

# Preparing for Job Development

## Interactive Webinar - Part 1

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### Record of Meeting

Tuesday, 17 October 2023

## Background

This webinar is part of an ongoing project - School to Work - which gives families tools to help their high-school students with disability find meaningful employment.

This series of Job Development workshops and webinars covers

- (Part 1) [Preparing for customised job development](#)
- (Part 2) [Engaging with employers and customising roles](#).

The videos of the original workshops, recorded in 2023, can be found on our website.

## Summary of interactive follow-up webinar 1

The following information summarises our first interactive follow-up webinar.

We briefly overviewed the first workshop, which touched on

- the essential elements of customised employment
- selecting the right individual or agency for job development and
- mitigating potential trade-offs.

The idea of job development without funding (NDIS) resources and scenarios for service providers willing to adopt customised employment practices were discussed.

We explained how Discovery informs the job development process, emphasising the conditions for success and the importance of a visual resume. Gathering business needs and information from targeted businesses was explored.

The webinar also explained how families could learn about the work demands of unfamiliar businesses through information interviews.

The webinar included practical exercises involving

- learning about the person through different methods of Discovery
- identifying targeted businesses
- brainstorming businesses based on general and specific interests, and
- planning information interviews.

The ultimate goal was to equip attendees with practical knowledge to help students with disability find suitable employment.

## Key points

### Discovery: The importance of interviewing others

We discussed the significance of conducting interviews to gather information about a person's interests and skills. This approach focuses on discovering an individual's strengths and interests rather than starting with limitations, as is often the case with traditional assessments.

### Discovery: Written reports

We suggest caution when reviewing existing reports, such as teacher assessments or occupational therapy reports. These reports may be assessment-focused and highlight limitations.

Instead, we recommend extracting useful information from these reports and shifting the focus towards identifying a person's strengths and interests.

### Planning for Job Development: Brainstorming activities with others

A key piece of advice is to engage in brainstorming activities. This involves thinking about activities that family members are interested in or skilled at. These activities can range from hobbies to volunteering or other tasks.

The goal is to consider these activities as potential sources of valuable skills and interests that can be translated into marketable skills for paid employment.

### Job Development based on a strengths-based approach

We highlighted the strengths-based approach of the Discovery process, which means seeking opportunities that align with an individual's interests and skills. This approach holds even for individuals with communication barriers or initial limitations, emphasising their capabilities rather than their limitations.

### Networking and exploration

Networking, open-mindedness, and continuous exploration are essential components of Job Development. These aspects play a vital role in discovering suitable employment opportunities.

The Job Development role involves reaching out, connecting with various individuals, and exploring different possibilities to find the right job fit.

### Patience in finding the right fit

We stressed the importance of being patient when seeking the right job fit for individuals with additional needs. Finding suitable opportunities may take time, and persistence is crucial to ensure a good match between the individual's skills and the job.

## Identifying suitable businesses

Also important is identifying businesses and organisations that align with the individual's interests and skills. This process involves a focus on specific areas.

Individuals can apply their skills effectively by finding businesses that match these attributes.

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## Exercises

### Exercise 1

Our first exercise was a brainstorming activity encouraging participants to think about activities their family members are interested in or skilled at. These activities could include hobbies, volunteering, or other tasks.

Examples from the discussion include

- a young man helping at a church sound desk
- assembling Lego
- computer gaming skills, and
- potential volunteer opportunities.

Each of these activities can be translated into marketable skills for paid employment.

### Exercise 2

A brainstorming activity identifying businesses and organisations that align with the interests and skills of individuals with disability for potential employment opportunities.

Participants name various businesses and organisations that might offer suitable tasks and roles for individuals with disability based on their interests and skills. These suggestions included

- roles related to sports
- Statistics
- little athletics
- golf courses
- a local park run event.

The importance of looking beyond traditional job roles and focusing on tasks aligned with an individual's abilities and interests was emphasised. Customised Employment is a way to connect individuals with disability to organisations that value their unique skills.

Mention of sports organisations, local community activities, and support from Community Development officers or place-makers is made to explore potential employment avenues.

### Exercise 3

This discussion involves a practical exercise where participants consider approaching businesses or organisations to understand how they operate and what opportunities might be available.

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A participant shared an email she crafted. She wants to step back from requesting employment and instead gather information about how an escape room business works. In her email, she emphasises that she's not seeking a job but rather wishes to understand the business operations.

Milton provided feedback on the email, highlighting that it is well-composed and invites a response. He appreciates how the participant framed her purpose as wanting to explore the nature of the business rather than directly seeking employment.

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A participant discussed her experience with her son's involvement in supervising a Lego table. She shared that the challenge she's facing now is that the director has changed. She wants to ensure the new director understands their objectives, primarily focused on work experience rather than immediate employment.

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### A clarification on volunteering

A crucial point: individuals with disability should only volunteer for tasks that others, including non-disabled individuals, would also volunteer to do.

It's important to avoid situations where individuals with disability do unpaid work that others get paid for.

