



The Division of  
Developmental  
Disabilities Services

# Early Start to Supported Employment

**A Program to Create a Seamless Transition for Students Needing  
Supported Employment Services for Job Success**

## Parent Handbook

**Revised June 2012**

“Early Start to Supported Employment” is a collaborative program sponsored by the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, the Delaware Department of Education and Local School Districts

# Early Start to Supported Employment Parent Handbook

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## Early Start to Supported Employment

### A Note to Parents:

As your son or daughter moves from high school into the adult world, a variety of needs may exist. These needs include:

- Vocational Needs
- Social Needs
- Recreational Needs, and
- Living Needs

Some students will not need any help meeting these needs; others will need services for a short period of time. Students with more severe disabilities may need help on an ongoing basis. **Supported employment** is an alternative to traditional sheltered and competitive employment approaches. It is an attempt to meet the specific needs of individuals with severe disabilities and is based on fundamentally different principles and assumptions. The supported work model assumes that all individuals, regardless of the nature or extent of their disabilities, should have the opportunity and support to work in the community. There are no pre-requisite skills needed for community job success. The task, therefore, is not to identify and place "work ready" individuals, but rather to locate and/or modify meaningful jobs in the community and provide training and supports at the job site. Supported Employment will often take the form of "customized" employment. **Customized employment** is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based on an individualized match between the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate and the identified business needs of an employer. Customized Employment utilizes an individualized approach to employment planning and job development — one person at a time . . . one employer at a time.

**Supported employment is paid employment where the individual receives initial and ongoing assistance he or she needs to be successful in an integrated community work setting.**

Supported and/or Customized Employment may encompass any or all of the following:

- **Task reassignment:** Some of the job tasks of incumbent workers are reassigned to a new employee. This reassignment allows the incumbent worker to focus on the critical functions of his/her job (i.e., primary job responsibilities) and complete more of the central work of the job. Task reassignment typically takes the form of job creation, whereby a new job description is negotiated based on current, unmet workplace needs.
- **Job carving:** An existing job description is modified — containing one or more, but not all, of the tasks from the original job description.
- **Job sharing:** Two or more people share the tasks and responsibilities of a job based on each other's strengths.

“Early Start to Supported Employment”(ESSE) is intended to create a more seamless transition for students leaving school and entering the adult workforce. **The outcome of paid work with post-school supports in place before the student leaves school is the primary goal of ESSE.**

At least three agencies along with the student and family must work closely together for this seamless transition to supported employment to be effective. Schools, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) all support students through the supported employment process.

Thank you for your interest in participating in the ESSE Program. Your participation will help to bring about important changes in how we support students needing long-term help for employment success.

## **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **Adult Service Provider**

Services funded through the DDDS are provided by contracted certified providers of developmental disability services. Supports include service coordination/case management, home supports, employment services, community supports, family and respite supports, clinical interventions and crisis services. These providers are located across the state and offer a variety of services to meet the needs of persons with developmental disabilities.

### **Competitive Employment**

Working either full- or part-time, for at least minimum wage or an equivalent payment after leaving high school in:

- a. an integrated competitive employment setting
- b. the military
- c. a community-based supported employment setting
- d. family business (e.g., farm)
- e. self-employment

### **Day Programs (Facility-based and Adult Day)**

Facility-based programs for individuals as a placement and/or a complement to their work schedules. Facility based options include sheltered workshops and adult day centers. Sheltered workshops provide individuals with the opportunity to learn work skills using paid contract work as the training modality. Individuals attend as if reporting to work and as they are performing contract work, they are learning workplace skills: timeliness, workplace etiquette, time on task, quality standards, communication, socialization skills, productivity, etc. These programs offer educational, pre-vocational and social activities with close supervision, and personal care services as needed. Community outings are a standard part of each program. Volunteer and/or commensurate wage work is a part of most of the day programs.

Adult Day Programs provide more intensive teaching and behavioral supports than found in a work center. The Adult Day Programs offer a variety of staff to consumer ratios based on the needs of the individual served. These programs utilize recreational and social activities to develop skills related to daily living, communication and independence. Skill enhancement in the areas of fine and gross motor skills, attention to task, and safety awareness are stressed throughout all activities. Social activities are stressed, both in program and through community activities.

### **Fading**

The job coach lessens the amount of time spent supporting the individual on the job, increasing the time the individual works independently.

**Follow-Along Services:** (also called “follow-up”)

After the individual is independent on the job, and the placement is considered stable, the provider continues to contact the worksite throughout employment to assist the individual to keep his or her employment.

**Individual Supported Employment**

Competitive employment in the community in integrated business settings for comparable wages. Agencies provide training on the job site and supply follow-along services and supports to the individual and business.

