

We're Glad You Asked!

Parents' Frequently Asked Questions

Are there employers who will really hire my son or daughter?

YES! Every person has a skill or talent that will fill an employer's need. Many people with disabilities, even significant disabilities, work in a variety of jobs and locations. It takes a good job match, a good understanding of your family member's skills and interests and finding the right workplace. With hard work and good teamwork it can be more than a possibility; it can be a reality.

What happens if my family member gets hurt on the job? What is the liability for the employer? ...for the school?

All employees—including workers with disabilities—are covered by the employer's Workers' Compensation insurance for injury.

If the workplace is a 'training site' or providing non-paid work for a school, then the school's insurance will cover an accident.

**Studies by Dupont on worker liability issues reflect that employees with disabilities have safety records that are equal to or better than non-disabled workers.*

When can a student earn wages?

A student can work and earn minimum wage at 16.

Does the student keep the job after he or she graduates?

Ideally a student would begin working in school and graduate with a job. Talk to the vocational teacher to make sure the job will continue. Also, make sure that the IEP has a goal for paid employment that can be retained after graduation.

Can a student work more than part time?

Most students balance academics with work during the school year. A student who is close to graduation can work more than part time if it is a part of his or her IEP.

Can a student use ESY (Extended Services Year) funds in the summer to support a job coach or trainer?

ESY funds are available when there is a need for continued support in the summer, based on the possible loss of skills or regression if the support is not given. The student's IEP must reflect this need for continued job coaching supports to keep their job in order to use ESY. You can—and should—ask for these supports if your son or daughter needs continued support during the summer months.

Who is responsible for transportation?

Schools usually offer transportation during school months and school hours. However, odd hours, weekends and summer months are more difficult to schedule.

Assistance from parents, siblings, friends, public transit or co-workers may be necessary to transport the student to and from the work site.

Will my son or daughter lose Social Security benefits?

NO! Not if you work with the Social Security Administration and your local Benefits Planner to use the Social Security rules and work incentives! The rules are not always easy to understand, and the benefits may change, but there is no reason to lose benefits—especially medical benefits—as your son or daughter develops his or her career.

How long will the job coach stay with my son or daughter on the job site?

Supported employment, by definition, implies that the person will have support on the job as long as needed. Based on the student's work goal and the employer's input, the job coach provides systematic training and supports. A "fading" process occurs as the student's competency on the job increases and the need for support is transferred to co-workers and natural means of support.

Students and adults who require sustained support on the job should continue to receive job coach supervision as long as it is needed.

What do we do when there are problems at work?

If problems with supervisors, co-workers or customers occur, be sure to let the job coach or vocational teacher know and follow-up. Help your son or daughter problem solve. Discuss what happened. Give them some ideas for solving the problem. Role-play what happened and ways that they might respond.

Who will provide attendant services for my son or daughter at work?

Initially, the school personnel or job coach will provide personal attendant services. Other resources need to be identified as the career develops. This may include paid assistance from co-workers, scheduled attendant care with home health agency personnel or other support services. Be sure to address this issue in the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) before graduation.

