

# WHAT DO I DO WHEN I FINISH SCHOOL?



*EMPLOYMENT*

*SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT*

*NON-RESIDENTIAL SUPPORTS & SERVICES*

*ADULT DAY TRAINING*

**P**articipating in new activities and gaining new experiences adds richness and quality to people's lives. Like everyone, adults with developmental disabilities need something meaningful to do when they complete school. More opportunities are now available for individuals with developmental disabilities than ever before.

Meaningful day activities help us all to have direction and purpose to our day, and allow us to make a contribution to someone or something. For some people that could mean working for pay, while for someone else it may mean doing volunteer work. For some people, their meaningful day activities may actually take place in the evening.

Three major options are available depending upon the person's personal interests and choices. You might choose to be *employed*—even working on a community job with individualized help (*supported employment*). It might include learning about the world of work and the community in which you live (*non-residential supports and services*). It might be attending a school or program to learn new skills (*adult day training*). These services are available to adults who have completed their public school education and are ready to move on as adults. The four options identified above are available to you if you have identified goals related to meaningful day activities on your support plan.



What is right for you? It is a matter of your choices based upon your interests, skills and talents. You decide how you choose to use your time.

Some choices are more valued and respected. Some choices can help you increase your personal worth and



therefore do more or buy more things. You may choose to participate in activities that you pay for, activities that are free, or services that are paid for from various governmental agencies. The choice is up to you! Your

Support Coordinator can help you explore all of the various supports and services. You too, can learn more about your options in the Yellow Notebook, that you should receive annually from your support coordinator or social worker. You want to build a team to identify the supports and services that can meet your needs - whether they are available from this agency, from other governmental agencies or within your community.

This brochure will present an overview of some services that are available through APD to assist you. Use the information to help you make a decision about what you do after you complete school.

# Employment and Supported Employment

**G**oing to work and being part of a workplace—a factory, an office, a store—is an important part of life for a variety of reasons. When you work, you can earn money and you may make some new friends, as well. Employment provides greater opportunities for you to have money to do the things that are important to you. Talk with your Support Coordinator, if you would like to work. She or he may be able to help you find a job or make a referral to another agency that can help you.

If you would like to work but think you might need some help, a **Supported Employment** program might be just what you need. **Supported Employment** programs can give you the opportunity to choose where you would like to work—based on the personal outcomes and goals you find important.

**Supported Employment** is a way to get paid for a real job at a real work place with the help that you might need. If you would like to work, you can get help to find and keep a job that is something you would like to do. It might be a job working outside or in an office or a job working with lots of people or just a few. With a **Supported Employment** provider, you can talk about what



you would like to do, and think about where you might like to work. Together, you can find a job that you will like and that uses your talents and abilities. Your first job could be a stepping stone to other career and job opportunities. The **Supported Employment** provider may also help you find transportation to your job, if it is needed.

**Supported Employment** includes an employment specialist who may provide you with training for a specific job or tasks on the actual job site. The specialist may also teach job-related skills that are necessary to keep a job. The length of support is based on your needs and is ongoing for as long and as frequent as you need it. In addition to job training (and retraining if it is needed) support may include things like counseling or consulting with employers and co-workers, connecting people to other workers, or any other services needed to maintain the job and be part of the work place. If you want to work and your family has concerns or fears, the **Supported Employment** specialist will work with you and your family to help resolve those fears.

In **Supported Employment** you will be paid at or above minimum wage. That means you will receive a salary the same as other people who perform the same type of job. If adaptations are needed in the work environment, the **Supported Employment** provider or the employer may provide them. In **Supported Employment**, you might work by yourself or in a group. Group models are called enclaves or mobile work crews. Some people in **Supported Employment** may own their own business or work for a small business that they run.

A person in **Supported Employment** contributes, along with his or her co-workers, to the company and the community. Focusing on what people can contribute leads to employment that makes sense to both the employer and employee.

## Some Key Questions about Supported Employment

**Q:** *Do I need to be "ready" to work (self-directed, stay on-task without reminders, keep up my speed, follow directions, and have community safety awareness) to participate in Supported Employment?*

**A:** The need for "work readiness skills" has been demonstrated to be a myth for people with even "the most severe disabilities." In fact, the premise of Supported Employment is to provide on-the-job training to teach not only job tasks, but also what are often believed to be "readiness" skills. Supported Employment research has consistently shown that the only factors that are needed for successful Supported Employment are the desire on the part of the person for employment, support from the person's family or other advocates, and individually tailored supports.



