

Working Independently, Here We Come!

A Checklist for Identifying Skills Needed to Work Independently



Working independently in competitive, integrated employment is the optimal goal for all youth and young adults with disabilities. Varying degrees of employment are possible. These possibilities include full- or part-time employment in a paid, competitive job; working in supportive employment; or unpaid volunteer work. Feeling productive in society brings positive self-esteem. Varying degrees of support will be needed to prepare these youth and young adults for the work force. Job shadowing, job coaching, and supervised work experiences are all important for employment preparation. This checklist provides needed skills to help youth and young adults with disabilities prepare for working as independently as possible given the unique needs and challenges of each youth or young adult. Depending on ability level, some higher-level skills may not be able to be mastered by all youth with disabilities.



Directions: Check off each skill that has been mastered under each area. Unmarked skills can serve as a guide to creating transition goals for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or other goal plans. After the unmarked skill has been mastered, check it off as well.

Area: Organization and Time Management

Skills needed to keep track of life events and manage time.

Skills:

- ☐ Uses a calendar to keep track of school/work/personal activities
- ☐ Tells time on an analog and/or digital clock

- ☐ Uses alarms to get up on time
- ☐ Uses timers for reminders
- ☐ Makes and follows a to-do list
- ☐ Gets to activities and events on-time
- ☐ Breaks large tasks into smaller, more manageable steps
- ☐ Sets long-term goals and creates steps to meet them
- ☐ Has cell phone with apps for daily use and living

Area: Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy

Skills needed to know one's rights, make decisions, and advocate for oneself.

Skills:

- ☐ Knows his/her rights related to employment for persons with disabilities
- ☐ Knows how to ask for assistance appropriately
- ☐ Recognizes harassment situations and knows how to report
- ☐ Makes informed decisions
- ☐ Can take action when needed
- ☐ Can express his/her needs and wants to others
- ☐ Understands appropriate social cues and behaviors in the workplace

Area: Safety

Skills needed for keeping oneself safe in a work environment.

Skills:

- ☐ Knows how and when to call 9-1-1
- ☐ Knows how to safely operate equipment on the job site
- ☐ Knows and follows safety procedures at the workplace
- ☐ Follows directions to safely operate equipment on the job
- ☐ Knows who to contact if injury occurs

Area: Financial Management

Skills needed to manage money, paychecks, taxes, and other financial matters.

Skills:

- ☐ Knows what payroll deductions are
- ☐ Knows what taxes are taken out of paychecks and why
- ☐ Completes financial forms for employment (W-4s, state tax forms, etc.)
- ☐ Opens a checking and/or savings account
- ☐ Tracks banking transactions and balances
- ☐ Understands how people get paid

Area: Job-Seeking

Skills needed to seek and gain employment.

Skills:

- ☐ Identifies places to look for job postings
- ☐ Prepares a resumé
- ☐ Completes a job application
- ☐ Writes a cover letter
- ☐ Develops job interview skills
- ☐ Dresses appropriately for job interviews
- ☐ Has appropriate hygiene for interviews



Area: Job-Keeping

Skills needed to keep a job.

Skills:

- ☐ Understands job expectations for work attendance and punctuality
- ☐ Works without supervision
- ☐ Understands how to request time off for sick and vacation time
- ☐ Demonstrates a positive work attitude
- ☐ Completes necessary job forms (time sheets, time off request forms, etc.)
- ☐ Understands how to keep track of time worked
- ☐ Wears appropriate and clean clothes
- ☐ Maintains acceptable personal hygiene
- ☐ Has reliable transportation to and from the job
- ☐ Uses a visual schedule or visual directions to accomplish job tasks

Area: Communication

Skills needed to appropriately communicate with others on the job.

Skills:

- ☐ Asks for feedback
- ☐ Uses appropriate language on the job site
- ☐ Is aware of and manages own body language appropriately
- ☐ Manages voice control appropriately
- ☐ Can carry on a conversation with others

Area: Interpersonal

Skills needed to interact with others on the job.

Skills:

- ☐ Demonstrates friendliness, adaptability, and politeness in group settings
- ☐ Demonstrates speaking, listening, and social skills as a member of a work team
- ☐ Interacts appropriately with those in authority
- ☐ Interacts professionally with co-workers
- ☐ Responds appropriately to requests from those in authority, co-workers, and customers
- ☐ Understands work ethics

Area: Personal

Skills that influence how a person acts and completes tasks.

Skills:

- ☐ Works well as part of a team
- ☐ Demonstrates leadership skills
- ☐ Demonstrates a strong work ethic
- ☐ Demonstrates problem-solving skills
- ☐ Demonstrates empathy for others
- ☐ Pays attention to detail
- ☐ Keeps a tidy and organized area



Your state's Department of Vocational Rehabilitation services can help you with some of the skills in this checklist. You can find vocational rehabilitation information for your state below:

Alabama: <https://www.rehab.alabama.gov>

Arkansas: <https://www.arcareereducation.org/about/arkansas-rehabilitation-services>

Louisiana: https://www2.laworks.net/WorkforceDev/LRS/LRS_Main.asp

Mississippi: <https://www.mdrs.ms.gov/>

Oklahoma: www.okdrs.gov

Texas: <https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>

The contents of this tip sheet were developed under grant number H235F00011 from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



Independent Futures that Work!

A project of the Alabama Parent Education Center

PO Box 118, Wetumpka, AL 36092

334-567-2252 or 866-532-7660

<https://independentfuturesthatwork.com>

