



<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/solutions/guideposts-for-success/>

The transition from youth to adulthood is challenging for almost every young person. This is particularly true for young people with disabilities. Yet, it is in those crucial transition-age years that a young person's future can be determined. NCWD/Youth has identified Guideposts for Success based on what research tells us that all youth need to transition to adulthood successfully. The Guideposts provide:

- a statement of principles;
- a direction that will lead to better outcomes for all young people; and,
- a way to organize policy and practice.

Guideposts for Success: Family Involvement & Supports

All youth need parents, families and other caring adults who:

- Have high expectations which build upon the young person's strengths, interests, and needs and fosters their ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency;
- Are involved in their lives and assisting them toward adulthood;
- Have access to information about employment, further education, and community resources;
- Take an active role in transition planning with schools and community partners; and
- Have access to medical, professional, and peer support networks.

In addition, youth with disabilities need parents, families and other caring adults who:

- Have an understanding of their youth's disability and how it affects his or her education, employment, and/or daily living options;
- Have knowledge of rights and responsibilities under various disability-related legislation;

- Have knowledge of and access to programs, services, supports, and accommodations available for young people with disabilities; and
- Have an understanding of how individualized planning tools can assist youth in achieving transition goals and objectives.

Guideposts for Success: Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning Experiences

Career preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential in order to form and develop aspirations and to make informed choices about careers. These experiences can be provided during the school day or through after-school programs and will require collaborations with other organizations.

All youth need information on career options, including:

- Career assessments to help identify students' school and post-school preferences and interests;
- Structured exposure to post-secondary education and other life-long learning opportunities;
- Exposure to career opportunities that ultimately lead to a living wage, including information about educational requirements, entry requirements, income and benefits potential, and asset accumulation; and,
- Training designed to improve job-seeking skills and work-place basic skills (sometimes called soft skills).

In order to identify and attain career goals, youth need to be exposed to a range of experiences, including:

- Opportunities to engage in a range of work-based exploration activities such as site visits and job shadowing;
- Multiple on-the-job training experiences, including community service (paid or unpaid) that is specifically linked to the content of a program of study and school credit;
- Opportunities to learn and practice their work skills ("soft skills"); and,
- Opportunities to learn first-hand about specific occupational skills related to a career pathway.

In addition, youth with disabilities also need to:

- Understand the relationships between benefits planning and career choices;
- Learn to communicate their disability-related work support and accommodation needs; and,
- Learn to find, formally request and secure appropriate supports and reasonable accommodations in education, training and employment settings.