The Colorado Office of Employment First (COEF) is a new training and technical assistance center housed at JFK Partners at the University of Colorado School of Medicine focused on improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities, including those with complex and significant disabilities.

COEF envisions a culture of inclusive, meaningful, and competitive employment for all people with disabilities.

**CONTACT US**

Colorado Office of Employment First
EMPLOYMENTFIRSTCOLORADO.ORG
info@employmentfirstcolorado.org

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**I CHOOSE WORK. WE PARTNER. COLORADO SUCCEEDS.**

A series of brochures focused on preparing young adults for employment developed in collaboration by the Colorado Office of Employment First, Department of Education, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

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**IN COLLABORATION WITH**

Colorado Department of Education
www.cde.state.co.us

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
www.colorado.gov/dvr

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**PEAK PARENT CENTER**

Training, information and technical assistance for self-advocates and their families.
www.peakparent.org/

**THRIVE CENTER**

Advisement, workshops and programs for low-income, linguistically-diverse families who have children with disabilities.
www.thrivectr.org/

**PARENT TO PARENT OF CO**

Connecting families of sons and daughters with disabilities or special healthcare needs to emotional and informational supports.
www.abilityconnectioncolorado.org/p2p-co/

**PACER CENTER**

Family Engagement In the School

Path to Employment: Tips for Family Members

“Drawing attention to the relationship between work and money may develop work ethic, particularly when one is empowered to use those earnings to choose preferred items and activities.”
WHAT ROLE CAN FAMILY PLAY IN SUPPORTING YOUNG ADULTS ACHIEVE EMPLOYMENT?

When it comes to family’s role in supporting their young adult’s vision for the future, often we are looking for a guidebook or checklist for what to do or how to help. One goal to start is to have high expectations and be supportive of your young adult’s vision. The more you focus on what your child can do, the more they will do. The creation and support of a young adult’s vision are the building blocks to having a good life, where supports and services can be developed to enhance the likelihood of achieving one’s vision and finding happiness in chosen work and activities.

“Research shows that the more families are actively involved in the education of their children, the more successful the child will be in school and in life.”

Questions that may come up to get support around:

- What steps do I need to take?
- When should I begin preparing, or is it too late?
- What are the resources to help?
- Who can help?
- What if I disagree with my young adult’s vision?
- What if my young adult does not have a vision?
- Who is going to make this all happen?
- How will my young adult gain the skills they need?
- What if I do not want them to work?
- How will this affect social security benefits?

EMAIL: parentadvisor@peakparent.org
OR infop2p@abilityconnectioncolorado.org

CREATING CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Colorado is an Employment First state where the belief that employment is the first and preferred outcome takes precedence. A job may not always be available, and parents can take on a role in helping to develop an employment opportunity. Customized employment may be an option. A customized employment opportunity is developed with an employer taking into consideration an individual’s unique assets and matching with an employer. To get connected to Customized Employment and for referral assistance, contact Darby Remley at darby.remley@state.co.us or Meghan Greene at meghan.greene@state.co.us with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

FAMILIES AS FACILITATORS

- Look for opportunities for your young adult to develop skills, learn about careers, or gain experience that relate to their strengths and interests.
- Organize and support communication with the school and service providers.
- Support your young adult to develop a portfolio to share their vision, experiences, and skills. This could be electronic, video or paper format.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING

- Understand the power of personal and professional networks.
- Connect with other families through family support groups, listservs, community-centered programs, or other interest-based activities.
- Develop a relationship map—who can help with employment, socialization, community access, navigating the system?

SKILL BUILDING AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY

- Encourage and create opportunities for your young adult to practice self-determination.
- Provide choices to be made throughout the day.
- Ensure chores and independent tasks are a part of the daily routine.
- Gradually fade supports in daily activities.
- Learn about assistive technology that can increase independence.