

Employment

The importance of having a valued and respected activity for any individual to attend regularly cannot be overstated. Employment in a suitable form can provide a sense of contribution and worth that is an integral part of having a full and satisfying life. The plans and goals may change over time and some or all of the following options may play a role in achieving that sense of worth.

Here is a link to a story of two of our members:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BOLgnEb1p0>

There are several types of employment and supported employment services available to school leavers and adults with a disability that offer the following options:-

- Work - paid or voluntary
- Workplace - supported or open
- Study - TAFE, university, apprenticeship
- One on one support - fee for service
- Combinations or sequence of the above

It is worth taking the time to look through the information with the person with a disability and identify which of the various options would best set them on the path to achieving their goals.

These activities can be set up as a progressive sequence or occur concurrently for a few hours or days each week depending on the individual's strengths and interests.

Employment Options

Voluntary

Support for voluntary work may be funded on a case by case basis under an Individualised Support Package (ISP) or a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in several categories.

Paid

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) are generally not for profit organisations providing supported employment opportunities to people with a disability. ADEs provide a wide range of employment opportunities and they operate within a commercial context.

There are ADEs across Australia providing supported employment assistance to approximately 20,000 people with moderate to severe disability. ADEs are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Australian Disability Enterprises will offer a much higher rate of onsite support which will adjust according to a persons support needs.

The hours of employment can vary to suit the individual and the enterprise.

Wages at an ADE are paid on an assessed productivity basis as a percentage of the minimum wage via the Supported Wage System* - SWS

For further information on ADEs refer to the following link:-

<https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programmes-services-for-people-with-disability/about-australian-disability-enterprises>

OPEN EMPLOYMENT

For people with a disability most open employment takes place with the support and assistance of a Disability Employment Service (DES) now funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Some DES providers specialise in supporting people with an Intellectual Disability and will provide coaching and marketing support to assist participants to find a job. A DES will provide support in the workplace to varying degrees depending on their company policy; some may drop in from time to time to see how the participant is going while some will provide full-time onsite support until the individual is feeling confident in the job. This will depend entirely on the DES provider and should be a question that is asked of the DES provider prior to registration.

Registration with a DES

To qualify for support from a DES a person will need to have an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) to determine their work capacity and support requirements. If an individual is already receiving the DSP they will not require a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA).

An ESAt is carried out, usually face to face, by a qualified assessor and is not generally considered a difficult experience.

For further information about ESAts refer to the following link:-

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/employment-services-assessments>

To qualify for DES support an individual will need to be assessed as having a current work capacity of 8 hours or more per week. A reassessment can be requested at any time. Some DES providers have set their intake limit as 16 hours or above work capacity for perspective program participants.

For more information about Disability Employment Services (DES) refer to the link:-
<https://www.employment.gov.au/disability-employment-services>

To find a DES provider refer to the link:-
<https://jobsearch.gov.au/serviceproviders>

NOTE - In the provider type choose - DES- Employment Support Service

Open employment - Less than 8 hours per week

Open employment assistance and support is also available to those who wish to work less than 8 hours a week by using the NDIS one on one support in the “finding and keeping a job” category.

Wages in “open employment” are paid at the relevant minimum wage rate or above unless a Supported Wage Assessment* (SWS) is requested by the employer in which case the individual’s productivity on the job will be assessed by a government appointed assessor to determine a productivity based wage.

For More information about the Supported Wage System refer to the link:-
<https://www.employment.gov.au/supported-wage-system>

3

*A minimum rate for a Supported Wage of no less than \$84.00 per week was set in June 2017.

For more information on Supported Wage rate refer to the link:-

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay/minimum-wages/employees-with-disability-pay-rates>

Apprenticeship support

Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS) is an Australian Government incentive payable to an employer who employs an Australian Apprentice who satisfies the disability eligibility criteria in an Australian Apprenticeship. This wage support is also available to an employer who employs an Australian Apprentice who becomes disabled during their apprenticeship or traineeship.

Further information about DAAWS, refer to the link:-

<https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/publications/support-australian-apprentices-disability>

Considering the options

It is important to look at the whole picture when considering employment options.

The most obvious consideration is what supports are available in your area.

Whether or not an individual can consider seeking open employment will depend on what type of support they will need in the workplace and if there is a provider offering those supports in your local area.