**Q:** *Is it true in supported employment I will be at the job alone after a few weeks of training and a staff will only stop in every few weeks to make sure that everything is OK?*

**A:** One principle of Supported Employment is not only to

## **More Key Questions about Supported Employment**

help people get a job, but also to assist people to form relationships with co-workers and other people who can be supportive as a natural part of the employment setting. The supported employment staff typically diminishes his or her time on the job site to the point that he or she only checks in every couple of weeks to assure job stability. However, you should understand that **one of the major responsibilities of the supported employment staff is to assure that you do not feel isolated. One of the ways they do this is by helping you to build and maintain relationships with your co-workers and other people important to supporting your ongoing employment.**

**Q:** *Is it true that my SSI (Supplemental Security Income) check will go down, but I should still come out ahead given the wage I earn?*

**A:** **The fact is that people receiving SSI and SSDI (Social Security Disability Income) benefits should come out ahead in terms of their overall income as a result of their employment.** The Social Security Administration (SSA) work incentives (1619[a]) are constructed on a formula that rewards you for working by ensuring that the combination of your employment related income and Social Security financial benefits is always higher than



## ***Still More Key Questions about Supported Employment***

your SSI or SSDI financial benefits alone. However, it is critical that you work with a Social Security Administration Benefits Planner to be sure you keep the benefits you need while working.



**Q:** *I heard that wage and hour regulations won't allow me to work and also attend an Adult Day Training center or get Non-Residential Supports and Services. Is that true?*

**A:** This issue has nothing to do with wage and hour regulations of the Department of Labor.

**APD waiver providers cannot bill for both Supported Employment and Adult day Training services or NRSS for the same person at the same time.** However, a person needing **Supported Employment and Adult Day Training or NRSS** can receive both services if they are provided on different days or at different times of the day.

**Q:** *Can I work evenings, week ends and more than 20 hours per week in Supported Employment?*

**A:** In statewide surveys of providers by Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, it was found that **supported employment jobs and sheltered workshops people averaged approximately 26 hours of work per week.** Since this is an average, obviously some people work more than 26 hours per week and others don't. **A growing trend**

## ***Even More Key Questions about Supported Employment***

**across the nation is to support individuals in two part-time jobs.** This has been found to work well with individuals who benefit from a change of environments or like varied situations. Some people work one job in the morning and another in the afternoon or evening. Again, this is just one way that can fit some individual needs.

**Q:** *Can I return to the Adult Day Training Program if the job I start doesn't work out?*



**A:** There should be a clear commitment by the service provider that long-term job related supports will be available as long as they are needed to maintain your job or to immediately find another job in the commu-

nity. If necessary, you can return to the Adult Day Training program until such time as a new job is secured.



## ***One Final Key Question about Supported Employment***

*Q: If I work too many hours or earn too much money will it have an effect on my medical benefits?*

**A:** This is a concern that is often heard, and can be a real problem, if proper planning is not followed. If you are going to be working fulltime or be earning more than \$860 within a one month period, you need to immediately learn about two people who can help you plan: **Benefits Planners and Disability Program Navigators**. In 1999 the Social Security Administration (SSA) established a grant program called Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO). **Under this program, community organizations are paid to hire Benefits Planners to provide people with disabilities, who receive SSA, information and assistance about work incentives planning and assistance services.** Use the following web address to find a benefits planner near you <http://www.ssa.gov/work/ServiceProviders/BPAODirectory.html#Florida> If there is not one in your area, call your local social security office and ask them to help you contact a benefits planner.

Another type of service offered through the Social Security Administration is provided by the Disability Program Navigator (DPN). **The DPN can help with job placements, help transitioning youth to find employment and serve as a resource to the workforce investment community.** Visit the above web address to find out more about DPNs, as well as whether one is located in your area.

## NRSS

### Non-Residential Supports & Services

**N**on-Residential Supports and Services or NRSS can help you learn skills to participate in your community. Training activities provided through NRSS must be tied to a personal outcome or goal that you have identified as important and is written in your support plan.

The type of things that you might do through NRSS should be the kinds of things that others do in their everyday lives. These things are meant to increase your valued role in your local community.

NRSS activities should also encourage the development of friendships with people whether they have a disability or not, and emphasize being involved in your local community. You might find that you have goals or interests that are similar to those of others. If so, you might do activities with a small group of up to three people. Some people have found that small groups and individualized activities make it easier for them to get to know people in their local community.



