

### STARTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

- **Talk about work.** Share your expectations of future education and employment. Talk about what work is and about different kinds of jobs and work opportunities. Ask questions about your child's interests, dreams & career ideas. Encourage youth to learn about different careers by job shadowing parents, family members, friends.
- **Find opportunities to help out around the house.** Have your child help with chores around the house and take part in neighborhood jobs. This will help instill self confidence and help teach them about money and budgeting.
- **Promote skill building and independence.** Self-advocacy skills can be taught by giving the youth choices, like what to wear or how to spend allowance money. Daily living skills, such as good hygiene and learning how to prepare meals are important skills that can be taught starting at a young age.
- **Help your child have a voice.** Effective communication and self-advocacy skills are essential and will serve your child well throughout their life. These include being sure your child understands their disability and strengths and know what accommodations and supports will be needed for them to be successful as an adult.
- **Look into Waiver Programs.** DDSD's vision is for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live the lives they prefer in their communities. With that said, we encourage individuals with intellectual and development disabilities or their families and guardians to research Home and Community Based Services for themselves or their loved ones at the earliest possible age. Please visit the Developmental Disabilities Support Division at <https://www.hca.nm.gov/programs-and-services/> to find out how to apply and who qualifies for services.

### STARTING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Examine interests, skills and preferences, based on work and volunteer experience.**
- **Learn about education and training requirements in a career area of interest.**
- **Seek out volunteer opportunities.** Your child will learn new job skills and expand their network by volunteering for organizations that appeal to their interests. Don't forget to ask for letters of reference!
- **BY AGE 14:** Students are eligible to register with NM Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR). NMDVR Staff should attend IEP meetings. Remember to include your child at the IEP meeting to talk about his or her career goals.

Higher levels of communication, self-feeding, self-dressing, ability to get to places, household responsibilities and participation in community activities are associated with higher rates of competitive employment

High parental expectations of employment and work experience while in high school are the top two predictors of post high school success

Career awareness training, computer skills, a high school job, participating in either a post-secondary vocational school or 4-year college/university program, were all associated with competitive employment.

## STARTING IN HIGH SCHOOL

- **Find work-based experiences** through an after school/summer job and/or internship.
- **Develop a career portfolio**, including a resume and letters of reference.
- **Develop transportation plans** for getting to and from college and/or work.
- **Explore independent or supported living options**, as appropriate.
- **Talk to other families** whose children have pursued work or college after graduation.

### BY AGE 16:

- Continue to have your child participate in their IEP meetings, especially when setting post secondary goals. These should include future education, training,, employment, and independent living.
- Begin the NMDVR employment process **at least 2 years** before graduation. Having documentation of the disability and knowing what the career goal(s) is/are will help move things along.
- View college resources for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

## ONE YEAR BEFORE LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL

If your child plans to attend college, **apply for college and contact the college/s Disability Resource Center** to set up accommodations.

### Before Age 18:

- **Prepare paperwork to apply for guardianship or conservatorship if necessary**, and explore alternatives to guardianship that may meet your child's needs.
- Make plans to **transition your child's primary care provider from a pediatrician to an adult physician**.
- **Add your child's name to residential placement wait lists**, if needed.



### At Age 18:

- **Apply for SSI.**
- **Apply for Medicaid.** If not eligible for Medicaid, look into health insurance options for when your child will no longer be covered by the parents'/guardians' plan or by a college health plan.
- **Register to Vote.**

