



Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence (ACCE) Standards

Evidence-based best practice guidelines to elevate the quality and consistency of services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families in Northeastern and Northcentral Pennsylvania

Transition and Employment for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a relatively common developmental disability affecting 1 in every 59 children in the US. ASD is a behaviorally-defined condition with many known and unknown causes. The following are guidelines are suggested as best practices for transition and employment for individuals with ASD.

- The overarching goal is to integrate individuals with autism into competitive or supported employment in a field that matches their interests. This transition to employment or post high school educational opportunities starts while in the school setting. This process formally starts as part of the annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the school year when then child turns 14 years of age. Best standards /practices for individuals with ASD are like those for people with developmental/intellectual disability.
- The path to services includes application through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). After intake is completed with participant and family, an OVR counselor will either accept the participant or deny them. If they are accepted, they will be referred to a service. The participant can then choose the provider they would like to use to provide that service.
- **Individual Transition Services** take place while the student is still in high school and under 21 years of age. The amount and type of service hours are determined by the OVR. This is a timeframe where the student is encouraged to ask questions, has opportunities to observe by job shadowing an employer while accompanied by a job coach. Some individuals will have up to 40 hours of a paid work experience with a job coach in a job that matches the student's interests.
- **Group Transition Services** include group sessions lead in the high school to prepare individuals with autism for employment. Topics include: Self-Advocacy, Independent Living Skills, Workplace Readiness, Job Exploration.
- **Supported Employment** can include a Community Based Work Assessment which is a service that can be up to 20 hours of volunteer work across different locations which help the person determine areas of interest, work experience and build a resume. This is a time for the job coach to monitor how the person follows directions and responds to their coach, their employer and other employees, and evaluate the environment in the context of the employee's needs. Supported employment can include job mentoring services where a job coach will help find a job including assistance with the application and interview process and orientation to the job itself. Another supported employment service is Job coaching. Job coaching services typically are provided for 40 hours direct on the job coaching and after the 40 hours the goal is to fade supports over time. During this timeframe, the job coach will work with the employer to work with the individual on specific skills to retain the job including how to perform the job task, time management, how to create relationships with coworkers, and how to interact with supervisors.