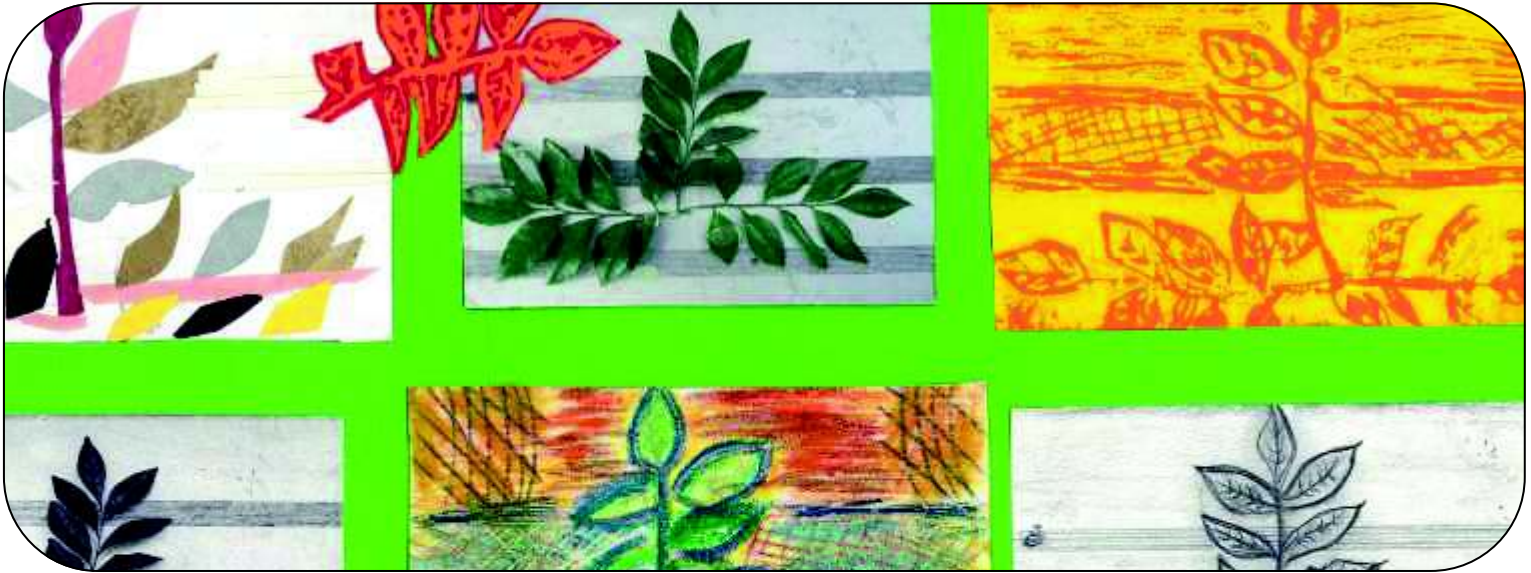


Getting students ready for life after school: Part 2...



Getting Students Ready For Life After School, Part 2: Post school education, training and employment options

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The Western Sydney National Disability Coordination Officer Program (WSNDCO) is funded by the Australian Government and works to improve the transition and participation of people with disabilities (including chronic medical conditions and mental health conditions) into post-school education, training and employment. WSNDCO is hosted by the University of Western Sydney Equity and Diversity Unit. There are 31 NDCO regions across Australia. To find an NDCO in your area, go to www.innovation.gov.au/ndco. You can find out more about the WSNDCO Program and access a large range of information and resources in the areas of education, training and work at www.uws.edu.au/ndco.

Last newsletter our article outlined the 10 top tips for schools and services. This edition we introduce the further education, training and employment options available after school and the types of supports available for each one. Which options are relevant or realistic for a young person will depend on a range of things, including their interests and skills and the type and severity of their disability. But it is important for a young person and their family to consider and find out about the full range of options so that they can make a well informed decision.

Things are very different to when most of us left school, and there are now a huge range of options available to young people with disability. This includes a range of support to assist people with disability to participate in mainstream courses and workplaces, as well as a range of disability specific programs and employment options. Below is a quick summary of the main options and some useful links. You can find much more information on our website www.uws.edu.au/ndco.

Ageing Disability and Home Care – Post school programs

Ageing, Disability and Home Care, part of the NSW Government Department of Family and Community Services, funds organisations to provide two post school programs for school leavers with disability: Transition to Work and Community Participation.

