



DO-IT

Preparing for a Career: An Online Tutorial

A guide for students and their advocates

by Sheryl Burgstahler, Sara Lopez, and Scott Bellman

Today's competitive job market demands that students possess knowledge, skills, and relevant job experiences that will set them apart from other applicants. Career preparation activities can increase their chances of obtaining employment after high school or college. Like most high school students, teens with disabilities may think that they have plenty of time to decide on a career and acquire the skills they will need to move down that path. However, they can start exploring their career interests and developing their job skills now! Career planning and preparation should be an ongoing process throughout high school and postsecondary studies. Teenagers do not need to settle on one area to pursue right away, and they may change directions as they discover new interests.

Hundreds of websites provide information about job duties and academic requirements for specific positions, career preparation strategies, and legal issues. Most of the examples listed in this publication are geared toward secondary students who will be completing high school with a standard diploma and pursuing studies at a technical school, community college, or university. To be cautious, parents and teachers should always check out websites before recommending them to a child. They might even find that the content of a website changes over time; even if it was once a great resource for a teenager, it may no longer be appropriate. Adults may enjoy exploring the sites side-by-side with children.

If website visitors find resources that are inaccessible to someone who has a disability (for example, sites that include graphics without text descriptions or video clips

without captions), they can do something about it. Adults can work with students to send email to webmasters, ask for an alternate format of site content, and encourage website sponsors to make their pages accessible to everyone. Look at these situations as opportunities for a child to practice skills in self-advocacy, as well as advocacy for others.

The following sections include advice to a career-bound young adult. They also include examples of web resources for further exploration of the topics.

Identify role models.

Learn about successful adults with disabilities. Role models will help you set expectations for yourself.

Perspectives of STEM Students with Disabilities: Our Journeys, Communities, & Big Ideas

www.uw.edu/doiit/

[perspectives-stem-students-disabilities](http://www.uw.edu/doiit/perspectives-stem-students-disabilities)

Develop a career plan.

Make plans to consider your skills and interests, explore career options, consider academic requirements, gain relevant practical experiences, and complete a job search. Consider the advice at the following websites to help you develop a plan for success.

The Career Planning Process: Taking It Step by Step

[careerplanning.about.com/cs/](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/choosingacareer/a/cp_process.htm)

[choosingacareer/a/cp_process.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/choosingacareer/a/cp_process.htm)

Explore Careers

www.mappingyourfuture.org/planyourcareer/



Search for occupations that are compatible with your skills and interests.

Consult the following websites to explore a wide variety of careers that might interest you. Learn about physical demands and skills needed for different kinds of jobs. Know whether jobs of interest are growing (e.g., computer software engineers) or shrinking (e.g., farmers, ranchers).

Career Briefs

careerplanning.about.com/od/occupations/a/career_briefs.htm

CAREERwise Skills Assessment

careerwise.minnstate.edu/careers/assessmentsuite.html

National Institute of Health Office of Science Education Career Finder (LifeWorks)

nihlifeworks.org/feature/index.htm

O*NET OnLine Skills Search

online.onetcenter.org/skills/

Occupational Outlook Handbook

www.bls.gov/oooh/

Occupation Profile

www.careerinfonet.org/select_occupation.asp?stfips=&next=ksas1

Explore job accommodations you might need.

Consider disability-related accommodations you may need in order to successfully complete the assignments of a job. They may involve a change in the work environment, a modification to the way a specific job function is performed, or the use of assistive technology. Consult the following websites for information about job accommodations for people with disabilities.

JAN: For Individuals

www.askjan.org/indiv/index.htm

O*NET Online Job Accommodations

www.onetcenter.org/links.html#Accom

Research government resources for workers with disabilities.

Find out what local, state, and regional resources are available to you. The following websites are examples of government resources for employees with disabilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for People with Disabilities Seeking Employment

www.ada.gov/workta.htm

Social Security Disability Programs

www.ssa.gov/disability/

Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies

askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902

Participate in work-based learning activities.

Work-based learning opportunities can help you clarify academic and career interests, practice work-related skills, develop communication and collaboration skills through interaction with coworkers, and network with potential employers. They can also provide opportunities to determine if you can perform the essential functions of specific jobs, practice disclosing your disability and requesting accommodations from an employer, use assistive technology in a work setting, and test which accommodations work best for you. Work-based learning opportunities include informational interviews, job shadows, service learning, and internships. Consult the career services office or counseling center at your school for information about work-based learning opportunities. The following are resources that describe types of work-based learning options and examples of work-based learning programs that might be available to you.



AccessCAREERS Projects

(See *Learn and Earn: Tips for Teens* and *Learn and Earn: Supporting Teens* videos and their corresponding brochures at www.uw.edu/doiit/videos/index.php) www.uw.edu/doiit/Brochures/Careers/careers_project.html

Bridges from School to Work
www.bridgestowork.org

Career Guidance & Exploration
www.ncset.org/topics/career/?topic=1

High School/High Tech
www.dol.gov/odep/programs/high.htm

Youth Leadership Forum
www.dol.gov/odep/programs/ylf.htm

Draft a résumé.

To begin building a résumé, make a list of all relevant work experiences (paid and volunteer), academic experiences, and other activities. Consult the following resources for information about résumé content and style.

Resume Writing Tips
www.monster.com/resumes/post-resume/

Resume Guide
www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/Resumes/ResumeGuide/Introduction.aspx?&frd=true

Develop interviewing skills.

It's important to make a good impression during an interview. Practice interviewing skills, perhaps with a parent or sibling. Consult the following resources for interviewing guidance.

Disability Disclosure and Interviewing Techniques for Persons with Disabilities
www.askjan.org/corner/vol01iss13.htm

Interview Tips and Advice
www.monster.com
college.monster.com

Resources

The following general resources are good places for students with disabilities and their families and advocates to start to explore career options.

AccessCollege: The Employment Office
www.washington.edu/doiit/programs/accesscollege/employment-office/overview

ADA Document Portal
adata.org/ada-document-portal

American Association of People with Disabilities
www.aapd.org

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Disability Information
www.ada.gov

CareerOneStop
www.careeronestop.org

CAREERwise Education
careerwise.minnstate.edu

Career Planning
www.thebalance.com/career-planning-4074039

Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD)
www.cosdonline.org/

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
www.askjan.org

Mapping Your Future
www.mappingyourfuture.org

Monster
www.monster.com



National Center on Secondary Education
and Transition

www.ncset.org

National Youth Employment Coalition

www.nyec.org

O*NET Resource Center

www.onetcenter.org

Office of Personnel Management (OPM):
Federal Employment of People with
Disabilities

[www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/
disability-employment/](http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/)

WorkforceGPS: Disability and
Employment Community of Practice

disability.workforcegps.org

World Institute on Disability (WID)

www.wid.org

Yan-Tang Institute on Employment and
Disability

www.yti.cornell.edu/

ZipRecruiter

www.ziprecruiter.com

About DO-IT

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) serves to increase the successful participation of individuals with disabilities in challenging academic programs and careers, such as those in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology. Primary funding for DO-IT is provided by the National Science Foundation, the State of Washington, and the U.S. Department of Education.

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509-328-9331 (voice / TTY) Spokane

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An earlier version of this content appeared in: Burgstahler, S. (2004). Preparing for a career... on the internet. *Closing the Gap*, 23 (3).

Acknowledgment

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H324M990010. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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