

## Attend a ‘Let’s Talk Work’ Event

These events are designed for middle school/ high school students who have a disability and want to learn more about careers, the skills it takes to get a job, and job expectations.

Each TSLP transition liaison partners with local service providers to host a Let’s Talk Work event in their region annually. Students, parents, special educators, and school counselors are encouraged to attend. Sessions will highlight information such as job application and job interview skills, employment supports for young adults, reasonable accommodations, and more.

To learn more about these events, contact your regional transition liaison or go to the TSLP website at [www.tslp.org/events](http://www.tslp.org/events).

## SD Department of Labor & Regulation

Each year, the local offices of the SD Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) fill more than 50,000 job openings. Every office is staffed with trained professionals ready to help your teen identify opportunities and prepare for productive employment. Services that are available include assistance with:

- Identifying career interests
- Identifying what skills are needed for a new career
- Writing a resume
- Locating possible jobs
- Completing the application process
- Preparing for a job interview
- Accessing appropriate training

All individuals seeking employment or information about the local labor market, including job listings, receive assistance at no charge. Call 1-605-773-3372 or go to [dlr.sd.gov](http://dlr.sd.gov) for the nearest DLR office.

# Tips on Employment Services In the High School Transition Process

**“No one can discover you until you do. Exploit your talents, skills and strengths and make the world sit up and take notice.”**

**Rob Liano**

Developed by  
Transition Services Liaison Project,  
a Black Hills Special Services  
Cooperative program.



Visit us at: [www.tslp.org](http://www.tslp.org)

Where will your teen live and work after high school? Who can provide employment services? How do these services and supports get paid for? Thinking about the future can be pretty scary. The intent of this tip sheet is to assist you and your teen in preparing for employment. More knowledge in the transition process typically means feeling more confident and comfortable in advocating for services and programs that will lead to a better quality of life for your teen.

### While in high school, encourage your teen to...

- ✓ Consider applying for services through the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and gain work experience through Project Skills.
- ✓ Engage in volunteer work experiences.
- ✓ Apply for Youth Leadership Forum (activity sponsored by TSLP).
- ✓ Explore career opportunities and develop career interests (consider using the SDMyLife program).
- ✓ Learn about their disability and practice advocating for themselves.
- ✓ Become involved in extra-curricular activities.
- ✓ Participate in job shadow opportunities.
- ✓ Attend a Let’s Talk Work event.
- ✓ Actively participate in their IEP meetings.



## Encourage Your Teen to Attend a Meet & Greet with You!

Meet & Greets are informal and interactive gatherings that allow you to network and make connections with adult service agency staff and identify resources that your teen may access in the future. Representatives from many agencies who provide services to adults are invited to answer questions students and families may have. For more information on dates and locations throughout SD, contact the transition liaison in your area or go to the TSLP website at: [www.tslp.org](http://www.tslp.org)



## Final Thoughts .....

- ✓ You and your teen should take a leadership role in planning and implementing their transition IEP, including promoting employment services early!
- ✓ Involve your teen in completing ordinary tasks in your home.
- ✓ Make your teen’s responsibilities (homework, school projects, household chores) theirs, not yours!
- ✓ Visit and share with other parents who are in the transition stage for their child!
- ✓ Help your teen understand their disability. Share information with them about others with disabilities who have achieved success in their lives!
- ✓ Encourage your teen to volunteer in the community. Volunteering allows a young adult to gain work skills, build social skills, develop career interests and is a great addition to their resume.
- ✓ Involve your teen in any decision-making that affects them.
- ✓ Be open to new ideas! Listen to the ideas of teachers and community providers, but remember **YOU** are the one who knows your teen best.

## PAID HIGH SCHOOL WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

**Project Skills** is a paid work experience program for high school students with disabilities. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the local school district. **Project Skills** provides students the opportunity to learn different skills in a variety of job placements, with the assistance of a job coach.

Many times, students with disabilities don’t get an opportunity to participate in a paid work experience while in high school. While Division of Rehabilitation Services covers the cost of wages and additional supports, **Project Skills** enables employers to provide these students with valuable work experiences in a real work setting.

Over 80% of South Dakota school districts are participating in Project Skills and giving their high school students with disabilities the opportunity to further develop career interests and gain work experience. For further information regarding this program, contact your local Division of Rehabilitation Services office, high school special education teacher or regional transition services liaison.

## Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)

These programs provide individualized vocational rehabilitation and supportive services to assist eligible individuals with disabilities to get and keep jobs compatible with their skills and abilities. The mission of these agencies is to enable people with disabilities to become employed, live independently and direct their own lives to the best of their ability.

