



Developing Essential Skills for Employment and Greater Independence

**A Transition Program
School to Work Possibilities and Expectations**

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About Yes She Can

- Yes She Can Inc. is a non-profit organization serving teens and young women with Autism Spectrum Disorders and related social and communications disabilities.
- Our mission is to help our clients develop transferable job skills to enable them to join the competitive workforce and achieve greater independence.
- Founded in 2013 by Marjorie Madfis, a mother of a teen girl with autism, after retiring from a 30-year career in corporate marketing.
- Headquartered in White Plains, NY

What is Yes She Can?

- Job Skills Training program for women with Autism and other learning differences
- Receive training while running the business
 - Girl Again – a boutique store selling refurbished American Girl dolls
 - Learn all parts of the business from cleaning dolls, pricing dolls, inventory, customer service to quick books. Expected trainees will take the skills learned other businesses

Employment status

- Today 80% of adults with autism spectrum disorders are unemployed, regardless of academic accomplishments!
- While many people with autism may have the skills to perform tasks of the job, they are lacking the workplace social skills and resilience to succeed.
- Those that do get jobs have difficulty keeping them.
- There is a lack of programs that teach essential work skills, and provide the training and supports that meet their specific needs.
- Often in the workplace, fitting in trumps competence and work skills.
 - Women are especially shunned for social awkwardness
- Most business managers are not knowledgeable about or skilled in providing accommodations for people with ASD other developmental disabilities.

Pat Rowan-Job Coach

<https://youtu.be/hiFWfVW8g-cY>

Are transitioning young adults prepared?

Differences	Workplace	Special Ed.
Support	Peers	Teacher and TA
Goal	Solutions to business problems; efficiency	Right answer, Avoid melt-downs
Organization	Flexible, Fluid, Hidden rules	Structured, Predictable
Approach	Collaboration, Discretion	Independent Rules
Communication	Necessary, Initiate	Selective, supported
Intensity Expectations	until it is done	50-minute class, breaks

Source: © Yes She Can In 2019

Characteristics of successful transitions

- Making and maintaining a circle of support including outside family system
- Connections to activities of interest
- Growing sense of mastery in different areas of life
- Good social communication skills
- Beginning ideas of future employment or educational path
- Community safety awareness
- Healthy, self-care awareness and activities
- Self-advocacy and decision-making skills

Transitioning from school to work expectations

Working towards increased self and peer reliance and less reliance on a supervisor

Ability to understand another's perspective

Understand that:

- ✓ Business is about solving a customer problem efficiently and effectively – not about getting an “A”
- ✓ It's less about you and more about the customer or the manager

Meet Maki

<https://youtu.be/SUelioFpYPM>

Unique approach to coaching

- Coaching staff are all professionals with previous experience in the ASD and IDD fields (Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists)
- Work as a team to ensure continuity for each trainee week to week
- Actively involved in trainee assessments and planning
- Trained in all Girl AGain store processes to guarantee appropriate and correct instruction when working with trainees

Teach students to become successful employees

- Understand tasks with a reason: why > generalization
- Process: how to get things done, efficiency
- Problem-solving: dealing with uncertainty, risk-taking
- Collaborative decision-making: team-work
- Understanding shifting priorities: manager, customer, business
- Responsibility: accountability and commitment
- Awareness of personal presentation: how you feel about yourself impacts how others perceive you

Teach from an employment perspective: Developing independence

- Personal presentation and hygiene
- Decision-making
- Self-care and self-advocacy
- Budgeting skills
- Executive functioning skills
- Transportation



Teach from an employment perspective: How to work

- Problem-solving for business needs, not yours.
- Information-gathering
- Guidelines vs discretion (80/20)
- Recommendations with rationale
- Negotiating
- Decision-making
- Collaborating with peers
- Answering to management



Teach from an employment perspective: how to interact

- Perspective-taking
 - business objectives
 - manager expectations
- Interacting with customers & peers
- Sensitivity to others
- Appropriate conversation
- Collaborating with co-worker
- Participation in team meetings



Teach from an employment perspective: business skills

Merchandising

- Assess, research, price, inventory, QA

Sales

- Communicate, upsell and cross sell
- transactions

Marketing

- Customer database
- Digital: Social media, web store

Administration

- Quick Books
- Store maintenance



Teach from an employment perspective: emotional regulation

- Accountable for own actions
- Cooperative and courteous
- Motivation
- Execute “non-preferred” tasks
- Sustain attention and pace
- Accept critical feedback
- Strategies to deal with frustration



A test in flexibility, perspective



American Girl Marisol
in original outfit



Marisol's outfit

"I can't.
It's not
authentic."



Similar pants

Teach from an employment perspective: Job exploration skills

JOB EXPOSURE

- Identify areas of interest
- Identify skills and strengths
- Ask family, friends, neighbors about their work and career paths
- Visit family, friends, neighbors at work sites
- Pay attention to what employees at businesses are doing when out in community settings
- Research jobs online
- Read job descriptions

NETWORKING

- Interview people to learn about their entry-level jobs and their current jobs
- Be curious. Talk (or write) to people who share your interests
- Stay connected to people you meet (you never know who can help you find a job)
- Volunteer or pursue internships
- Develop a resume
- Establish a LinkedIn profile and use it to build your network

Who we serve:

- Transitioning from or completed high school – Diploma, CDOS
- Some attending or transitioning out of college
- Diagnosis of ASD, and/or learning, social, language disabilities
- Qualify for ACCES – VR services
- Most qualify for and have OPWDD services
 - Many have self-direction plans
- All want to develop skills for success at a job
- All want a job in an area of passion
- Designed for Women – unique issues, underserved, isolated

Assessment insights

- **At work: all had improvements in**
 - Flexibility
 - Stamina
 - Appropriate social engagement
 - Ability to accept critical feedback
- **At home: parents observed**
 - Increased independence
 - Engaged in decision-making, offering suggestions
 - Taking more responsibility
 - Greater self-confidence

Where our trainees go

Employed

- Wealth Management; Financial services firm – office work
- Apparel manufacturer – fashion technical assistant
- Child care – pre-school teaching assistant
- Library assistant
- Extraordinary Ventures NY

Day Hab. Program

Project SEARCH for Autism at NY Presbyterian Hospital

Transition programs (Lesley, Riverview)

College (Manhattanville, Mercy, SUNY Purchase, WCC)

Women with autism. We work. With you.



Contact

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