

A GUIDE FOR TRANSITION WORK READINESS PROGRAMS

The activities planned within a student's work readiness program should vary according to the needs of each student, but will be organized into five key categories: Planning; Assessment; Life/Work Skills; Employment Preparation; and Transition Implementation/Support.

Planning:

Initial planning begins with setting programs goals that parallel the student's objectives as stated in the transition section of the IEP. Although it is not a necessity to mirror those goals and objectives, it makes sense to align the activities to the current program set forth specifically for transition. Gathering additional records and materials regarding the student's needs aims to target future services required after graduation, enabling appropriate referrals to other programs to take place. Planning includes:

- Reviewing a copy of the student's IEP transition goals and objectives;
- Designing a transition plan to align with current IEP goals;
- Gathering parent consent , disability documentation and other needed details;

Assessment:

As part of the initial evaluation of student needs, AHEDD utilizes the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Transition Health Care Checklist. While utilizing the entire checklist may not be efficient for all students, the design of the checklist allows for a comprehensive review of student needs and identification of necessary referrals for other services. Self assessment activities are another way we use to determine student interests.

- Transition Health Care Checklist- A tool in meeting the criteria for effective transition activities and resources as well as helping a young adult realize his/her strengths, needs, and interests in achieving success in the future.
- Self Assessment- In order for young adults to be successful in employment and learn about ways to secure a job it is important that they first look inside themselves. We design activities to help students determine: what they like; what they can do now; what needs to be learned; and what supports may be needed in the future.



Life/Work Skills:

AHEDD's program targets employment for those students interested in pursuing work prior to graduation. To compliment employment options, students may participate in a number of activities that help them to explore their goals, build self sufficiency, and ensure referral to adult services. Such activities could include:

- Employer related activities that discuss the value of work, show how work connects to their future goals;
- Education related activities that involve discussion and/or an onsite experience within colleges, trade schools, certificate programs, and other educational options;
- Budgeting and financial guidance activities to enhance their ability to live more Independently;
- Goal setting activities that get students explore their goals and dreams for driving, living situations, work environments, and more;
- Resource related activities that assist youth in identifying and understanding programs and supports (e.g.CareerLink) that are available to adults.

Employment Preparation:

The goal of this phase is to equip students will the skills and practice to secure and/or maintain employment as they transition out of high school. AHEDD believes in providing youth with “real” employment opportunities that are integrated and in the community. Activities in this phase can include:

- Review of pre-employment best practices such a resume preparation; dressing and preparing for an interview; application guidelines; handling disclosure; conducting an effective job search; and more;
- Hands on interview experience through video recording of an interview, practice with a local employer, and observation of others;
- Training and practice on behavioral competencies and interpersonal skills (soft skills) needed to be successful in the workplace;
- Completion of interest inventories and job market research using such resources as O*Net Online, a resource for career exploration and job analysis, http://www.youthhood.org/jobcenter/lw_index.asp , and others;
- Participation in brief opportunities to observe various jobs/industry settings (Job Shadows) and assess workplace abilities/skills (Community Based Work



Assessments);

- Creation of a student profile that contains a resume, results of assessments and other exploration activities, and a plan for next steps;
- Community Service and work experiences (paid or unpaid).

Transition Implementation/Support:

As a culmination to the program activities, this final step is designed to provide additional education and help the youth and their families to begin implementing the final steps necessary to transition out of high school and remain successful. This phase can include such things as:

- Work Incentive Counseling (WIC)- this service addresses concerns about how employment will impact current and future eligibility for SSA cash benefits and related healthcare;
- Scheduled meetings with representatives from needed adult services;
- Continued/Expanded/or New Employment;
- Orientation to and accommodation planning with chosen post secondary education institutions;
- Regular progress review/evaluation/support detailed in the Employment Plan;
- Status check in one year after graduation

AHEDD is a specialized human resource organization with a mission to serve the community as a catalyst in the employment and development of people with disabilities. AHEDD provides community employment services through a network of field offices throughout Pennsylvania. For further information about our Services, contact AHEDD at 1-866-902-4333 or inforequest@ahedd.org .