### DRS and SBVI services may include:

- Participating in transition planning with you and your local school district,
- Working with your teen and school district to obtain work experience through the Project Skills program,
- Assisting with transportation, assistive technology (AT) and other disability related expenses for training or employment,
- Working with the school district to obtain vocational or job site evaluations, and
- Providing career guidance and vocational counseling.



Through services provided by DRS and SBVI, individuals with disabilities are finding employment in the areas they choose to work and are keeping these jobs!

For more information on **DRS** go to [dhs.sd.gov](http://dhs.sd.gov) (click on Divisions - Rehabilitation Services) or call 605-773-3195. For more information on **SBVI** go to [dhs.sd.gov](http://dhs.sd.gov) (click on Divisions - Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired) or call 605-773-4644.



### Putting Your Teen on the Path to Future Employment

- Teach your teen how to set goals and work towards achieving them. Start small and work towards larger goals. Many students who struggle with school or drop out do so because they lack long range goals.
- Encourage work-based learning experiences: internships, part-time jobs, or volunteer and community service opportunities to help define interest in a specific career. Vocational education classes expose young people to varying careers and prepare them for work.
- Help your young adult develop employment 'soft skills' by practicing them at home. "Soft skills" include such things as being able to accept

directions, ask for help, deal with conflict, and engage in interpersonal communication. They also include being prompt and good personal hygiene.

- Set up opportunities for your teen to develop friendships and social skills. You will be assisting your teen in developing the ability to interact and get along with others, another essential skill employers look for and value in an employee.

### SDMyLife

**SDMyLife** is an online career exploration and academic program for South Dakota students and educators. Through this program, students can determine interests, skills, and abilities. Students can explore careers in their interest area and develop a plan of what courses to take in high school. SDMyLife's goal is to help students understand how their interests, skills, and knowledge relate to real world academic and career opportunities. If your teen isn't familiar with this program or hasn't accessed it in school, talk to the special education teacher or the high school counselor at your school. Students can access the this program by going to [www.sdmylife.com](http://www.sdmylife.com).

## SERVICE OPTIONS IN THE ADULT SERVICES SYSTEM

**Family Support 360** is a program for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The program is designed to assist individuals with disabilities to remain as independent as possible in their own homes by helping them get the services they need. Contact Dakota at Home at 833-663-9673, Option 2 for more information.

**Independent Living Centers** provide services to individuals with disabilities in the areas of advocacy, information and referrals, independent living skills training and peer support. Call 605-773-3195 or email [InfoRS@state.sd.us](mailto:InfoRS@state.sd.us) for more information.

**DakotaLink** provides assistance to individuals of all ages to acquire and use the latest available assistive technology devices that best meet their needs to maintain independence at home, work, in the classroom or in leisure activities. Contact DakotaLink at 1-800-645-0673 or <https://www.dakotalink.net/> for more information.

**South Dakota Benefits Specialist Network** provides advice and support on Social Security work incentives, Medicaid, Food Stamps, TANF, Housing Assistance and other disability related benefits. Information about Social Security benefits is provided on an individual basis for Vocational Rehabilitation consumers. Contact South Dakota Benefits Specialist Network at 1-800-224-5336 for more information.



## Financial Planning for Young Adults



Financial planning is an important part of transition. Many people with disabilities are beneficiaries of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a federal program that provides financial and medical benefits, through the **Social Security Administration (SSA)**.

### Did you know...

- If your teen is receiving SSI Benefits prior to the age of 18, SSA will need to re-determine the individual's disability under the adult definition of disability. The 18-year-old individual is an adult, considered to be a family of one, and only their individual finances and resources are counted.
- Your teen can complete all needed paperwork for Social Security determination, but do not turn into the Social Security office until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- If the SSI recipient pays their fair share for room and board, the recipient will be eligible for the full SSI Benefit amount (assuming the beneficiary has no other income). If your teen lives in your home, does not pay room and board, and has no other income, the benefit amount is reduced up to 1/3.
- It is not unusual for a person to be denied Social Security benefits and choose to go through the appeal process.

### South Dakota Benefits Specialist

If your teen receives Social Security benefits and is starting work, it may be in your best interest to schedule an appointment with a **Benefits Specialist**. There are six **Benefits Specialists** in South Dakota who are available to provide advice and support to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) consumers on managing your social security benefits. They can also assist you with advice on:

- Social Security Work Incentives
- Food stamps
- Other disability related benefits
- Public assistance

To inquire about **Benefits Specialist services**, contact your Vocational Rehabilitation counselor or call 605-494-3601.

