Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of HAPPINESS

Best Practices in Employment Preparation

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It is important that our students with special needs be provided with an educational experience that links the classroom to *real-world* work experiences.

When looking for a career development model, one important consideration should be that it is a continuum of educational experiences.
The model should be developmentally based.

The model components should not exist in isolation and should not be mutually exclusive as to the activities in each.
Phases of the Continuum

1) Community Awareness
2) Interests and Job Awareness
3) Pre-Vocational Development
4) Vocational Skill Preparation
5) Skills Application
6) Specialized Services/Referrals
The ability to interact with co-workers and supervisors is essential to job retention.

The program should place strong emphasis on social skill development.
The Help Group’s Vocational Education Program

- Serve young adults between the ages of 18 and 22 with special needs.
- The program works to promote growth and development using a structured curriculum combining classroom instruction with real-world application.
While Career Development curriculum provides instruction at various levels, effective assessment and accurate evaluation are essential. Assessment should drive instruction.

Career Inventories:
- Combination of formal and informal assessments
- Interviews
- Observation of the individual
Evaluation can occur at various levels

- Self-Evaluation
- Staff Evaluation
- Job Site Evaluation
Vocational Training

Provides hands-on learning through managing and working at on-campus businesses in addition to receiving site-based training at local community businesses and establishments.
Vocational Training

Work Opportunities at the Voc Ed Center

- Pair classroom instruction with various multiple classroom businesses and school-wide enterprises.
  - Lulu’s Kitchen
  - Lulu’s – student run café
  - Restoration Station – Furniture
  - Ebay – Arts and Crafts
  - Natural Connections Landscaping
  - Clothing Resource Program
  - Lulu’s Outlet – Yard Sales
  - Office Solutions
Off-Campus Internships

- Job coaches provide support to the individual within a real-world work experience in a natural environment.
  - TJ Max
  - Walgreens
  - Dollar Tree
  - Public Library
  - Fresh and Easy
  - One Generation
  - Regal Cinemas
  - Sharkey’s Restaurant
Internships are designed to provide a realistic, meaningful work experience for the individual.

- Length of work shift
- Length of internship
- Tasks
- Intern expectations
- Role of the manager
- Role of the job coach
The National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition published a document for secondary education and transition. The purpose of the document is to provide a common and shared framework to help school systems and communities identify what youth need in order to achieve successful participation in postsecondary education and training, meaningful employment and adult life.
Five Areas of the National Standards and Quality Indicators

- Career Preparatory Experiences
- Youth Development & Leadership
- Family Involvement
- Connecting Activities
- Schooling
During Schooling knowledge and skills are imparted through curriculum and instruction, experiential learning, and work–based learning.

Effective schooling provides individuals with the necessary tools to become productive citizens, engage in meaningful employment, and work toward achieving their life goals.
Career Preparatory Experiences

- Career prep activities include career awareness, career exploration, and career assessment tied to classroom learning, employability skills training and work experiences.
- Career preparatory activities allow individuals to explore a variety of career opportunities while identifying their career interests, abilities and potential needs for accommodations.
Youth Development/Youth Leadership

- Youth development is promoted through activities and experiences that help individuals develop social, ethical, emotional, physical and cognitive competencies.

- Youth leadership is part of the youth development process and supports the individual in developing the ability to understand his/her own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation and abilities to carry them out.
A family’s involvement in their child’s education is the single most important factor in school success and achievement.

The definition of family must be inclusive of and respectful of each child’s family structure which may include new spouses, partners of parents, extended families, step-relatives or any other person that is considered a family member.
These are the services, accommodations and supports that help youth gain access to and achieve success within chosen postschool options.

Options may include employment, mental and physical health care, access to transportation, financial planning advice and participation in leisure or rec activities.
All of the components of this presentation should be considerations when looking for a model Transition Program.