

Transition to Work & Higher Education

Preparing Individuals with X and Y Chromosome Variations

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Plan early for employment

- Begin volunteer and/or paid work experience before age 18
- Assess interests and aptitudes as a basis for potential volunteer or paid work experiences
- Consider functional level and challenges which might eliminate potential opportunities
- Be persistent and keep trying different options if some aren't a good fit

Seek help to find work opportunities

- Friends, neighbors, and other families with an individual with a disability
- Co-workers and business colleagues
- School personnel - teachers, IEP (Individualized Education Plan) team members, student organization advisors, etc.
- Local and state disability advocacy groups

Include work experience/skills in an IEP

- When individuals transition to high school, discussion of future work objectives should be included
- Hard and soft job skills (promptness, social interactions, etc.) can be included as IEP goals
- State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agency counselors may be included on the IEP team
- Include work opportunities and/or training each year of high school (seek it privately if you homeschool or if your child is in a public or private school which does not or will not offer it)

Access Vocational Rehabilitation programs

- All states have government funded programs for individuals who have disabilities that impact successful employment
- VR agencies help individuals prepare for, obtain, maintain, and regain employment
- VR agencies may have counselors who are involved with the local school districts and attend IEP meetings, but an individual does not have to be in school to access VR services
- To find your state VR agency, check <https://www.askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies/>

Request Vocational Rehabilitation services

- Example: Georgia <https://gvra.georgia.gov/>
- If your family member is in school, request VR services to be included in the IEP; if your family member is not in school, request the services yourself directly from the VR agency
- Services require an eligibility determination, often based on a neuropsychological evaluation; ensure you have a **recent, thorough** evaluation for your family member obtained through the school, VR, or privately

Request Vocational Rehabilitation services (continued)

- Ensure that the updated neuropsychological evaluation includes all areas which need to be considered for VR eligibility
- Confer with other families of individuals with disabilities who are currently receiving services in order to learn the process, limitations, etc.
- Remember that accessing services may take time (due to waiting lists, etc.), so start as soon as possible
- Be persistent but polite in requesting the needed services

Utilize various Vocational Rehabilitation services

- VR can provide specialized testing to determine suitable jobs
- Placement with suitable employers can also be facilitated through VR
- Job coaches provided by VR can help an individual to succeed in a job placement
- VR can ensure appropriate accommodations are provided to an employee who self-identifies to an employer as an individual with a disability

Higher Education

- If an individual is eligible, VR agencies may provide or direct you to other programs that provide tuition assistance for college and vocational schools
- These schools are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and not the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Students must self-identify
- After providing required documentation of disability to the Office of Disability Services, appropriate accommodations will be determined

Higher Education (continued)

- Students must confirm accommodations with each instructor; curriculum and testing cannot be modified
- Parents (usually) may not independently communicate with instructors and advisers, so the student must be able to self-advocate
- The student may sign a FERPA (Family Educational Rights Privacy Act) release to allow the parents to obtain information about their student from the institution of higher education

Some considerations

- Due to limited structure in college and vocational school environments, consider options other than the independent residential setting
- Commuting and online instruction may be preferable to traditional dorm living, at least initially
- Attending a college, university, etc. with a specialized program (designated tutors, assistance with daily living, etc.) for individuals with disabilities may help the student be successful; many of these programs are quite expensive
- Taking a gap year (or longer) prior to beginning a program in higher education is another option

Questions or Comments?

Thanks for your attendance and participation!

Feel free to contact me at drdorothyboothe@gmail.com