**Non-Residential Supports and Services** should be customized for you. Supports are designed to meet your unique needs and preferences as specified in your support plan.

Some things that you might learn through **NRSS** are how to shop independently, as well as how to use the library, public parks or other community resources.

**NRSS** can *not* be provided in your home or the home of your provider, however it is provided in your local community.

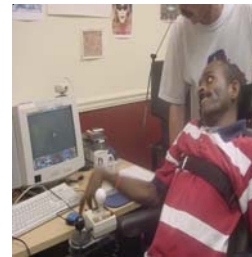


In addition to opportunities to explore the local community, **NRSS** can also provide you with opportunities to volunteer in programs like *Meals on Wheels*, and animal shelters or other places to which you might like to contribute. Through **NRSS** you can also explore potential jobs and work places to determine what you like (or don't like) as a way to begin to make informed job choices.

## ADT Adult Day Training

**A**dult Day Training is a service that you may attend to learn new skills and to be part of various activities. Some people go to **Adult Day Training** center all day (about six hours) five days a week, while others may go part time. That choice is up to you. Most activities of the **Adult Day Training** program take place at the center, but sometimes you might leave in groups generally larger than three people, for some activities in the community.

In an **Adult Day Training** program you can learn skills through training such as self care, daily living skills like staying healthy, work-like activities and balancing a checkbook, as well as getting along with others. There is a choice of a variety of activities you might like to do. All the activities provided through an **Adult Day Training** program have an implementation plan that is tied back to a personal outcome or goal that you have identified as important and is included in your support plan.



Some **Adult Day Training** centers provide activities that help people learn to communicate better, activities that provide sensory stimulation, or music and art therapies to help people learn skills. Other **Adult Day Training** programs may also provide opportunities for you to learn about self-advocacy. In some Adult Day Training centers special programs may be provided for seniors. You might want to visit a variety of **Adult Day Training** centers to see which one best meets your needs.

## Some Things to Think About Related Meaningful Day Activities

**Y**ou might think that making a decision about a Meaningful Day Activity might be hard to do. If you are not sure what is best for you, take some time to think about this and talk it over with others. Bounce some ideas around with your family and other people who know you best—like your friends. If you are about to graduate from school, involve your teachers in your discussions.

**T**hen talk with your Support Coordinator. She can help you set up meetings with providers of Supported Employment, Non-Residential Supports and Services and Adult Day Training that are in your area.

**M**aybe you are not thinking about a job but would like something to do. What about volunteering at some different places or getting involved in a club or hobby group. As you think about what is best for you, you might want to visit different places. Again, your support coordinator can help you arrange to do that. You definitely need to see and know what is available in your area and find the one that could best meet your needs. With all this information, you should be able to make an informed decision about day activities that are meaningful to you.

This publication is provided by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. It is meant for informational purposes. In addition to the meaningful day activities described in this publication other supports and services are available through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD). Contact your local area office for more information or you can go online to their website: <http://apd.myflorida.com/>. When you are online, check out Yellow Notebook : [http://apd.myflorida.com/clients/yellow\\_notebook.htm](http://apd.myflorida.com/clients/yellow_notebook.htm). While you're on the agency's website browse through the News and Reports tab (upper left) to see what the new E-Bulletin has to say. You may even want to sign up and be sent the latest information, as it is published. One more good resource on this website is located under the Training tab (upper left). Click on the optional tab to see what courses are available for everyone to take and you may even be interested in checking out the courses that are required for providers. We hope you will find this website interesting and informative.

Telephone numbers for the area offices can be found on the next page of this booklet.



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Suite 380  
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April, 2006

## District & Regional Contacts

District/ Region	Counties	Telephone Number
1	Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton	850.595.8351
2	Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla, Washington	850.487.1992
3	Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrest, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee, Union	352.955.5793
4	Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, St. John	904.992.2440
Sun Coast	DeSoto, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Sarasota	813.558.5548
7	Brevard, Orange, Osceola, Seminole	407.245.0440
8	Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee	239.338.1572
9	Palm Beach	561.837.5564
10	Broward	954.467.4218
11	Dade, Monroe	305.377.5792
12	Flagler, Volusia	386.238.4607
13	Citrus, Hernando, Lake Marion	352.330.2177
14	Hardee, Highlands, Polk	863.619.4236
15	Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie	772.467.3792