**Integrated Community Work (Business) Setting**

An employment setting where individuals with disabilities are working side by side with individuals without disabilities in an individual’s community

**Job Coaching**

The provider staff member provides one-to-one training to the individual on the job.

**Job Development**

The process of assisting a student to find a job that meets his or her needs, preferences and skill levels. Job Development is intended to find a good job match for the individual.

**Natural Supports**

Training strategies that ensure that neither the employee or employer become too dependent on the presence of the employment specialist. An example of natural supports is: helping coworkers and supervisors assume some of the oversight of work performance.

**Situational Assessments**

The student participates in exploration and assessment of job interests through community-based employment sites. This provides the student and provider with more information on skills, interests, abilities and next steps toward employment.

**Work Adjustment Training**

The provider evaluates and assists individuals to understand the emotional, social, physical and behavioral demands of employment. Students learn about attitudes and work behaviors required for success in competitive employment.

## **“Early Start to Supported Employment” Defining the Program**

### **Philosophy:**

All persons regardless of disability are able to be employed and be successful, active, participating members in their communities.

### **Purpose:**

- Support a seamless transition for students into supported employment upon exiting secondary education (high school).
- Alleviate student and family stress during the difficult transition from school to an unknown adult life.

### **Student Selection Criteria: (Eligibility will vary from student to student based on individual needs).**

1. The student is eligible for DVR and DDDS.
2. Open to any student who is two years from their final year of school, and who is interested in working and capable of working with supports, including those students who may be exiting with: (1) a regular diploma; (2) without a diploma but with same-age peers without disabilities, or (3) at age 21.
3. High student and family motivation to include work as a main post-school activity.
4. The student understands that the focus will be on work activities and schedules outside of the school environment, and he or she may have to adjust vacation and school schedules.
5. Student should have some type of job related experience (work tasks) through school related jobs and/or community-based work experiences.
6. Student should exhibit good work habits, which may include previous successful community-based work experiences, and a clear idea of strengths along with notion of job preferences.
7. The student should have some level of independence on a training site after learning a job skill.
8. Will the student be able to work with appropriate supports in place.

### **Family Expectations:**

1. The family wants to include work as a main post-school activity for their child.
2. The family understands that the focus during their child’s last school year will be on work activities and schedules, and may have to adjust vacation and school schedules.
3. The family will make sure that eligibility for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDDS) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has been determined for their child.
4. The family will work closely with the school program, the agencies involved, and the adult service provider they select for supported employment services.

**Process to Emphasize Timely Services:**

1. Schools, families, and agencies select students that meet the criteria mentioned above. Families sign an agreement for participation. (Fall/Winter of Junior Year)
2. The student and family choose a supported employment provider. (Spring/Summer of Junior Year)
3. A Supported Employment Assessment is completed and all participants will meet to review the results. (Fall of Senior Year)
4. DVR authorizes job development for the student. (Winter of Senior Year)
5. Job development process is completed (and active search for placement is on-going?). (Summer of graduation)
6. DDS picks up the funding for long-term supports for the individual. (September after graduation and ongoing)



## Information on the Individual Supported Employment Process

Students with developmental disabilities transitioning from school into employment are often most successful with service providers that offer the full array of supported employment services. In Delaware, such services are generally based on some variation of the Job Coach Model and are expected to provide job development, on the job training, and long term follow-up services. Service providers are also expected to facilitate the development of natural supports at the work site.

### The Job Coach Model

The key elements of a job coach model are:

1. **One-on-One Training**. Provider staff members provide services to the participant on a one on one basis. These staff members are generally called job coaches, employment specialists, job trainers, or employment coordinators.
2. **Job Development**. The employment specialists are responsible for finding a job that meets the participant's needs, preferences, and skill level. Your child should visit the proposed site and accept or reject employment there. The more flexible your child or student can be about job location, hours, or tasks, the more likely that they will quickly find a good job match. It is important to discuss with the employment specialist on which aspects of the job description you can be flexible.
3. **On the Job Training**. Before the participant begins the job, the employment specialist will observe or perform the tasks the participant will need to learn. Often they develop a list of the steps required to perform each task. They may also pinpoint some possible trouble spots, or organize the way the participant will perform their job on a daily basis. This is called *task analysis and job structuring*.

The job coach is responsible for teaching the person to perform their daily tasks to the speed and quality standards of the work place. They make sure the participant is meeting all their other work related obligations, such as arriving to work on time, interacting socially with coworkers and supervisors in an appropriate manner, and meeting the grooming standards of the work place. The employment specialist will also develop strategies for problem solving, such as appointing one coworker as a reference person when questions arise.

