



# DAIVERGENT

Preparing for Employment &  
Starting a Career Through Transition + Employers

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# Your Presenters



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# Learning Objectives From This Session

You will:

- Understand the strategies that go into preparing a younger adolescent with ASD for employment
- Understand how adult job-seekers and older children with ASD can take steps to start a career
- Understand the importance of Vocational Rehabilitation for getting essential services to job-seekers with ASD
- How this is important to work with Employers and Industry



# Preparing Adolescents For Employment

# Meet Lisa, a 14 year old high school student & autistic self-advocate

Moderate learning disability, but shows strength in **creative disciplines**

Doesn't know what her goals are for work or her career strengths

Finishing freshman year of high school

Planning her IEP to do an extended school year (5+ years of high school)

Her IEP team is considering what employment exploration they can include



**Is this too early for Lisa and her family to be thinking of employment? NO!**

**It's NEVER too early or too late!**

**Here are some steps the family  
could start to follow...**



# Start early and “small” with employment transition

Socialize the idea of work before the average transition age (14-22 years old)



Caring for  
a Family Pet



Doing Chores  
for Allowance



Volunteering at  
an Animal Shelter



**Lisa practices following a schedule by taking care of a shelter dog every Saturday at 11 AM.**

# Note Down Skills When You See Them

Skills can be observed by:

- The adolescent themselves
- School staff & teachers
- Parents & family

Skills can include Lisa's:

- Technical aptitude
- Creative arts
- Physical ability



**What if I observe barriers to skills, or need help with skills?** Skills can be improved with vocational training (Work Adjustment Training; ABA; CBT) from service providers.



**Lisa's parents sees her sketches of the shelter dog she cared for. The drawings are beautiful!**

# Don't Go Alone...Go Together!



Find a community of people and resources to surround your child with

Tap into personal and professional resources you may already have who can be a professional role model for your child

Community is important for networking and goal planning, and chances are you have a role model or mentor in your own life. **Try to find one for your child as well.**



**Lisa's parents have a good friend who works as an artist. Lisa was able to get connected and do an informational interview about what it takes to make art!**

# Find the right supports to barriers

Think long term about how supports such as DDD, Vocational Rehabilitation, and training will play a role in your child's future



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**Lisa's family learns about how Arizona's Vocational Rehabilitation agency can help assess Lisa for areas of improvement in her job skills.**

# Enroll in Vocational Rehabilitation

Starting at age 14, you may enroll your child in Vocational Rehabilitation.

The services you receive depend on the needs of the individual, and include:



Identifying  
Vocational & Job  
Goals



Job Training &  
Post-Secondary Education



Adaptive  
Technology  
Equipment



Building  
Self-Advocacy  
Skills



**From Voc Rehab, Lisa learns about a career in graphic design based on her love of drawing.**

## Make Vocational Learning a Priority

Acquiring work skills won't happen right away

Prioritize learning skills essential to work you've identified with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and their school

Affirm to your child that learning is a lifelong process for everyone...and that "Adults" just don't like to admit it!



**Lisa receives after-school job training from a service provider specializing in graphic design for ASD, and makes great progress on her IEP employment goals!**

**Lisa is on-track to achieve  
independence and support herself**





# Strategies for Starting a Career

# Virtual Resources for Each Age Bracket

14-17, Exploring: Assessments, Job Shadowing, Skills Development



18-21, Specialization: Learning about New Careers, Virtual sandboxes, discussing with peers



22+, Opportunities: Job boards, remote work opportunities, short project/gig work

# 14-17 Years Old: Exploring

Interest Evaluation – “What do I like to do?”



Baseline Assessments – “What am I already good at?”



Job Exploration – “What jobs combine my interest and skills?”

## Resources:

1. Go onto the O\*NET website and take the “[My Next Move](#)” assessment
1. Try a skills assessment with [Daivergent](#) for the career areas that O\*NET identifies as a fit for you.
1. Read about 700+ “day in the life” jobs in [WhatForWork](#)

# 18-21 Years Old: Specialization

Deeper Dive into Training – “I want to learn more about this job!”



Virtual Sandboxes – “I want to try out what it’s like to do this job!”



Discussion with Peers – “Tell me what it’s like to do this job!”

## Resources:

1. Take a free professional course in one of 14 “hot career” areas on [LinkedIn Learning](#)
1. Try a “day in the life” work experience for a Fortune 500 at [TheForage.com](#)
1. Hear from real people about their jobs on [Reddit Job Profiles](#)

## 22+ Years Old: Opportunities

Vocational Rehabilitation: “I want to get professional help to find jobs”



Internships & Projects: “I want to dip my toes into this job”



Integrated Employment: “I’m ready to start my career”

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# How to Present and Pitch to Companies

1. Have an inventory of strengths
2. Know your pitch
3. Practice it
4. Pitch early and often

## Resources:

1. Apply for [Vocational Rehabilitation](#) benefits in Arizona to get assigned professional job coaches and staff.
1. Find opportunities on [Upwork](#) and [Rat Race Rebellion](#) for work-from-home, part-time, and project-based work.
1. Check out autism-specific job boards like [Daivergent](#), [Mentra](#), [Inclusively](#), and the [Neurodiversity Career Connector](#) for employers focusing on hiring ASD job-seekers

# THANK YOU AND APPLY FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION!

## What we covered:

- Understand the strategies that go into preparing a younger adolescent with ASD for employment
- Understand how adult job-seekers and older children with ASD can take steps to start a career
- Understand the importance of Vocational Rehabilitation for getting essential services to job-seekers with ASD
- Connecting to Employers

**Daivergent helps families of 14-35 year olds with ASD apply for job training benefits and get the professional support they need.**



# DAIVERGENT

Q&A and Thank You!

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