



Paid Work Correlated with Improved Education, Employment, and Independent Living Outcomes

What is the level of evidence?

This predictor of post-school success has been labeled by NTACT at a Research Based level of evidence to improve education and employment outcomes, based on six *a priori* correlational studies and a Promising level of evidence to improve independent living outcomes, based on one *a priori* correlational study. *More information on NTACT's process for identifying effective practices is available here: [NTACT's Effective Practices](#).*

What is the predictor?

Work experience is any activity that places the student in an authentic workplace, and could include: work sampling, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and paid employment. Paid employment can include existing standard jobs in a company or organization or customized work assignments negotiated with the employer, but these activities always feature competitive pay (e.g., minimum wage) paid directly to the student by the employer.

What are the essential characteristics?

1. Provide opportunities to participate in job shadowing, work-study, apprenticeships, or internships.
***Consider work study, apprenticeships, and internship environments that are culturally sensitive to students from different cultural backgrounds.*
2. Provide instruction in soft skills (e.g., problem solving, communicating with authority figures, responding to feedback, promptness) and occupational specific skills (e.g., clerical, machine operation).
3. Provide transportation training, including the use of public transportation and job-site and community safety.
4. Conduct job performance evaluations by student, school staff, and employer.
5. Provide instruction in obtaining (e.g., resume development) and maintaining a job.
6. Develop a process for community-based employment options in integrated settings with a majority of co-workers without disabilities.
7. Conduct situational vocational assessments to determine appropriate job matches.
8. Develop a process to enable students to earn high school credit for paid employment work experience.

9. Link eligible students to appropriate adult services (e.g. Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities Services) services prior to exiting school that will support student in work or further education.
10. Involve appropriate adult services (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation or job coach when needed) in the provision of community-based work experiences.
11. Use age-appropriate assessments to ensure jobs are based on students' strengths, preferences, interest, and needs.
12. Ensure employment training placements offer opportunities for (1) working 30+ hours/week, (2) making minimum wage or higher, with benefits, and (3) utilizing individualized supports and reasonable accommodations.

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

The Division on Career Development and Transition of the Council for Exceptional Children developed a Fast Fact on Paid Work Experiences available here:

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/SPED/34aee1c1-7ded-4d59-af82-da4af08d5fc4/UploadedImages/DCDT_Paid_Work_Delphi_Final.pdf.

Additionally, the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth developed a Practice Brief on work experiences for youth: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/innovative-strategies/practice-briefs/engaging-youth-in-work-experiences>.

References used to establish this evidence base:

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Wagner, M. M., Newman, L. A., & Javitz, H. S. (2014). The influence of family socioeconomic status on the posthigh school outcomes of youth with disabilities. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, 37*, 5–17.

Reference used to define and identify characteristics of this predictor:

Rowe, D. A., Alverson, C. Y., Unruh, D. K., Fowler, C. H., Kellems, R., & Test, D. W. (2014). A Delphi study to operationalize evidence-based predictors in secondary transition. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, 38*, 113-126.

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