DES providers are funded to actively seek out suitable and appropriate employment for an individual however they may not provide the type of support required for an individual to maintain that employment. Some DES providers are reluctant to register individuals with high support needs.

Some potential question to ask DES providers:-

“How many hours per week of ongoing support in the workplace do you provide to participants and for how long?”

“Have you placed a person with Down syndrome in open employment before?”

“How did you provide support for that person?”

“How did that work out?”

“Do you provide travel training?”

Job Access

JobAccess is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers.

JobAccess provides information on, for example: financial support, workplace modifications, help with finding and changing jobs, creating flexible work environments, links to career advice and training courses, connecting with employers, providers and peak bodies and a range of other tools and resources for people with disability, employers and service providers.

For further information on Job Access refer to the link:-

<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/about-jobaccess>

Developing work capacity over time

It may be an option to consider a period of time working at an ADE to develop independent work skills as a preparation to moving to open employment. The post school transition to work programs use this principle to prepare young adults for broader employment options.

The NDIS fee for service employment supports also focus on building capacity and independence through volunteering, work experience, and working fewer hours with a higher level of support.

Hourly fee for service supports provided as Assist Access/Maintain Employment under the Finding and keeping a job category.

What Supports NDIS will fund in relation to employment:-

https://www.ndis.gov.au/html/sites/default/files/documents/employment_supports_the_ndis_will_fund.pdf

Other Fee for Service supports such as work experience etc. may be available as part of the social inclusion and capacity building sections of funding.

Employment location

Another serious consideration is the location of potential employment. It can widen the market considerably if an individual can be supported to develop independent travel skills. Some DES providers will provide travel training to a specific job, otherwise NDIS funding may cover this support.

Looking at the sustainability of whatever plan you set is very important and a serious question to ask is “How does this work with the rest of the family now and in the future?”

How will working affect my pension?

Please refer to page 9 for an example table of how the pension will be affected by wages.

This is only a sample as rates and allowance may vary from person to person. The most accurate information about the Disability Support Pension can be obtained directly from Centrelink.

Once an Individual is receiving a regular income they will need to declare their income to Centrelink. Centrelink provide various options for doing this.

For further information about Disability Support Pension cut off points per fortnight, refer to link:-

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/income-test-pensions#a5>

Considering employment for school leavers

Once the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) roll out is complete the School Leaver Employment Support – SLES will be focused on preparing young people in all states for appropriate employment. Until that time, some school leavers will still be covered by the Victorian government funded Transition to Employment (TTE). Both systems focus on capacity building and skill development through work experience and vocational training.

The aim of SLES is to support participant’s aspirations for employment and to develop pre-employment skills through activities such as work experience. The NDIS and the employment system will work closely together at the local level to plan and coordinate streamlined services for individuals requiring both employment services and disability services to provide a smooth transition from one to the other or across service systems.

For further information about the NDIS SLES refer to the link:-

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/h50/h10/8800937836574/SLES-Participant-FAQs-Updated-April-2017.pdf>

The following links are to National Disability Coordination Officer Program booklets which may be of use when deciding what sort of work would be suitable.

GET READY For Study and work: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/961682/Form_Final_-_20152906_NDCO_Get_Ready_-_Parent_Guidebook.pdf



GET READY! For Study and Work: Top tips for young people with a disability
https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/961677/Form_Final_-_getreadytoptipsworkbook.pdf

GET READY! For Study and Work: Top tips for young people with a disability - Easy English Version
https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/928043/easyenglishNationalworkbook.pdf

Resumes, Cover Letters, Interviews – TIPS

TOP points to remember

Be honest

- DO NOT make unrealistic claims about your abilities.
- DO NOT undersell specific skills that are relevant – just because you do it naturally and everyday doesn't mean it isn't worth mentioning. For example the job Key Selection Criteria (KSC) asks for good team player – you have been told you're "always" easy to get along with and appear to be happy most of the time – give examples of When? Where?

The employer only cares if you can do the job and/or what you bring to the company.

- Resumes, cover letters and interview answers should be customised with each application to fit the position being applied for.
- Add in any work or personal achievement details that can demonstrate the required skills
- Keep unrelated work experience and paid work descriptions to minimum details unless they include skills and attributes relevant to the Key Selection Criteria.
- Read the selection criteria carefully and rephrase your responses using criteria phrases
- Use STAR – Situation Task Action Result – as often as possible in interview questions or when responding to selection criteria to demonstrate existing skills and attributes.

Example of STAR and phrasing:-

Position Description says "Work well in a team and can also work unsupervised."

(Situation) When I was on work experience with the child care centre (Task) three of us were responsible for tidying up after lunch. (Action) We decided together who would wash the dishes, who would clean the tables and who would put away the food. (Result) We made that decision as a team and then each completed our own tasks unsupervised until the room was clean and tidy. If one person finished before the rest of the team they would help the others until the job was done.

A simple way to explain this method of answering interview question and selection criteria is:-

"Where?" (were you at the time)

"What?" (were you asked to do)

“How?” (did you do it)

“Good?” (how did you know you did a good job)

Have an electronic, editable version of your resume

For the following reasons:-

- It can be customised to suit each application.
- It can be loaded on a USB or emailed to your employment agency support person.

Simple Format

Keep the resume to a maximum of 3 pages and keep the same font throughout with minimal size changes.

Limit the cover letter to one page unless you are addressing the selection criteria within the cover letter.

The following link leads to information regarding cover letters, resumes and interview tips on the SEEK website.

<https://www.seek.com.au/career-advice/resumes-and-cover-letters>

7

It may be worth asking your LAC or support coordinator if you are able to get support through the NDIS to create a resume and prepare job applications.

Getting your resume “out there”

DES providers and employment support agencies are funded to actively market or promote a registered individual as a potential employee to suitable businesses in the local area. This can be very effective when seeking customised employment in a supportive environment.

As employers become more aware of the benefits of hiring a person with a disability some people may actively seek to employ someone with specific personal attributes. Developing and uploading a SEEK or LinkedIn Profile may help prospective employers find you.

An employment support agency or DES can be approached to provide support once an opportunity has been identified.

Volunteering in a business of interest can help to get a foot in the door. It is worth checking to see if your funding will provide the required Worksafe cover.

Personal networking amongst known businesses, associates and personal friends is another way to hear about potential positions.

The following links on the Down Syndrome Victoria and Down Syndrome Australia websites have information brochures to download which may be of value to both potential employers and individuals starting a new job.



Down syndrome – An Employer’s Guide

http://www.downsyndromevictoria.org.au/DSV/Resources/Information_by_topic/Employment/Employment.aspx

Down syndrome in the workplace for employers

A new resource published by [Down Syndrome Australia for employers \(PDF\)](#).

Down syndrome in the workplace for employees

A new resource published by [Down Syndrome Australia for employees \(PDF\)](#).



9

DSP and Wages , Single 21 & Over EXAMPLE ONLY*			
WAGE/Fortnight	WITHDRAWAL FROM PENSION	PENSION RECEIVED	TOTAL INCOME/Fortnight
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$894.40	\$894.40
\$168.00	\$0.00	\$894.40	\$1,124.60
\$200.00	\$16.00	\$878.40	\$1,078.40
\$300.00	\$66.00	\$828.40	\$1,128.40
\$400.00	\$116.00	\$778.40	\$1,178.40
\$500.00	\$166.00	\$728.40	\$1,228.40
\$600.00	\$216.00	\$678.40	\$1,278.40
\$700.00	\$266.00	\$628.40	\$1,328.40
\$800.00	\$316.00	\$578.40	\$1,378.40
\$900.00	\$366.00	\$528.40	\$1,428.40
\$1,000.00	\$416.00	\$478.40	\$1,478.40
\$1,100.00	\$466.00	\$428.40	\$1,528.40
\$1,200.00	\$516.00	\$378.40	\$1,578.40
\$1,300.00	\$566.00	\$328.40	\$1,628.40
\$1,400.00	\$616.00	\$278.40	\$1,678.40
\$1,500.00	\$666.00	\$228.40	\$1,728.40
\$1,600.00	\$716.00	\$178.40	\$1,778.40
\$1,700.00	\$766.00	\$128.40	\$1,828.40
\$1,800.00	\$816.00	\$78.40	\$1,878.40
\$1,900.00	\$866.00	\$28.40	\$1,928.40
\$1,956.80	\$894.40	\$0.00	\$1,956.80
*Subject to Centrelink DSP rate changes			