During this initial training period, the employment specialist will also will make sure that the participant can get to and from work independently, and that lines of communication are set up between the work site and the home. The participant should be as responsible for these links as their skill level will support.

4. **Natural Supports**. Employment specialists use a set of training strategies called *natural supports* to ensure that neither the participants nor their coworkers become too dependent on the presence of the employment specialist. Some of the aspects of developing natural supports include:

- Helping coworkers and supervisors relate to their new team member. As quickly as possible, supervisors are asked to assume their characteristic role of teaching and overseeing work performance. Some agencies prefer to discuss needed employment supports with coworkers before the participant begins the job.
- Fading as quickly as possible (see below). However, before the job coach begins leaving, she should observe that there is a comfortable rapport established between the participant and the coworkers.
- Consulting with the work place to help the employer trouble shoot any problems that arise, and providing on-site intervention during complex or crisis level situations.

5. **Fading.** Once the participant can perform their tasks to the quality and speed standards of the work place, the job coach begins to leave the job site for increasingly longer lengths of time. This process is called *fading*. By fading slowly, the participant can increase the time they work independently, allowing them to build confidence on a series of small successes.

6. **Long term follow-up.** After the individual is fully independent and the placement is considered stable, the job trainer continues to contact the worksite, but at increasingly greater intervals of time between contacts. This continues throughout employment and is called long term follow-up or follow-along. The reason for the monitoring and interventions is to assist the individual to keep his or her employment.

As part of their contract, vendors are also expected to advocate for the same benefits such as raises, vacation time, and sick leave, as are received by coworkers. They may also advocate for promotions or acquiring new tasks requiring greater levels of skill and responsibility, if the participant expresses interest in this. If the participant loses his job, the vendor must offer replacement services or help coordinate alternative services at the request of the participant.

## Early Start to Supported Employment

### General Timeline for Services

\*Junior year is defined as the year immediately before exit year

\*Senior year is defined as the exit year

Individual Early Start Transition Meeting	Family Orientation and Provider Fair	Family Chooses Service Provider Agency Application Completed	Assessment Authorized		Assessment Report Submitted	Team Meeting		Job Placement	30-day Retention	Stabilization	DVR Closure
October - December of Junior* Year	January-March of Junior* Year	April 1 of Junior* Year	April of Junior* Year		August of Senior* Year	September-October of Senior* Year	<b>J O B</b>	Anytime during Senior* Year	30 days after job placement	30 days after retention	90 days after stabilization
Local School Program	Student/Family	Student/Family DDDS	DVR		Provider to DVR	DVR		Provider	Provider	Provider	Funding transfers to DDDS
Local school program schedules a meeting that will include school, student, family, DVR rep, DDDS rep, provider (if identified) and others as needed. ESSE referral paperwork will be reviewed, DDDS application and DVR intake will be completed. Family will receive information on providers and upcoming provider fairs.	Students and families have attended the ESSE Family Orientation and Provider Fair.	Students and families have chosen a service agency to provide supported employment services.	The agency selection leads to the authorization for the service provider to conduct vocational assessments.	<b>A S S E S S M E N T</b>	The student has a variety of vocational experiences. A report is completed based on activities completed.	The team meets to determine the next steps in job development.	<b>D E V E L O P M E N T</b>	The student is placed in long-term employment.	Services are provided to assist the student be successful in new job placement.	A 3-month period is provided to ensure that the recent job placement is stable for the student.	Successful employment brings closure of the student's case with DVR and ongoing supports are in place through DDDS.

This timeline was developed to give families an idea of the different services that can be expected in the supported employment process. Anticipated dates are also included for completion of the activities. **Circumstances may occur that may speed up or delay the dates when services are completed.** The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) funds the service providers for supported employment services to students. The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) provides long-term ongoing funding for continued supports to individuals to ensure employment success.

## **Choosing an Adult Service Provider**

Parents, teachers or others usually become the spokesperson for the participant while choosing a provider. It is useful to get together with your son or daughter, and perhaps the DVR counselor, to determine types of services that your son or daughter wants and needs from a provider. Each Supported Employment service provider must meet quality indicators that are determined through contracts with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Please contact your local DVR office if you have any questions about the service providers.

### **Some Questions for Students to Consider**

- Are you looking for part-time or full-time employment?
- To what areas of the state are you willing to travel? What type of transportation will you be using?
- What kinds of benefits do you want, need?
- Do you prefer to wait in order to find the best possible job match, or is it more important to start work right away?
- Can you, or another person in your support community, provide job leads or participate in some of the employment activities?
- How much money do you need to make?
- Which area(s) represents your greatest strength: quality, speed, or cooperation with others?
- Can you work independently? Do you need supervision to work continuously and problem-solve adequately?
- Can you be successful at a job that relies primarily on physical strength? Some academic skills? Some fine motor skills?
- How important are social contacts at work to you? Is socializing likely to interfere with your work performance?
- What hours would you like to work?

