

Vocational Training – Lots of Local Resources

A transitioning special needs adult who has been approved by Florida's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), take their eligibility to a one of many local VR vendor organizations. Local organizations vary in size, staffing, training types, training support, format, class length, ongoing support etc., but they all have the same underlying goal to help every special need student successfully transition into a functional adult. This means much more than finding employment. Nearly all programs offer training in: life skills, interpersonal/social skills, life-at-work skills, self-advocacy, financial responsibility and independent living skills. Successful employment means matching the right skill sets with the right employer and employment setting. This can only be accomplished

through in-depth evaluations and subsequent training.

Training for Employment and Adulthood


Many organizations offer vocational training through programs that resemble school. This includes, offering formatted training during a typical school year calendar. Participants register for courses aimed at developing specific skill sets. Some offer guidance counselors to work with each student. Other organizations offer a specific skill set training in the form of a one-time course over 4-10 weeks. Some organizations offer on-site housing during the time enrolled, while others provide transportation. Much of the cost for these programs can be fully funded through VR. Training and repetition are proven

elements to help achieve both short-term and long-term success.

On the Job

With assessments/evaluations completed and ongoing training in place, the natural progression over time is to engage a student in the workplace. VR approved organizations typically have existing relationships with various businesses offering likely success for employer and employee. Continual efforts to train on both work skills and at-work skills is key. Some programs offer students the ability to rotate through multiple work fields and work types (requiring different skill sets). While each organization's approach may be different, the goal is the same, a win-win for both parties. Some organizations are entrepreneurial in their approach, offering the means for their participants to manufacture their own creations on-site which are then sold online in a virtual retail setting.

Developing Social Skills

One of the biggest adjustments for any special needs child moving into adulthood is that of continual social development, especially for those now living independently away from parents. Parents may find watching their child transition from dependent child to independent adult a difficult process. The need for constant focus on social skills has led to a number of local organizations providing outlets for these new adults to develop skills beyond work, such as in cultural, physical and recreational activities. Some organizations offer classes in person or via Zoom, including: arts, crafts, marital arts, exercise and yoga. Today's special needs children growing into adulthood have more resources, options and opportunities than ever before thanks in great part to the numerous organizations devoted to assisting them in their journey. 

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