chittering, Toodyay, York and Northam.

## *The support can:*

- ✓ Complement, but not replace, school-based work experience.
- ✓ Occur during out-of-school hours, such as after school, weekends and holidays.
- ✓ Be provided by an employment support provider or skills development provider, chosen by you and your child.
- ✓ Include a work preparation plan, with a 'discovery' phase where a trained support worker will get to know your child in various settings.
- ✓ Assist your child to secure a part-time job or work experience.
- ✓ Assist your child to undertake other work, such as: small jobs to help friends and neighbours in their homes or making items to sell or setting up a small business.
- ✓ Provide the required on-the-job support.



# SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN WA NDIS TRIAL SITES

The WA NDIS operates in Western Australia's Lower South West and the Local Government Areas of Cockburn and Kwinana. From October 2016, it will also be available in Armadale, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Murray. If you live in these areas, you should discuss with your WA NDIS Co-ordinator the importance of including employment support in your child's Plan to help them prepare for work and community life.

For families living in the south-west WA, Forrest Personnel operates the NDIS Employment Service for school-leavers who have been assessed by Centrelink as only being able to work between one and seven hours a week. This service provides pre-vocational skill training, transport training, time and financial management skills training and support to find a job. The service is not funded to provide on-the-job support beyond the first day of employment.

The Ticket-to-Work program assists eligible high school students with a disability, living in the Kwinana/ Cockburn or the Lower South West areas, to connect with a network of disability support services and training organisations who can assist your child to prepare for work and locate employment opportunities in the region.



# IN SUMMARY

## *It's a Right*

Your child, like any other person, has the right to determine and pursue their own career. You're there to help.

## *It's a Partnership*

Involve as many key people and organisations as possible in the partnership; teachers, Disability Employment Services, Registered Training Organisations, Group Training Organisations, other disability organisations, and employers.

## *It's a Journey*

People very rarely stay in their first job for their entire working life. School leavers, in particular, rarely stay in a job for long. Your child's decision to change jobs, and taking responsibility that decision, is all part of becoming an adult. It could take several jobs and a number of training courses before your child settles into the job of their choice.

## *It's About Optimism*

Talk positively and regularly about working, the world of work, the importance of work and the benefits of work.

## *It's about the Whole Person*

Becoming involved in a sporting club, gym, volunteer work and community activities will make your child a more interesting and confident person. It will also build vocational and social skills that will be useful in future jobs.

## *It's About the Right Job with the Right Employer*

A good quality job is one that matches the person's interests, job aspirations and lifestyle. The workplace should be convenient to home and transport, welcoming, safe, secure and provide needed training and support.

## *It's About Determination*

Your child has a right to take their place in the workforce. Nothing should force your family or your child to surrender the dream of paid and meaningful employment.

# ON-LINE RESOURCES

**[www.careertips.net.au](http://www.careertips.net.au)** - this site has been specifically developed for students with disability and provides comprehensive information on how your child can get their career on track.

**[www.skillsroad.com.au](http://www.skillsroad.com.au)** - this site is a career development website with activities and tests to help develop your child's career options and refine their career choices.

**[www.careercentre.dtwd.wa.gov.au](http://www.careercentre.dtwd.wa.gov.au)** - this site provides career videos and job search tips.

**[www.disabilityemployment.org.au/provider-search/wa/](http://www.disabilityemployment.org.au/provider-search/wa/)**

**<https://jobsearch.gov.au/serviceproviders/search?jsk=1>** - these sites provide information about disability employment services in your area.

**[www.wecanwork.info/choice](http://www.wecanwork.info/choice)** - this site provides information on the performance of DES providers by disability type.

**[www.jobaccess.gov.au](http://www.jobaccess.gov.au)** - this site is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers. It includes information on how to apply for funding to modify a workplace to accommodate a person with disability. It also includes videos of people with disability talking about their work.

**[www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)** - this site provides information on apprenticeships and traineeships and the additional supports available to apprentices and trainees with disability.

**[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)** - this site provides information on the National Disability Insurance Scheme and how to contact your NDIA Planning and Support Co-ordinator.

**[www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)** - this site provides comprehensive information about the WA Disability Services Commission and the NDIS trials in WA, including how to contact your Local Co-ordinator or WA NDIS Co-ordinator.

**[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/income-test-pensions](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/income-test-pensions)** - for advice on how your child's income can affect the amount of payment received from Centrelink.

**[www.tickettowork.net.au](http://www.tickettowork.net.au)** - this site provides information about school-to-work transition and pathways to employment.

**<http://cciwa.com/students/the-essential-guide-for-graduates>** - this site has a guide for young people to assist them to find a job

