

## What Parents Can Do to Support Future Employment\*

- Believe that all individuals, regardless of the level of disability, can work in the right setting, with the right supports. Make work an expectation for your child's future.
- It's never too early to talk about work. It's part of being a full member of the family and of the community.
- Give your children age-appropriate responsibilities and tasks. Chores at home build valuable work skills for the future.
- Encourage high expectations at every age, even for children with the most significant disabilities. Let your child know you believe in their abilities.
- Encourage and support your child's interests. Interests can lead to employable skills.
- Focus on your child's strengths. Encourage activities which develop those strengths, not just ones which address challenges.
- Make sure your child has experiences similar to their peers. Most kids start doing paid, part-time work in their neighborhood.
- Teach your young adult that work is part of being an adult. Work and wages will give them more choices and control over their life. Work also builds self-esteem, maturity and important social connections.
- Many students with disabilities have the opportunity for school-provided work experiences. Those opportunities are valuable during their early transition years, but provide a limited experience of employment. As your child enters the last years of school education, work experiences should be targeted and individualized to their unique interests and skills.
- Most students have paid jobs while they are still in school. Students who have regular, paid jobs are much more likely to be employed as adults.
- Most young adults get their first jobs through family connections. Using your social networks is an important and natural role for parents.