

VOCATIONAL CLUSTERS

Beginning at the age of 15, and each year after, students will be asked to identify postsecondary goals in the areas education/training, employment, and where appropriate, independent living which will be documented in their IEP. Although the goals identified will be reviewed at each IEP meeting and updated annually, these are the primary focus for the development of the student's transition IEP.

As students are becoming young adults, and preparing for careers, they may not have a clear idea about the types of careers that would be of most interest to them. And, students can only choose between those career options that they are aware of. In many cases a student may identify a career outcome that does not seem to match their skills and abilities. In further discussion with the student you may find that he or she does not really understand the responsibilities of the job or the education and training required. Frequently students will identify a desired career because of its high visibility. Professional athletes, rock stars, auto mechanics, and teachers are popular choices.

As part of the career development process, it is important for students to have opportunities to research careers and try out different work environments. In many cases, there will be an appropriate job within a career category that a student has expressed an interest in. Researching and discussing different career categories, or clusters, and finding out about the skills and experience required will help students and their families to make the best choices.

Career clusters can be identified using O*Net Online (www.onetonline.org). Career Clusters contain occupations in the same field of work that require similar skills. Students, parents, and educators can use Career Clusters to help focus education plans towards obtaining the necessary knowledge, competencies, and training for success in a particular career pathway. Major clusters of career categories include:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agriculture, food and Natural Resources2. Architecture and Construction3. Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications4. Business Management and Administrations5. Education and Training6. Finance7. Government and Public Administration | <ol style="list-style-type: none">8. Health Science9. Information Technology10. Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security11. Manufacturing and Service12. Marketing and Service13. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics14. Transportation, Distribution and Logistics |
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Career Clusters Activity

The purpose of this activity is to brainstorm and list a wide variety of potential jobs in each career cluster for your son, daughter or students.

Using the career clusters worksheet, list specific jobs under each career cluster that may be appropriate for your son, daughter or students. Then, think about places in your community that a student could go for a job shadow or to get work experience in that career area.

Be creative—look for parts of jobs and related occupations that would be possible for a person with a disability to perform with the appropriate supports.

For example, your son or daughter is interested in cars and would like to be an auto mechanic, but due to learning disabilities and problems with fine motor control, this may not be possible. You may consider parts of that occupation such as changing oil, battery charging, tire repair, or mechanic's helper, or look at other related jobs such as auto detailing, car wash, or working in a parts department.

If your student likes animals and would like to be a veterinarian, consider jobs in a pet store, animal shelter or horse stable.

Students who express an interest in the performing arts may find paid or volunteer opportunities making costumes or scenery, helping with lighting and set changes, or handing out programs.

This can be a fun and energizing activity. Try this with a group of people who know your son or daughter well, or with a group of students. Sometimes we get more creative ideas when we work together.



Career Clusters Worksheet

Specific Jobs

Tryout Sites

1. Agriculture, food and Natural Resources

2. Architecture and Construction

3. Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications

4. Business Management and Administrations

5. Education and Training

6. Finance

7. Government and Public Administration

8. Health Science

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9. Information Technology

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10. Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security

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11. Manufacturing and Service

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12. Marketing and Service

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13. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

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14. Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

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