



Early Start to Supported Employment ESSE

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

Parent Handbook

Revised October 2018

“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

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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
- Living Needs
- Transportation

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 specific needs of the individual will attempt to be met through an Adult Service Provider chosen by the individual/family. 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. Department of Education (Local School Districts), 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

Supports funded through DVR/DDDS/DVI/DSAAPD are provided by contracted certified providers. These providers are located across the state and offer a variety of services to support the individual in their employment endeavors.

Competitive/Integrated Employment

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

- a. at or above minimum wage
- b. location typically found in the community
- c. afforded the same employment opportunities
- d. self-employed

Day Programs (Facility-based and Adult Day)

Facility-based programs for individuals as an adult programming choice 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 unpaid contract work if they are under 24, and minimum wage (if available) for over 24 years of age but must receive career counseling each year, as the training modality. Individuals attend as if reporting to work and as they are performing contract work, they are learning workplace skills.

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.

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”

ESSE

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 Eligibility Criteria: (Eligibility will vary from student to student based on individual needs).

1. The student is eligible for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (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.

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 the Supported Employment Services: 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. There are times when an individual cannot be at the work site alone and therefore his/her team will discuss options for ongoing supports.

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.

**** What about those who will need on-going job support? Not mentioned here. Parents will assume this child cannot work otherwise. (example – support beyond natural supports in event those aren't strong enough)

**** What about including real life examples of how ESSE works/looks for various levels of need so parents can better imagine how it would benefit their child?

- Example – Sam, high functioning,job coach, faded, successful , independent with natural supports
- Example- Sally, more challenged....., job coach, limited fading, on-going supports, natural and from DDDS, DVR fades away

**Early Start to Supported Employment
General Timeline for Services**

Employed	18-21 years Continuation of Services	15-17 years Initiation of Services	14 years Introduction of Opportunities	10-13 years Employment First Movement
<p>Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Providers/Job Coach •DDDS- CN •DDDS/Pathways- EN •DVR- Vocational Counselor •School •Family •Natural Supports <p>Independent Living Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home •Providers •Case Manager 	<p>Graduation and Employment</p> <p>School- involvement in IEP- Self-advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Job experiences •Summer opportunities •Job Development- Provider •Refer to DVR •Visioning- What do you want to do for employment? •DART <p>Graduate/Alumni:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •come in and talk- mentor •Adds to visioning <p>DDDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CN •Respite •Pathways to Employment- EN age 14 (Medicaid Eligibility) <p>DVR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pre-Ets- Continue to Participate •Apply for Services- 2 years prior to graduation <p>Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Volunteering <p>Parent Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If no DDDS services, complete DDDS application •Attend IEP meetings •Actively Participate in Agency Meetings •Be sure to ask questions about the above services •Choose a Service Provider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Attend Provider Fairs •Interview Providers <p>*Conversations: SSI, guardianship, Medical, Independent Living, Money Management, Age 18-Age of Majority, Support Needs, State ID, Benefits Counseling</p>	<p>Graduation and Employment</p> <p>School/Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Involvement in IEP- Self-advocacy •Job experiences Summer opportunities •Job Development- Provider •Refer to DVR •Visioning- What do you want to do for employment? •DART •CTE opportunities •Explanation of Adult Services <p>Graduate/Alumni:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •come in and talk- mentor •Adds to visioning <p>DDDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CN •Respite •Pathways to Employment- EN age 14 (Medicaid Eligibility) <p>DVR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pre-Ets- Continue to Participate •Apply for Services- 2 years prior to graduation <p>Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Volunteering <p>Parent Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If no DDDS services, complete DDDS application •Attend IEP meetings •Actively Participate in Agency Meetings •Be sure to ask questions about the above services •Choose a Service Provider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Attend Provider Fairs •Interview Providers <p>*Conversations: SSI, guardianship, Medical, Independent Living, Money Management, Age 18-Age of Majority, Support Needs, State ID, Benefits Counseling</p>	<p>School/Student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Involvement in IEP- Self-advocacy •Visioning •Job experiences- Summer opportunities •Grounds •Walk- DART •CTE opportunities •Explanation of Adult Services <p>DDDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CN •Respite •Pathways to Employment- EN age 14 (Medicaid Eligibility) <p>DVR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pre-Ets- summer and during the year, internships and vocational training <p>Community Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Volunteering •School Parent Meetings <p>Parent Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If no DDDS services, complete DDDS application •Attend IEP meetings •Actively Participate in Agency Meetings •Be sure to ask questions about the above services •Choose a Service Provider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Attend Provider Fairs •Interview Providers 	<p>“School Engagement”</p> <p>School/Student (self-advocacy):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •know your disability/ability •health and safety •career cruising (4 options- assessments) or other tools <p>Graduate/Alumni:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •come in and talk- mentor •Adds to visioning <p>Involved in IEP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Schools-visioning process (ED & Teachers) •Parents <p>Parent Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •If no DDDS services, complete DDDS application •Attend IEP meetings •Actively Participate in Agency Meetings •Be sure to ask questions about the above services

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.
254 East Camden-Wyoming Ave
Wyoming, DE 19934
(302) 698-9336

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.

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

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

Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Offices (DVR)

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 (DDDS)

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 (DOE)

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