### **Some Questions to Consider Asking Providers**

- How many years have you been providing Supported Employment Services?
- How many staff do you have devoted to Supported Employment Services?
- How many people are currently employed in individual supported employment?
- What are some of the job titles and duties of individuals that have supported employment through your organization?
- Do you have a satisfied employer that would serve as a reference for your organization in supporting employees with disabilities?
- Tell me about your best job match between a client's interests/abilities and the kind of job he or she received due to your efforts.

## **What should I do if I am not happy with the services provided?**

The client/family should attempt to resolve any issues with the vendor before approaching the state agency that is paying for the supported employment services. If DVR is paying for services, the following should occur:

The client and/or family can approach the DVR counselor assigned to the case after attempting to resolve the issue(s) with the vendor.

If the DVR counselor is unable to resolve, he or she should bring the issue to the DVR District Administrator. If still not resolved to the client's satisfaction, the case should be forwarded to the DVR Central Office Program Specialist in charge of Supported Employment Services. This person will review the case and seek the advice of the Deputy Director of DVR should it become necessary to render a decision.

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is available if it is considered appropriate to the issue at hand. Information on the services provided by the CAP is provided to every family upon application and determination of eligibility for DVR services.

### **Client Assistance Program**

Responsibilities:

- Communicating with consumers in clear terms regarding how DVR programs function and how services are provided.
- Informing and advising consumers and applicants of available benefits.
- Assisting consumers in making requests known to the DVR counselor and those providing services they require.
- Assisting consumers with projects, programs and facilities providing services.
- Resolving difficulties the consumer may have with DVR as quickly and amicably as possible.
- Assisting consumers, upon request, in administrative review and/or fair hearing process if they are dissatisfied with a determination made by DVR.
- Advising state agencies of systematic issues in the provision of DVR services and suggesting improvements in the service delivery system where problems have been identified.

### **CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Don Moore, Director  
Client Assistance Program, United Cerebral Palsy, Inc.  
700A River Road Wilmington, DE 19809  
(302) 764-6216

The following pages provide a list of supported employment providers in the State. Included in the information is the area(s) they serve, the services they provide, and contact information.

**EARLY START TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT  
PROVIDERS BY COUNTY**

<b>Location and Provider</b>	<b>New Castle County</b>	<b>Kent County</b>	<b>Sussex County</b>
AHEDD	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
The Arc of Delaware	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Chimes	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Choices for Community Living		<b>X</b>	
Community Integrated Services (CIS)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Connections	<b>X</b>		
Elwyn Delaware	<b>X</b>		
Easter Seals	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Goodwill	<b>X</b>		
Heartwood Corporation			<b>X</b>
HOME (PENDING) – Healthcare Operations Management Enterprises	<b>X</b>		
Kent-Sussex Industries (KSI)		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Opportunity Center, Inc. (OCI)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
POW&R (Autism Delaware)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Salvation Army	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
TEEM (University of DE)	<b>X</b>		

## **Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Offices**

### **Wilmington**

TTY/Voice (302) 761-8300  
N. Market Street  
Wilmington, DE 19802

### **Dover**

TTY/Voice (302) 739-739-5478 4425  
Carroll's Plaza  
1114 S. Dupont Highway  
Dover, DE 19901

### **Middletown**

TTY/Voice (302) 378-5779  
122 Silver Lake Road  
Middletown, DE 19709

### **Georgetown**

TTY/Voice (302) 856-5730  
20793 Professional Park Blvd.  
Georgetown, DE 19947

### **Newark**

TTY/Voice (302) 368-6980  
190 Executive Drive  
Pencader Corporate Center  
Newark, DE 19702

### **Milford**

TTY/Voice (302) 430-7720  
24 NW Front Street  
Milford, DE 19963

## **Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Offices**

Community Services, Kent County Office  
Thomas Collins Bldg  
540 S. DuPont Hwy  
Dover, DE 19901  
(302) 744-1000

Community Services, Sussex Co. Office  
26351 Patriots Way  
Georgetown, DE 19947  
(302) 933-3000

Community Services, New Castle Co. Office  
2540 Wrangle Hill Road  
Bear, DE 19701  
302-836-2100

## **Delaware Department of Education**

401 Federal Street, Suite 2  
Dover, DE 19901  
Attn: Dale Matusevich  
(302) 735-4210