Job Skills: Getting Ready for Work

Learning and practicing job skills while youth are still in schools helps youth with disabilities to be more successful at finding and maintaining employment. Parents and family members can also work with and encourage youth to develop skills to be successful in the workplace. Depending on the needs and strengths of the youth there are many different ways these skills can be taught. A transition plan that focuses on both assessment and planning is essential to prepare youth for life after high school.

Job skills can be divided into three main categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
<th>Interpersonal Skills</th>
<th>Decision Making Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Following and giving directions</td>
<td>• Cooperating with others</td>
<td>• Handling conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Communicating information either verbally or in writing</td>
<td>• Displaying appropriate workplace behavior and etiquette</td>
<td>• Following directions and accepting instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understanding and processing information</td>
<td>• Maintaining good personal hygiene and appearance</td>
<td>• Getting along with others</td>
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<td>• Requesting and offering assistance</td>
<td>• Knowing appropriate topics for discussion in the workplace</td>
<td>• Respecting others</td>
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<td>• Non-verbal communication</td>
<td>• Knowing when and when not to socialize on the job</td>
<td>• Arriving to work on time</td>
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<td>• Protecting oneself from victimization on the job</td>
<td>• Using social problem-solving techniques</td>
<td>• Calling into work when sick</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encouraging youth to be respectful of others</td>
<td>• Ensuring proper appearance and hygiene</td>
<td>• Requesting vacation time</td>
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</table>

Examples of how to help:
- Work on building vocabulary
- Encourage participation in school activities
- Practice different communication in different environments
- Teach appropriate speaking volume and personal space
- Work on listening skills by having conversations with others
- Model listening skills and proper posture
- Have youth repeat instructions that have been given
- Practice proper eye contact, facial gestures and expressions

Examples of how to help:
- Encourage volunteering in various settings
- Engage youth in games with friends or family to foster cooperation, following rules, taking turns, controlling emotions, and learning new skills
- Participate in athletics which encourages team work
- Role-play challenging situations
- Model proper appearance and hygiene

Examples of how to help:
- Assign responsibilities at home
- Ensure the youth understands use of phone and texting at work
- Enroll the youth in etiquette or mentoring program
- Encourage independence
- Encourage use of public transportation

Resources: Job Skills