

California's Employment First Policy

Signed into law on October 9, 2013 by Governor Edmund G. Brown
The Lanterman Act, Section 4869(a)(1)



“It is the policy of the state that opportunities for integrated, competitive employment shall be given the highest priority for working age individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities.”

What Does This Mean?

It is now the state's highest priority to make integrated competitive employment a real choice for people with developmental disabilities. Integrated competitive employment is a job at a workplace among individuals with and without disabilities. It will be a full or part-time position at or above minimum wage. Self-employment is another option.

Getting Help

Students need to ask the school to prepare them for getting a job in their community making at least minimum wage. Students can ask for integrated work experiences. These goals should be in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Transition Plan (ITP). People can ask their regional center service coordinator to put integrated employment supports in the Individual Program Plan (IPP). The service coordinator can assist people to request employment supports from the Department of Rehabilitation. After leaving school, the regional center can purchase services which will help people obtain and maintain integrated competitive employment.

Getting Work

It can be a lot of work to get a job. It is a good idea to find out: What am I good at? What do I like to do? What kind of workplace will I do well in? Higher education and vocational training can be used to prepare for a job you want. Volunteer work or job exploration is a good way to see if you like a particular job. With the right help, you can get a job and get paid well.

MORE INFORMATION on the Employment First Policy can be found on the website of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities at www.scdd.ca.gov/ef. This site also has information on how well California is doing making employment a real option for people with developmental disabilities. In depth information on the affect of employment on public benefits, such as SSI and Medi-Cal, can be found at www.ca.db101.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON YOUR OWN OPTIONS, contact your school, regional center or the Department of Rehabilitation and ask what they can do to support you or your family member to work, earn, and contribute.



"Having this job makes me successful because I have learned a lot of things. This job makes me happy because even though I'm the person that I am, they accept me here for who I am, and they give me support."

~ Seleste
Lawrence Berkeley
National Laboratory



"Being in school will help me get a better job. I like the teachers too. They're very nice. They help me with what I need"

~ Jasmine
East LA College

What the Employment First Policy Means to *Families*

- With the right supports, children with developmental disabilities can get an integrated full or part time job that pays at least minimum wage.
- With proper planning, public benefits such as SSI and Medi-Cal can be protected (see www.ca.db101.org).
- People with all types of disabilities can make money, contribute, be involved citizens, meet people, and make friends through their work.
- Families can talk about work and career around the dinner table, give their children responsibilities at home to develop a work ethic, help their children explore their interests, and encourage schools to prepare students for work or for higher education.

What the Employment First Policy Means to *Regional Centers*

The first option to consider in the IPP is integrated competitive employment. Regional centers must inform people that integrated work at regular pay is a real option and discuss available services and supports to help people become employed. Regional centers and providers have services to support people with developmental disabilities who want to work. To see great examples of people having the supports they need to succeed, go to www.scdd.ca.gov/ef.

What Employment First Policy Means to *Schools*

- Prepare students for transition to work no later than 14-16 years of age.
- The IEP and ITP should include work experiences.
- People with developmental disabilities require an education that prepares them for integrated competitive employment, or prepares them for post-secondary education. There are great examples (see www.scdd.ca.gov/ef) of students with developmental disabilities having work experiences, transitioning to post-secondary education and integrated competitive employment.