

4 GETTING PREPARED FOR YOUR FIRST JOB



THINK ABOUT WHERE TO START LOOKING

- **Large organisations**

Many large organisations, such as Coles, McDonalds, and Coffee Club, value employees with disability and large organisations often have many small roles that are not always obvious.

- **Local small businesses**

Small businesses in your community are also a possible source of employment; particularly, if you are known to the business already, and you and your family give them business. They may be quieter and easier to get to.

- **Family businesses**

You or another family member may have a small business yourselves. This can be an excellent place to start. Your family knows you well and is likely to be creative and flexible. Many young people get started in a family business.

Government departments, including local councils and the National Disability Insurance Agency, employ people with disability to demonstrate the value that people with disability can bring and to a workplace. This is not likely to be your first job in high school but could be a first job when school finishes.

GET SOME EXPERIENCE

Get started where you can. Look for jobs in an area of interest, but remember this is about finding your first job not the perfect job. This is just the beginning. You will learn a lot, and the experience will help you decide what you want to do in the future.

Here are two suggestions:

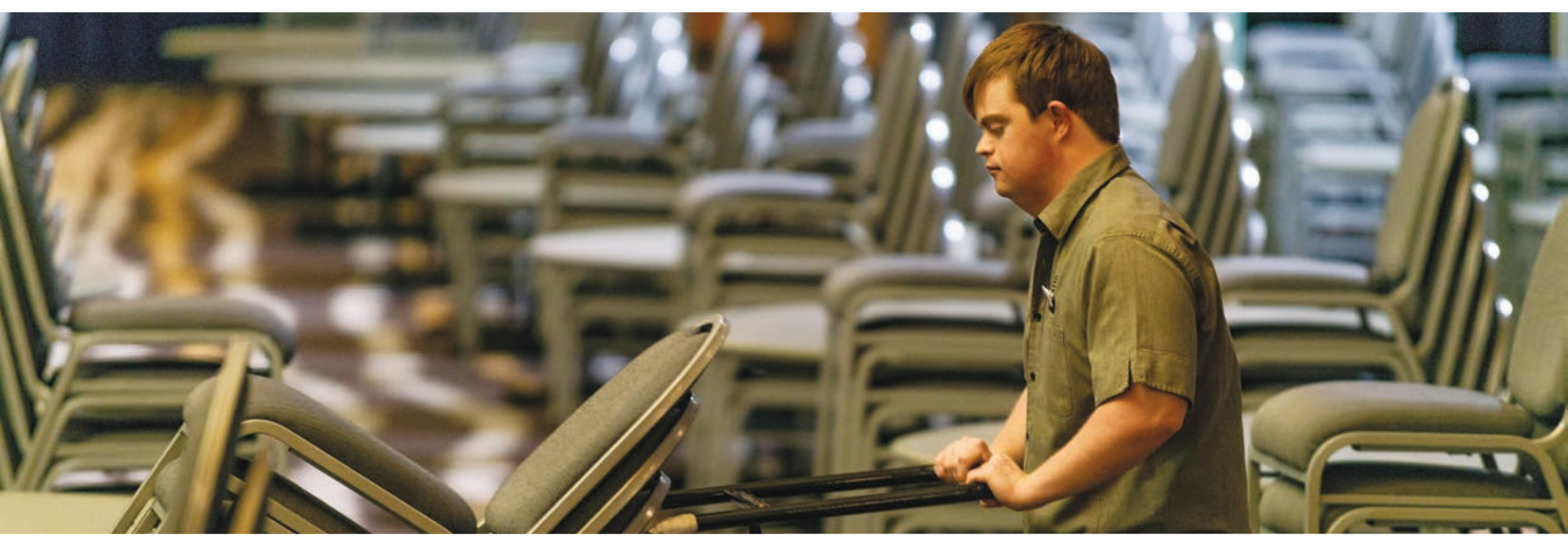
- **Volunteering**

Volunteering gives you experience and builds your networks. Volunteering is not instead of a paid job; it can be a step to real paid work. It demonstrates to a future employer your willingness to work.

Look where other young people volunteer—music festivals, fun-runs or bush re-generation. There will be good role models and the work is likely to be interesting and fun.

- **Work Experience**

You may have some work experience that is organised by your school, or your family. Work experience is for a short period to help you understand what work means and what sort of work you might enjoy in the future. It will also build your confidence and connections. During your work experience, look out for any future opportunities that may exist. It could lead to a paid job in the future.



STORY

Steve went job hunting when he left school. His family helped him think through what prospective employers would want to know. They were able to describe his talents and needs in a positive, respectful way:

“Steve is very friendly and sociable though can be initially shy. While his speech may initially be difficult to understand, he will work at getting his message across. He enjoys being helpful and feeling like he is contributing. When he is in a role he feels he can shine at, he is an enthusiastic and dedicated team member.”

“Steve is very good at following a schedule and reading simple instructions and procedures. Visual prompts are helpful. Steve is less successful when a routine changes, when he is unclear about what is expected, or he is anxious about whether he has understood the requirements.”

“Steve is physically strong and enjoys lifting, packing, and sorting. He is able to lift and move very heavy items and usually enjoys this task. He likes things to be neat. Steve is very safety conscious and is not reckless around dangerous items.”

“We see a number of possible roles in catering and hospitality, in a conference or reception centre.”

PLAN FOR YOUR FIRST JOB

Many young people find their first job through people they know. Getting your first job deserves careful planning and thought. You may need a more personalised approach, and your family and friends can assist. See **Fact Sheet 5** for some example exercises to help you plan for your first job.

A DISCOVERY PROCESS

A process of discovery identifies in a common-sense way what work you could do. This becomes the foundation for employment planning. See **Fact Sheet 8** for more background on this process.

You can identify your talents and contributions, goals and needs, before you look for a suitable place to work. The process uncovers any potential issues that should be shared, such as what you need to be successful at work and how that can be provided.

It may be helpful to develop your résumé. The purpose of a résumé is to sell yourself, including relevant experience and skills. Capturing your skills helps guide the discovery process and could be a part of your pitch.

With the help of your family and friends, and their networks, you can then investigate possible workplaces to see if they have needs that match what you have to offer, in an environment that suits.