COLORADO OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT FIRST

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._

---

EXAMPLE IEP FOCUS AREAS FOR EMPLOYMENT:

- Assistive technology goal to help meet deadlines and timelines
- Soft skills goal to improve interpersonal relationships and follow directions
- Financial literacy goal to plan for budgeting and increase self-determination of own earnings

---

COLORADO OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT FIRST

EMPLOYMENTFIRSTCOLORADO.ORG
info@employmentfirstcolorado.org

IN COLLABORATION WITH

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

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
www.colorado.gov/dvr

WORK ELEVATED.

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.

“Talking About Employment during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process”
TIPS:
✓ Ensure skill building activities do not stop at preparation and work readiness opportunities, but also include actual work experiences in the community.
✓ Make sure communication not only happens at the IEP meeting but is ongoing. Consider making a communication log between the family and school to document work experiences.

START DISCUSSING EMPLOYMENT EARLY

Talking about a student’s interests and goals are always a part of an IEP discussion. When a student turns 13 or 14 you can start moving those conversations about interests into how they might apply their skills and interests in a job.

Use the discussion of IEP goals (areas that a student needs support and development in) as an opportunity to strengthen skills with a vision of employment in mind.

Activities to Prepare for Employment.

■ AGES 13 AND 14: Career Scope assessment, community and workplace volunteering, job club participation, self-advocacy awareness

■ AGE 15: Self-advocacy and self-determination skills development, transportation training, soft skills development

■ AGE 16-18: Job shadowing, workplace learning, summer internship, informational interviewing, application completion and submission, paid employment

■ AGE 19-21: Resume development, paid employment, strengthening of skills, connections to community

UTILIZING THE IEP PROCESS

A student with an identified disability and receiving special education services has specific rights to services and supports that they can access. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legal document in place to support a student’s strengths, preferences, interests, and needs. When a student turns 15 in Colorado, they can access transition services specially designed to support a student’s vision for life after high school.

In high school, annual IEP goals should reflect areas of need related to a student’s goals for employment and increasing a student’s independence. Transition assessments help to inform annual IEP goals. Utilizing situational assessments can help to identify employment related IEP goals and potential areas for employment skill development.

Discussions should start with a future vision. This vision is discovered during the transition assessment process. The student’s vision translates to the establishment of postsecondary goals (PSGs). Finally, annual goals are written focused on student skill development to accomplish their vision for employment each year.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

The school and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) can support a student while they prepare for and obtain a job. A school might have a vocational specialist or utilize paraprofessionals to support students. A student may have access to a job coach and assistive technology through DVR.

Using supports on the job are appropriate and legal. While some supports might be necessary to utilize all the time, others can fade out such as the hours a job coach spends with a student on the job. As a student learns tasks and becomes more independent, supports can fade to develop stronger self-determination.