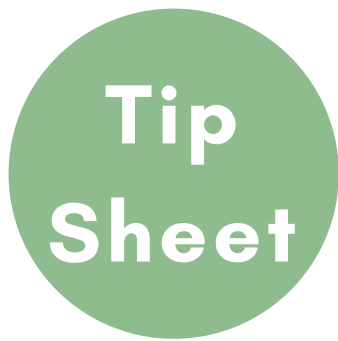


# Tip Sheet

## Life After School!

- ✓ Thriving after school is assisted by having a big vision for a full, meaningful and inclusive life and intentionally planning to bring it to life.
- ✓ Start talking, planning and thinking about life after school early. Expectations are formed in our early years. Even very young children have hopes and dreams for the future. Keep having conversations about what you want to do in the future and explore options e.g. ask people about what they do or visit their work place.
- ✓ Every person is an individual and will have a unique career pathway and life after school and this is not determined by diagnosis or disability type but by interest, passions and strengths. What is it that you enjoy or are good at doing? Tap into your interests, passions, gifts and strengths and use these to guide what you do.
- ✓ Follow “typical”, valued and inclusive opportunities in the community that are available to all citizens e.g. mainstream study, part time work, volunteering, employment etc. Interestingly students who have attended mainstream schooling are more likely to find work after school (Hehir et. Al (2016).
- ✓ Take on extra roles at school to learn skills and join extracurricular activities e.g. sports teams, music, drama to extend your skills and connections.
- ✓ Put time into developing friendships at school with others e.g. students, teachers, families and others as they’re all potential employers in the future or could recommend you for a job.
- ✓ Take on jobs around the house, for family, friends and neighbours. This is a good way to contribute to the lives of others, learn skills and earn pocket money.
- ✓ If using a job support service, make sure they assist you as an individual to find work based on your interests and strengths. You might like to develop a list of questions and ask them about what types of jobs they find people, how long it takes, how many hours of work people are employed for, how long people keep their jobs, do they use subsidised wage schemes and what on the job support or training they offer.



# Life After School!

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- ✓ Most people find work through their networks! Join neighbourhood groups, clubs, sporting associations, classes, environmental or other groups. This is a good way to explore and follow your interests, learn skills and meet people who might have job opportunities. Join service, civic or business clubs where lots of business people gather. Make a list of people who might be able to provide you with advice or an opportunity  
e.g. people you know, people you don't know very well or people you should get to know.
- ✓ Do typical work experiences to explore what type of job might suit you. Also get typical career advice about job and career pathways. Too often people with a disability either miss out on this advice and/or opportunities and are placed in special environments.
- ✓ While at school, why not volunteer? Or find a part time job? Not only could you earn money but you will learn and strengthen your skills e.g. budgeting, team work, punctuality, learning new tasks. You might even meet new friends and increase your confidence and independence! It will also increase your credibility to future employers. Avoid volunteering where others get paid!
- ✓ Consider further study options or short courses based on your interest. Stand strong on an inclusive education as many providers will try and encourage you to take courses specifically designed for people with a disability. Universities and TAFE are not allowed by law to discriminate and are required to ensure your accessibility.
- ✓ Based on your interests, skills and strengths, it may be possible to craft or carve a job and negotiate with an employer rather than using competitive job application processes. This is called "customised employment."
- ✓ Use an appreciative enquiry approach. Talk to business about what they do and things that never get done. You may be able to offer your skills!
- ✓ Avoid schemes that are likely to base your income on productivity (often referred to as supported wage or subsidised wage schemes). There is more to being a good employee than how fast your hands work (Callahan, 2010)! Research indicates that people with a disability have fewer accidents, often take less sick leave than other employees, build staff morale and increase customer and staff loyalty (Graffam, Smith, Skinkfield and Polzin, 2002).
- ✓ Consider starting a small business (often called a microbusiness) based on your interests, passions and skills. They can create jobs for people who are often excluded from work. You can also learn skills, gain experience, work flexible hours, provide unique products to locals, meet people and make money!

Belonging Matters would like to acknowledge the community inclusion movement who have provided us with many tips over the years e.g. Social Role Valorisation, John O'Brien, David Hager, Janet Klees, The National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations and the many individuals and families who have pushed the boundaries!