

EMPLOYMENT FIRST:



What's it all about?

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

Mission of Employment First

The mission of Employment First is to establish the expectation and promote inclusive employment opportunities for all working age individuals with disabilities. The goal in Michigan is to gain individual, integrated employment making minimum wage or more. Employment First also seeks to engage businesses to value the contributions that employees with disabilities bring to their organizations.

What is individual, integrated employment?

- ✓ **INDIVIDUAL:** Not a group, as in an enclave
- ✓ **INTEGRATED:** Alongside individuals without disabilities with opportunities to interact with other people
- ✓ **EMPLOYMENT:** A job in the general workforce and in which the person is included in the payroll of the business or, the person is a self-employed business owner
- ✓ **MINIMUM WAGE:** A job making at or above minimum wage

The case for renewed emphasis on work

Research shows that youth with disabilities who have paid work experience in school:

- ✓ Are far more likely to hold jobs after school
- ✓ Have valuable experiences, similar to any youth regardless of diagnosis, race, gender or, need for accommodations

What are the essential components of best practices?

- ✓ School-based experiences
- ✓ Career preparation
- ✓ Paid work based experience
- ✓ Youth development and leadership
- ✓ Connecting activities
- ✓ Family involvement and supports

What are the qualities of seamless transition to work?

- ✓ Begins in early middle or high school
- ✓ Continues through post-school
- ✓ Follow-up supports
- ✓ Job, or postsecondary education for every individual with disabilities



How important is paid work experience?

Most people would say that employment is a central part of their adult lives. This is no different for individuals with disabilities. Equal opportunities for individual, integrated jobs making minimum wage or more, is a dream central to the majority of Michiganders.

Employment First in Michigan seeks to improve the quality of life for adults with disabilities by providing, employment-related education, advocacy, and systems change. This happens by increasing the economic capacity, providing higher wages and better job satisfaction for individuals with disabilities. Paid work experience is the most important factor in publically funded education leading to productive post school employment for individuals with disabilities.

For information or questions contact the Developmental Disabilities Council at: (517) 335-3158, or on the web at: www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil