

EMPLOYMENT FACT SHEETS



preparation
job mentors
career talents
CUSTOMISED
inclusion
diversity
VALUED
outcomes
strengths
DREAMS

1 EVERYONE CAN HAVE A REAL JOB

Why employment matters

Everyone can benefit from having a job, earning money, and building a career. You have a lot to contribute, and society is stronger for your contribution.

Having a job brings a sense of purpose and belonging and the opportunity to make friends. Your first job is an important start to your adult life. With some creative thinking, meaningful work is possible for everyone.

Inclusive employment means working in a typical and socially-valued job alongside other people in the community. It means fair pay for your work. It also means getting the support you need, reasonable adjustments in the workplace and equipment to help you do your work.

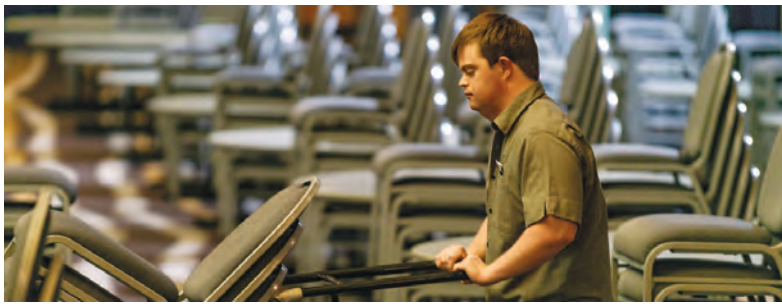
Jobs come in many different shapes and sizes. The important thing is to find the right match between you and the job, including your interests and strengths, and your plans for the future.



What gets in the way?

Unfortunately finding your first job is not as easy as it sounds or should be. Not all employers realise people with disability can be valued employees or contributors to their business. Because many people with disability are not in the paid work force, your family and school may also not immediately expect that you can have a real job. It can also be difficult to get a job when you need to compete with lots of other job-seekers or fit into a standard job. Getting a job while you are in high school is a great place to start.

With some determination, persistence, a creative customised approach and the help of family and friends, it is possible to get a job where you can learn, contribute and be successful.



Getting your first job fact sheets

1. **EVERYONE CAN HAVE A REAL JOB**

outlines why employment matters

2. **RAISING EXPECTATIONS**

will help you imagine a good working life

3. **USEFUL TIPS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

will guide them on how to assist you

4. **GETTING PREPARED**

offers some helpful strategies to think about and plan for a first job

5. **FINDING YOUR FIRST JOB**

has some practical exercises to think more about what you have to offer

6. **SUPPORT FOR YOUR FIRST JOB**

gives some ideas on where to obtain support

7. **INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS**

outlines the value of employees with disability

8. **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

lists references and links on employment.

Story

Seeing is believing! Marcia's mother was a great cook and knew that her daughter also shared her passion. After Marcia finished school, she planned for her to attend the local day centre which had a cooking program.

When her neighbour told her of a young woman with disability working in their local bakery, she went there to observe.

"Marcia could do that!" she thought. "Let's begin to explore this idea."

She thought of all the places in her local community where there might be a job for Marcia. Marcia was excited too. She had always wanted a real job, just like her school mates.



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2 RAISING EXPECTATIONS



Believe you can have a job

Believe that you have a lot to contribute because with some creativity, there is a job for you. You and your family will need to be determined to find and maintain a real job. It's good to have a goal of what you want and then work out the steps you need to take now to get there. Other people have done this before you so remember it is possible.

Follow your dreams

You might have a dream for your future. Dreams are important. They guide your goals and plans for your future. Imagine what could be possible and talk to other people about how they decided what they wanted to do. Listen to other people's stories and learn what is possible.

Identify what you can offer

Everyone has strengths and something to contribute. Ask your family to help you identify your talents and contributions. Write these down and share them with others - they might have noticed qualities or skills that you have missed.

Think outside the box

Translating your dreams into a job might need you and your family to think "outside the box".

Here are some strategies to help you think of typical and valued possibilities in your community.

Circles of Support

A circle of support is a semi-formal group of people, who meet regularly to assist you to dream, plan, and work towards your personal goals. If two heads are better than one, then six heads are better than two. You and your family will feel much more connected, determined and organised with their support.

Power of 10

The Power of 10 is a process using the concept of the multiple of ten ($\times 10$) to help us think more broadly than we usually do. For example start by making a list of 10 things you are interested in; then for each of those ten you could name ten jobs that are related to that interest; then for each of those, name ten businesses that employ people to do that. You can do this alone but it works better when you have a group of people thinking with you.

Learning to Ask

Asking for assistance is difficult for many people. People have written some useful tips on this to enhance the chance of success. These resources could guide you and your family on different ways to approach others and seek their involvement. See **Fact Sheet 8** for a link to some of these resources.

Think about a Career

Having a career means your first job is not your last — you build on your experience in each new job towards a fulfilling work life. It also means developing skills and confidence over time. See **Fact Sheet 5** for more thoughts on Career.

Surround yourself with positive people

Finding and keeping a job takes determination and persistence. Surround yourself with positive, experienced people who support your personal goals. They will have useful networks and knowledge to help you solve problems and find creative solutions. They will also support you when things get tough.



Story

Mike listened to his school mates talking. They had many plans for the future — leaving home, travelling, going to university and having a girlfriend. Mike's dream was to be a rock and roll superstar.

When his Mum heard that she said,

“Well, that’s a challenge. We will need to think about how this can happen.”

With the help of his family, Mike found his first job at the local music store where all the local musicians hung out. They got to know him and invited him to their gigs.

Ten years on, Mike continues to work in the music store. He has set up a studio at home, recorded some songs, and played in his friends' band throughout the district. He is well on his way to fulfilling his dream.



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3 TIPS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

It takes determination and persistence to find your first job, and your family and friends can be helpful. They care about you and want you to succeed. Families can contribute in many practical ways, from finding your first job to helping you build a career.

It's never too early

Parents can encourage a work ethic from an early age, by delegating household tasks, and expecting a contribution to family life. Having typical conversations about what the child wants to do when they grow up is all part of the preparation. Taking up opportunities like using public transport, getting used to paying for tickets; learning how to speak up for yourself are all great preparation for working life. Being confident and responsible are great assets when looking for jobs.



Get informed and inspired

Entering the workforce is not easy for anyone, and there is much to learn. It can be a fearful time for your family member and for you — feel the fear; then get going.

A powerful start is to listen to your family member's dreams, goals and plans for the future. Support them, even if you do not know where to begin. Think about what is valued and typical for other young people - this is a good guide. There are endless possibilities.

Invite others to help

If you feel overwhelmed, it is useful to invite others to help. Friends – can sometimes identify opportunities that families miss. Brothers, sisters, cousins and their friends know a lot about starting work. A Circle of Support is an intentional strategy for planning and safeguarding. For links to more information on how people have used this semi formal strategy to harness the knowledge and support of family and friends - see **Fact sheet 2**.



Use your networks

Although there are formal services that find jobs for people with disability, you and your family do not have to wait. You can start by seeking out opportunities through your informal networks. It's often who you know, not what you know.

A family business can provide people with disability a flexible and welcoming place to get that first job. Here, they can gain confidence and skills to join the mainstream workforce.

Facilitate relationships

A job will bring new connections and opportunities to make friends. You can assist your family member to make the most of these opportunities by ensuring that they have the support they need to respond to social invitations and of course, in time, they can also instigate invitations.

Create a safety net

Everyone has failures and disappointments in the workplace, and your family member will be no different. You can provide a safety net when things go wrong to give them confidence to keep on going. You can also help them to create their own safety net as they become more confident and experienced.

See **Fact Sheet 8: Further Information and Resources.**



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Story

Patrice's family had no idea what she would do when she left school. With eighteen months to go, her Mum and Dad began to panic. They called some close friends together for help.

“What can we do? The day centre is nearby but that is not an option. Patrice would be very unhappy there. She has big plans for herself.”

The group gathered regularly for a year, talking with Patrice and thinking through a number of options. This planning was important not only for Patrice but for the whole family. School had made life relatively simple for everyone. The change for Patrice was a change for everyone.

Eventually, Patrice's Mum found a small part-time job that Patrice could start. Initially, Patrice's Mum and Dad assisted Patrice transition into her new job. This was a good solution for Patrice, her family and her employer. As everyone became more confident, Patrice needed less support.

4 GETTING PREPARED FOR YOUR FIRST JOB

Think about where to start looking

Large organisations

Many large organisations value employees with disability and large organisations often have many small tasks that are not always obvious.

Local small businesses

Small businesses in your community are also a possible source of employment; particularly, if you are known to the business already, and you and your family give them business. They may be quieter and easier to get to.

Family businesses

You or another family member may have a small business yourselves. This can be an excellent place to start. Your family knows you well and is likely to be creative and flexible. Many young people get started in a family business.

Government departments, including local councils and the National Disability Insurance Agency, employ people with disability to demonstrate the value that people with disability can bring to a workplace.

This is not likely to be your first job in high school but could be a first job when school finishes.



Get some experience

Get started where you can. Look for jobs in an area of interest, but remember this is about finding your first job not the perfect job. This is just the beginning. You will learn a lot, and the experience will help you decide what you want to do in the future.

Here are two suggestions:

Volunteering

Volunteering gives you experience and builds your networks. Volunteering is not instead of a paid job; it can be a step to real paid work. It demonstrates to a future employer your willingness to work. Look where other young people volunteer - music festivals, fun-runs or bush re-generation. There will be good role models and the work is likely to be interesting and fun.

Work Experience

You may have some work experience that is organised by your school, or your family. Work experience is for a short period to help you understand what work means and what sort of work you might enjoy in the future. It will also build your confidence and connections. During your work experience, look out for any future opportunities that may exist. It could lead to a paid job in the future.

Plan for your first job

Many young people find their first job through people they know. Getting your first job deserves careful planning and thought. You may need a more personalised approach, and your family and friends can assist. See **Fact Sheet 5** for some example exercises to help you plan for your first job..

A Discovery process

A process of discovery identifies in a common sense way what work you could do. This becomes the foundation for employment planning. See **Fact Sheet 8** for more background on this process.

You can identify your talents and contributions, goals and needs, before you look for a suitable place to work. The process uncovers any potential information that could be shared, such as what you need to be successful at work and how that can be provided.

It may be helpful to develop your résumé. The purpose of a résumé is to sell yourself, including relevant experience and skills. Capturing your skills helps guide the discovery process and could be a part of your pitch.

With the help of your family and friends, and their networks, you can then investigate possible workplaces to see if they have needs that match what you have to offer, in an environment that suits.



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Story

Steve went job hunting when he left school. His family helped him think through what prospective employers would want to know. They were able to describe his talents and needs in a positive, respectful way:

“Steve is very friendly and sociable though can be initially shy. While his speech may initially be difficult to understand, he will work at getting his message across. He enjoys being helpful and feeling like he is contributing. When he is in a role he feels he can shine at, he is an enthusiastic and dedicated team member.

Steve is very good at following a schedule and reading simple instructions and procedures. Visual prompts are helpful. Steve is less successful when a routine changes, when he is unclear about what is expected, or he is anxious about whether he has understood the requirements.

Steve is physically strong and enjoys lifting, packing, and sorting. He is able to lift and move very heavy items and usually enjoys this task. He likes things to be neat. Steve is very safety conscious and is not reckless around dangerous items.

We see a number of possible roles in catering and hospitality, in a conference or reception centre.”



5 HOW TO GET YOUR FIRST JOB

Customised Employment creates roles in open employment based on the interests, contributions and ideal conditions of successful employment for the job seeker, and the unmet needs of the employer. It involves identifying tasks in a workplace that are a good match for the job seeker, forming a customised role and thereby creating a win-win situation for both the job seeker and employer.

Developing and practising your pitch

Once you and your family have identified some prospective employers, you can plan how to make your pitch.

A pitch is a thoughtful personal approach to describe who you are, what you have to offer, and why an employer should consider you. A successful pitch catches the employer's attention and responds positively and realistically to any questions the employer may have.

Think carefully about who should deliver the pitch - Is it you? Is it someone who knows you well? Or is it someone who knows the employer well who makes the first approach? There is no right or wrong answer for this, it will be important to work it out each time.

Think about the amount of work that you can manage. Some conditions reduce a person's stamina so it's good to consider how much is right for you. This can change over time.

Think about if or how much information you want to share with your employer about your access needs or disability and how you will answer any questions about your disability. It will be important to talk about what you can do and really highlight the different ways you can do things and or the support you will require to do the job. It may be possible to illustrate your abilities via photos or a short video. You can practise your pitch, so you feel confident.



Reflecting on your pitch

Take some time after you make your pitch to think about how you went. Write down some notes about things that went well and the things you might do differently. Take it all in your stride and try not to feel put off if it didn't go as well as you had planned.

If the employer is open to it, try giving them a call back to ask for some feedback about some of the things that you excelled at and some of the things you can work on for your next pitch. It is a learning experience and a good chance to refine things for next time.

Customising or tailoring employment

Once you make your pitch and an employer agrees to engage you, then you and the employer need to agree on the type of tasks, and what support and adjustments might be needed in the workplace. You can help the employer by providing information on workplace adjustments. The outcome is increased productivity for the employer and a job for you, providing a win-win for both. For more information see **Fact Sheet 7: Information for Employers.**

Example pitch – making a good impression

This is an example of what the Job Seeker might say if talking to a prospective employer. This template would be adjusted if someone else was doing the asking on their behalf.

SOME THINGS TO INCLUDE	EXAMPLE
Introduce yourself	My name is Jessica and I am 16 years old. I am currently studying at Breezeview State High School. People have said I have a great sense of humour and fun and, while I can be shy with new people (particularly new adults); at heart I am sociable, and outgoing. I am enthusiastic, I like to be helpful around the house and enjoy meeting new people.
Namedrop if someone has recommended you for the job	Linda Smith has recommended me for this position. I have known Linda for 10 years now. Linda knows me well as we have spent time together on holidays with family and friends. We also attend the same local gym together.
Describe some of your skills or positive personality traits related to the type of work you are seeking	Types of work I am good at (but not limited to) include routine clerical work, hospitality and cleaning etc. I am great at following a routine and will aim to complete a task with minimal prompts or encouragement. I am very good at following a schedule and reading simple instructions and procedures. I like to be organized and have my materials ready before beginning a task.
Example of types of tasks you could offer an employer (and how the company might benefit)	I am very good at setting up a room for a function – putting chairs out, bowls, napkins, cutlery, glasses, tea and coffee cups etc. and I am able to count out the required numbers of sets of items, though I will most likely require a visual or written cue to recall quantities. When I have done this in the past it has helped bring a sense of welcome to the other places I have worked.
Give an example of at least one success	In terms 3 and 4, I worked at our local real estate agency and undertook tasks such as setting out morning tea (cutting up cakes); setting up the meeting room with tables, chairs, pencils, and paper. My supervisor commented on how good the room looked and said it helped their day run smoothly.
The next step - Are you seeking further experience, advice or for a formal interview	I have some more background information that might help you in considering me for this position. It would be great to meet you in person so that you can hear some more about what skills I have to offer and some of the benefits I could bring to your company.
Thank the person for their time	Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can be considered for this position, or we can customise one together to use my strengths and to meet your workplace needs.

6 SUPPORT FOR YOUR FIRST JOB

Job mentors

A job mentor can assist you to find and keep your first job. A job mentor would need to understand the expectations of workplaces, how to work alongside others, and how to solve problems. Your job mentor can help you learn how to do your job, keep good communication in the workplace and see that you are well supported. Job mentors are sometimes also called job coaches or job supporters.

A job mentor may assist you with a range of things including (but not limited to):

- Explore and talk with you about expectations of the workplace.
- Support the relationship between you, your colleagues and your employer.
- Liaise with your family and your workplace to ensure that you are well supported to perform the work role and meet workplace expectations.
- Assist you to develop your skills and confidence by being alert to new opportunities to contribute.

You might pay someone to assist you as a job mentor or you might find that other employees in the workplace can offer you some support.



Employment assistance programs

Funded programs can be helpful in providing financial support and expertise. Disability Employment Services may assist some people with disability to work. Employers may also receive funding for equipment and reasonable adjustments to the workplace to employ people with disability. To see if you are eligible visit www.jobaccess.gov.au

The National Disability Insurance Scheme funds support for people with disability who are wanting to work. School leavers with disability can apply for funds to support them transition into work in open employment.

To see if you are eligible visit:
www.ndis.gov.au/participants/finding-keeping-and-changing-jobs



Thinking long term: Thinking Career

A career is working for a significant period of your life with opportunities for skill development and increased responsibility and pay. People with disability can have a career like everyone else.

Develop a Career mindset

- Have goals and a plan, so that you can decide what job is right for you
- Be optimistic, believe in yourself and your ability to make things happen. When things go wrong, learn from this experience
- Be ready to seize an opportunity when it comes your way. Know your strengths, gifts and talents and how you can build on these
- Take the initiative to communicate well
- Every now and then, ask yourself, are you satisfied in your job, or are you ready for a change?
- Consider some further study to complement your work and build your knowledge and skills.



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Story

Ruby has always wanted to play sport and work with young people her own age. She had a family committed to ensuring that work was a central part of Ruby's life after school.

Ruby did work experience at the local fastfood outlet, but she continually reminded her family that this was not the job she was after. Her family and friends met to plan how they could find a more suitable job — one that would lead to her goal.

Through Ruby's Discovery process, they identified a number of possibilities in the local community. Her cousin found a part-time position as an aide in the local gym. It was the perfect first job.

Ruby has now been working for four years. Her stamina and confidence in the workplace have increased and she has been offered fulltime work next year. She has asked her employer to help her develop the skills she needs.

7 INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

Benefits for Employers

There are many recognised benefits to employing a person with a disability. Research has found that employees with disability are likely to bring new skills and valuable perspectives to the business. They generally have lower absenteeism and stay longer resulting in reduced turnover, recruitment and training costs longer term. Inclusive work practices tend to decrease incidences of workplace injury, which increases productivity. Customers are more loyal to businesses that demonstrate inclusion and diversity, and when the workforce reflects the broader community. Employees with disability can help businesses understand what their customers with disability need, and this makes them more competitive.

Building an inclusive, diverse workforce benefits everyone - employees, the business and society as a whole.

Recruiting a person with a disability

Be aware of making assumptions about a person's ability to perform a job on the basis of a diagnosis or disability – whether that is visible or hidden. There are often different, creative ways tackling tasks that might not be immediately obvious to you.

Some employers have little experience in employing people with disability and are concerned they might ask the wrong questions. An employer can reasonably ask questions about the impact of a person's disability if it relates to how the person would perform the 'inherent requirements' of the job and to work out if workplace adjustments or support might be needed. To identify the inherent requirements of the job, focus on the end result of the work you need done rather than how you usually do it.

www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights



Support for Employers

Employing people with a disability should not cost any more than employing people without disability. Employers may be eligible for funding to cover the costs of workplace adjustments or other financial assistance. Employers may also be able to access on the job training and support to assist employees with a disability learn the job and/or maintain their job.

Visit: www.jobaccess.gov.au/disability-adjustment

Job Mentors

Employees with disability sometimes use job mentors. Job mentors can assist in various ways, including providing information for the person to do the job, solving day-to-day problems as they arise, and encouraging the person to do well. Mentors are chosen because they want the person with disability to succeed. They may be paid by the person with disability, or they may volunteer for a limited time. Often another employee will offer to assist.

See **Fact Sheet 6** for more information on Job Mentors.



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Story

Delia ran a small Post Office agency in a country town. She was losing business to the new shopping centre that had recently opened. Her fortune changed when she gave Therese her first job.

At first, Delia thought this would be too much trouble, as Therese used a motorised wheelchair. Although the shop was accessible, the serving counter was not. Therese and her family said there that was funding available to make part of the counter accessible. They argued that an accessible counter would attract more customers and Therese had a lovely way with people — she always made people feel welcome.

This is exactly what happened. The word spread that the Post Office was a very comfortable and welcoming place for people to pay their bills, buy their lottery tickets and do their banking. They could sit down to do their business and have a chat. Gradually, the Post Office became an important community gathering spot, and Delia expanded the business by selling coffee and cakes. Her business is now flourishing.

8 FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Customised employment and Microenterprise

Customised employment and discovery processes provide people with disability an alternative approach to the traditional job market:

- Marc Gold & Associates:
www.marcgold.com
- Inclusion Australia:
www.everyonecanwork.org.au
- Australian Network on Disability:
www.and.org.au
supports organisations and businesses to advance the inclusion of people with disability in the workforce.
- Centre for Disability Employment Research & Practice CDERP:
www.cderp.com.au
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia. CYDA:
www.cyda.org.au
- Guide to Starting a Business:
www.business.gov.au
- Community Living Project CLP:
www.communitylivingproject.org.au



Some resources to get you started

There are many ways people with disability and their families can envision a good life, include others in the planning and set goals and plans:

- Bringing the Good Life to life:
www.cru.org.au/resources/thegoodlifewebsite
(On page 3 there are resources on Asking)
- Resourcing Inclusive Communities:
www.ric.org.au
- Belonging Matters:
www.belongingmatters.org





Good Stories

There are many good stories of people with disability living inclusive lives at home and at work:

- 19 stories project:
www.19stories.org
- Self-managed supports:
www.selfmanagementsupports.org.au
- Inclusion Alberta:
www.inclusionalberta.org
- My Home My Way:
www.myhomemyway.com.au



Government funding

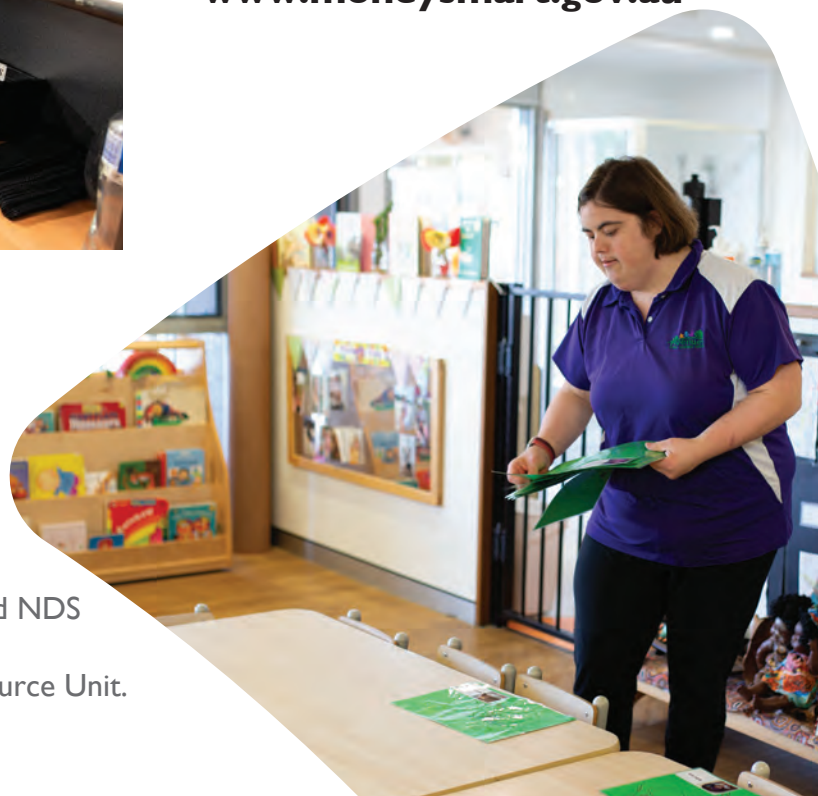
The Australian Government provides funding for support, workplace adjustments and equipment:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme: **www.ndis.gov.au**
- Australian Government's Job Access: **www.jobaccess.gov.au**

Money matters

Here is everything you need to know about managing your money:

- ASIC Money Smart:
www.moneysmart.gov.au



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