Transition to Work – is a two year program for young people with disability who need support to make the transition from school to work or further education. It helps young people develop independence, gain practical work experience and develop skills needed for employment or study. See http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/delivering_disability_services/post_schools_programs/transition_to_work

Community Participation – is a program for young people with moderate to high support needs who may require an alternative to paid employment in the long term. It focuses on building independence, skill development and participation in the community. There are three different models for this program, including centre-based, community-based, and a self-managed model where young people and their family

organise their own activities and prepare plans for what they would like to do and how they will use their funding. See http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/delivering_disability_services/post_schools_programs/community_participation

Access to both of these programs requires an assessment to be conducted during year 12 at school to determine eligibility.

TAFE

TAFE NSW offers a wide range of nationally recognised courses in many vocational areas and at various levels. TAFE also offers a range of flexible learning options including part-time courses, evening courses and distance or online learning. All TAFE colleges have specialist teacher/consultants (TCs) who provide support and adjustments for students with disability. Support offered includes assistance with course selection, assessment modifications, exam provisions, note-taking, access to assistive technology, and tutorial support, depending on the needs of the student. See www.tafensw.edu.au/services/disability/

University

All universities have disability services staff who are responsible for providing reasonable adjustments for students with disability. Upon registering with this service and providing appropriate documentation, a young person may receive support including assessment and exam adjustments, access to equipment or assistive technology, advice and advocacy. It is important to remember that even if a young person does not get into university based on their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), there are many alternative entry pathways that may assist them gain entry to university. See our Get Ready for Uni website

www.uws.edu.au/ndco/getready for more information or http://www.adcet.edu.au/Student_Resources/Who_Can_Help/University_Disability_Advisers.chpx for links to disability services at individual universities.

Other further education and training options

There are a range of other further education and training options. These include Adult and Community Education, such as local Community Colleges, and Registered Training Organisations. They may offer a range of benefits including flexible learning options and small class sizes. However it is important to be aware that most smaller training providers will not have a specific disability service in place. *All training providers are required by law to provide reasonable adjustments* to students with disability, however a young person may need to negotiate and advocate for these directly with their teacher.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Australian Apprenticeships (including both apprenticeships and traineeships) are available in a huge range of career areas and levels. They can be a great way to “earn while you learn” and combine the benefits of structured learning with on the job training. Australian Apprentices with disability may be able to access tutorial and mentoring support during their coursework, and workplace modifications through the Employment Assistance Fund. Their employer may also be eligible for wage incentives through the Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support Scheme. In many instances, starting an Australian Apprenticeship may be option while the young person is still at school. See www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au

Open or self employment

It may also be an option to seek a job in the open labour market, or for the young person to set up their own business. There is support available to do both of these things. It is important to be aware that it is illegal for an employer to discriminate against an employee or potential employee on the basis of disability. A young person is entitled to *reasonable adjustments* in the workplace, so long as those adjustments do not cause the employer *unjustifiable hardship*. The Employment Assistance Fund can assist with workplace modifications, equipment and other support a young person may need to participate successfully at work. There is a range of specialist assistance available to find and/or maintain open employment, for example Disability Employment Services and Job Services Australia. There is also a New Enterprise Incentive Scheme to assist eligible people to start their own small busi-

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ness. Centrelink can help you access these and other employment services. www.jobaccess.gov.au is also a great resource for information and advice about disability at work.

Supported employment – Australian Disability Enterprises

If a young person is likely to require ongoing support at work, they may wish to consider an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE). These are supported workplaces for people with moderate to severe disability. ADEs are commercial businesses which perform a range of services, including packaging, assembly, production, garden maintenance and landscaping, cleaning and laundry services. Employees are paid a productivity based wage for their work, which means that they are paid a portion of the full wage based on their level of productivity, usually in addition to a Disability Support Pension. ADEs can be a great way to learn new skills and develop the confidence to later move into open employment. See <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/>

[disability-and-carers/program-services/for-service-providers/australian-disability-enterprises](http://www.uws.edu.au/ndco/getready)

Volunteer work

Volunteer work could be a great way for a young person with disability to: build confidence; develop skills; explore different types of work to see which career they would like to pursue; and identify the types of support or adjustments they may need at work. It is also a great way for them to give back to the community and contribute to issues they are passionate about. It can also lead to paid work! See <http://www.govolunteer.com.au/> for opportunities.

It is important to keep an open mind during early transition planning and facilitate the young person to explore a wide range of possibilities. With support, reasonable adjustments and/or access to assistive technologies, a young person with disability may be able to participate in options that may not initially look very feasible. By exploring a range of possibilities, you are facilitating the young person making a realistic, informed decision about the best pathway for them. Here is a visual summary to graphically illustrate these broad categories of post-school options:

You can find much more detailed information and advice on our website www.uws.edu.au/ndco. You can also download copies of our comprehensive workbooks and guides for young people and parents from www.uws.edu.au/ndco/getreadytips. We'd love to hear from you with feedback on any of our resources!

