

Families' Role in Work-Based Learning Experiences

Families play a crucial role in preparing their child for college and careers through valuable work-based learning (WBL) experiences. WBL facilitates supervised experiences for students with disabilities organized by schools and vocational rehabilitation agencies in real work settings. These experiences help students develop interests and skills for employment.

Work-based learning experiences connect classroom learning and real-world work to improve students' chances of securing competitive, integrated employment. In addition to school staff, families play a crucial role in planning and supporting high-quality, work-based learning. Let's explore specific activities families can do at home, school, and community settings to support their child's WBL experiences.

Home



- Start talking about work and career interests early on.
- Assign chores at home to encourage independence and responsibility.
- Teach and practice important skills needed for the workplace.
- Provide opportunities to explore different career interests.
- Tell your child's case manager about their strengths, interests, and abilities.
- Encourage your child to make choices and decisions.
- Assist with transportation to WBL experiences if needed.
- Assist in obtaining a state ID and locating their Social Security card so your child is ready for job opportunities.
- Help your child prepare for job interviews to boost confidence.

School



- Share ideas with the IEP team about potential connections with businesses.
- Maintain positive communication with the school to stay informed.
- Assist your child in communicating their strengths, preferences, and interests during IEP meetings.
- Speak up for your child's needs in a work environment to ensure a supportive experience.
- Communicate with the school to monitor your child's progress during WBL experiences and provide ongoing support at home.
- Help your child talk to their case manager about their future goals after high school so that they can work together on a plan.

Community



- Explore volunteer options in the community aligned with your child's career interests.
- Connect with community disability services early to access resources.
- Support your child's participation in community activities to better prepare for work-based learning experiences.
- Network with potential employers and friends to identify WBL opportunities.
- Identify transportation options for WBL early.
- Assist your child in advocating for necessary accommodations in the community during WBL experiences.

Families are integral partners in creating a supportive and enriching environment for students with disabilities as they engage in work-based learning experiences. The more families collaborate with schools to identify WBL opportunities that align with their students' interests and strengths, the greater their support and encouragement will assist the students in reaching their career goals.