

3 TIPS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

It takes determination and persistence to find your first job, and your family and friends can be helpful. They care about you and want you to succeed. Families can contribute in many practical ways, from finding your first job to helping you build a career.

It's never too early

Parents can encourage a work ethic from an early age, by delegating household tasks, and expecting a contribution to family life. Having typical conversations about what the child wants to do when they grow up is all part of the preparation. Taking up opportunities like using public transport, getting used to paying for tickets; learning how to speak up for yourself are all great preparation for working life. Being confident and responsible are great assets when looking for jobs.



Get informed and inspired

Entering the workforce is not easy for anyone, and there is much to learn. It can be a fearful time for your family member and for you — feel the fear; then get going.

A powerful start is to listen to your family member's dreams, goals and plans for the future. Support them, even if you do not know where to begin. Think about what is valued and typical for other young people - this is a good guide. There are endless possibilities.

Invite others to help

If you feel overwhelmed, it is useful to invite others to help. Friends – can sometimes identify opportunities that families miss. Brothers, sisters, cousins and their friends know a lot about starting work. A Circle of Support is an intentional strategy for planning and safeguarding. For links to more information on how people have used this semi formal strategy to harness the knowledge and support of family and friends - see **Fact sheet 2**.

Use your networks

Although there are formal services that find jobs for people with disability, you and your family do not have to wait. You can start by seeking out opportunities through your informal networks. It's often who you know, not what you know.

A family business can provide people with disability a flexible and welcoming place to get that first job. Here, they can gain confidence and skills to join the mainstream workforce.

Facilitate relationships

A job will bring new connections and opportunities to make friends. You can assist your family member to make the most of these opportunities by ensuring that they have the support they need to respond to social invitations and of course, in time, they can also instigate invitations.

Create a safety net

Everyone has failures and disappointments in the workplace, and your family member will be no different. You can provide a safety net when things go wrong to give them confidence to keep on going. You can also help them to create their own safety net as they become more confident and experienced.

See **Fact Sheet 8: Further Information and Resources.**



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Story

Patrice's family had no idea what she would do when she left school. With eighteen months to go, her Mum and Dad began to panic. They called some close friends together for help.

“What can we do? The day centre is nearby but that is not an option. Patrice would be very unhappy there. She has big plans for herself.”

The group gathered regularly for a year, talking with Patrice and thinking through a number of options. This planning was important not only for Patrice but for the whole family. School had made life relatively simple for everyone. The change for Patrice was a change for everyone.

Eventually, Patrice's Mum found a small part-time job that Patrice could start. Initially, Patrice's Mum and Dad assisted Patrice transition into her new job. This was a good solution for Patrice, her family and her employer. As everyone became more confident, Patrice needed less support.