



Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA



**Transition to
Adulthood and
Employment**

Autism Society of North Carolina



The leading statewide resource organization
improving lives, supporting families, and
educating our communities



What is Autism?



- A developmental disability that appears in early childhood
- Affects the brain's ability to process information and understand and interact with the world
- Early intervention and ongoing training ensures that those with autism improve and develop skills that allow them to reach their full potential.



How Autism Affects Transition & Employment

- Longer time and more support needed to develop adult skills.



- Challenges with executive functions: processing information, planning, decision-making & reasoning, all of which affect ability to set and achieve goals.
- Some have cognitive impairments.

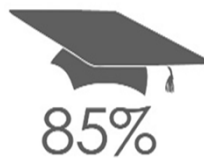


How Autism Affects Transition & Employment (cont.)

- Communication difficulties and understanding social interaction impact interviews, “soft skills” in post secondary & workplace.
- Some individuals use alternate communication methods.
- Sensory overstimulation in workplace: lights, noises, etc.
- May have higher incidences of anxiety, depression and social isolation.



Unemployment



of those with post-secondary degrees are unemployed



People with Autism



- Are all unique individuals and can bring their distinctive skills to a workplace.
- May be very detail-oriented, focused.
- Have technical and factual knowledge.
- Are reliable, dependable, comfortable with routines.



Two Diverse Transition Groups



Occupational Course of Study
significantly affected, long-term supports expected, typically get work experiences



Standard Course of Study
Mainstreamed, often have less obvious challenges, still need supports in post secondary ed and employment



Workshops & Education



ASNC trains over 5,000 people each year on understanding and working with people on the autism spectrum.



Our website and publications reach 250,000 each year.



Employment Supports



MORE THAN
100

individuals gained skills to obtain and maintain competitive employment



What support can do

“ [she was] shy and withdrawn... She had never volunteered or worked prior to starting in job development. [She] began to blossom at about 60 days into her employment with the support of her coworkers. By the time her VR case closed, [she] had come out of her shell... She dropped the soft, whispery voice for a more commanding voice when she got behind the register and customers got waited on quickly and efficiently. ”



 Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA

Supportive Employers

“ [The] management, the owners, the kids and the parents absolutely love him. Once Dominick puts on his costume, it's like magic! All of his insecurities melt away and his big personality shines through! ”

<https://www.facebook.com/braverykidsgym/videos/1318333238205867/>



 Autism Society
of NORTH CAROLINA

JobTIPS



- Evidence-based curriculum developed by Do2Learn on getting and retaining a job: videos, checklists, visual supports.
- Covers basics of seeking and keeping job, but also unique issues like disclosing diagnosis, workplace behavior, small talk, personal appearance, bullying and harassment.
- ASNC offers a 12-week series of this program at three locations.



IGNITE



Young adults develop social, problem-solving, and independent-living skills.





What's Working?

- VR and LME contracts with community organizations for supported employment
- VR programs for youth with stipends for community volunteering/work experience
- DPI training for schools on transitions
- Local schools emphasizing work experience and skills regardless of "track"



What's Working (cont.)

- Programs such as Project SEARCH, JobTIPS, local job clubs that work on job readiness, work experience, and soft skills
- Post-secondary programs for IDD and Basic Skills programs
- Participant-led programs like IGNITE that focus on independent living skills that support employment



Need for Willing Employers



“For every 100 employers we talk with, we might get two who are interested.”



What else is needed?

- Expand current outcomes-based programs for students and adults, regardless of Medicaid eligibility
- Make job experiences and employment training available to all students with disabilities
- Local schools need additional trained professional staff to be able to focus on transition supports
- VR: resources for longer-term supports, retaining staff, smaller caseloads
- Innovations Waiver-eligible students and adults should have access to services
- Fund employment innovation in rural communities, including transportation



Support Ends, the Need Does Not



“ I find it kind of upsetting that once high school is over with, it's like the place where the person lives has lost interest in helping the person out... ”

- Autism self-advocate, on the lack of information and help in adulthood



What Success Looks Like



“ [He] has gone from being very shy and soft-spoken to a person who speaks with confidence, authority and self-assurance. His efficiency, knowledge and ability to implement procedures coupled with his awesome customer service was quickly noticed. He has recently been asked to conduct a mini workshop with his coworkers on the operations of the Accountable Mail. He now stands with his head high and shoulders back. **He has set a new goal for himself to become a Mail Inspector and has already signed up for the training.** ”



Questions?

Contact: Jennifer Mahan, *Director of Public Policy*

jmahan@autismsociety-nc.org

919-609-5662

