

Life After High School:

Resources for supported employment and continued learning

Employment Programs and Services

The community-based employment programs and services below have been grouped into categories. Programs will have different eligibility requirements and will offer different types and intensity of support with employment related goals. We recommend contacting more than one program or organization of interest to find out more.

Individual Support for Job Search

Employment Ontario- The Government of Ontario funds employment service provider organizations in every community. You can access a map and [full list of Employment Ontario employment support service providers in Ontario](#). Some or all of these agencies have eligibility criteria related to year-round availability for work and may not be accessible while you are still a student in school.

Service providers offer similar types of supports, however there may be differences in the amount/duration of support, types of employer connections and experience level supporting individuals with learning needs and/or communication challenges. Examples of Employment Ontario employment supports service providers in the GTA include:

- [Community Living Toronto](#)
- [Corbrook - Individual Service Employment Programs](#)
- [March of Dimes](#)
- [Youth Employment Services](#)
- [Tropicana Community Services](#)
- [TDSB Next Steps Employment Centres](#)
- [PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs](#)
- [Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work \(CCRW\)](#)
- [JVS Toronto](#)

Dream Weavers – [1:1 Life and Employment Skills Sessions](#) – Dream Weavers provides 1:1 employment and life skills sessions for young adults on the autism spectrum or with other developmental differences. Sessions are provided by an Occupational Therapist. They also offer various group programs throughout the year.

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

150 Kilgour Road, Toronto ON Canada M4G 1R8 **T** 416 425 6220 **T** 800 363 2440 **F** 416 425 6591 hollandbloorview.ca

A teaching hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto.

Reena – [Reena Supported Employment Service \(RSES\)](#) – For youth and young adults with developmental disabilities including autism who live in York Region. Individual and group-based support for job-search and start-up.

Structured Pre-Employment & Work Placement

Corbrook – [Striving for Success](#) – Pre-employment training program consisting of experiential learning and workplace life-skills curriculum.

JVS – [Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\) Job Readiness Project](#) – Structured program consisting of employment and life skills workshops, on-the-job coaching support and paid work placement.

JobSkills – [Right Fit for You](#) – A 20 week paid pre-employment training program for youth with disabilities and/or complex barriers to employment who live in Peel Region or York Region. Includes workshop based learning, individual job search support and work placement with on-the-job coaching.

Kerry's Place Autism Services – [Employment Works](#) – A pre-employment training program for adults with an autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities. Includes regular structured learning sessions and virtual experiential learning (e.g. workplace simulations).

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) – [Adult Learners Employment Services](#) – Offers job-specific training to adult learners looking to pursue particular career paths such as food services, hair styling and construction.

Day Programs with a Vocational, Life-Skills or Learning Focus

A wide range of day programs exist for adults with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities. While day programs will typically consist of social and recreational programming, some programs may have more of a focus on ongoing skill development (including pre-employment and life skills). Some of these programs are highlighted below, however this is not an exhaustive list.

Some day programs may offer funded spots through Developmental Services Ontario and/or fee for service options (to which Passport funding can often be applied).

Brighton Launch – [Launch Day Programs](#) – Offers several day program options for adults with disabilities with a focus on life skills and employment experience.

Community Access Learning Centre – [Day Program](#) – Programming to increase independence for adults with disabilities that includes a day program and respite. Programming focuses on increasing different skills around social, computer, life, vocational, culinary and TTC development.

Corbrook – [Learning Opportunities](#) – Corbrook offers full-day and half-day programming as well and one-to-one support for various life skills.

Kohai LIFE – [Day Program](#) – A day program with a focus on life and social skills, functional academics and work placements with community partner organizations.

March of Dimes – [Paving the Path to Work](#) – A 6-week long life-skills program for young adults with disabilities focused on developing life skills needed for employment and volunteering.

Reena – [Community Participation Programs](#) - Reena offers community participation programs that caters to the unique interests and schedule of each individual. Options include life skills and employment.

Sunflower Developmental Services – Offers [day programs](#) that include volunteering opportunities and participation in skill building activities such as employment readiness, office skills, literacy skills, and community/ life skills.

Variety Village – Variety Village [adult day programs](#) are designed for individuals 21 years of age and older with a physical and/ or developmental disability. Participants can continue to learn and develop skills through learning initiatives, fitness and wellness activities and other unique programming offered.

Continued Learning Options

This section highlights a variety of programs that are connected with educational institutions.

Alternative High School and Adult Learning Programs

Bright Start Academy – [Foundations Program](#) – Bright Start Academy is a private school in Toronto. The Foundations Program is a transition-focused program for students in a non-credit stream in high school. The program focuses on life skills and work placements.

Monsignor Fraser College (Alternative and Adult Secondary School) – [Transition to Work](#) Program – A program within the TCDSB that offers hands-on co-ops and experiential learning opportunities for special education stream students transitioning from high school. Students aged 18-20 may stay for 1, 2 or 3 years depending on transition and learning goals.

[Project SEARCH Toronto](#) – A transition-to-work program for students with a primary diagnosis of an intellectual disability. During the final year of high school, students immerse at a host business for three connected experiential learning placements combined with classroom instruction in employment life skills and personalized employment planning. There are programs in Halton and Hamilton as well.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) – [Essential Skills Upgrading](#) – A non-credit program for adults looking to improve their reading, writing, math, employability and workplace skills.

Post-Secondary Programs

Many **Ontario Colleges** offer [Inclusive Education programs](#) (also known as **Community Integration through Co-Operative Education or CICE**). These programs are geared towards students with a developmental disability, intellectual disability or other learning challenges who want to continue their learning in a college environment. Most programs include a set of core courses, electives based on student interest and a general work placement (co-op). Students typically have access to additional learning supports. You can look at individual college websites for specific program details. The focus

of many of these programs is on having a general college experience rather than on employment as an outcome. Some students participate and then link to employment supports or programs afterwards. Many **Ontario Colleges** offer [foundational, transition to college programs](#) (click “Career & Preparation”) that aim to help students explore their potential area of interest, upgrade their academic skills, and enhance their college readiness. Students may then move on to register in college diploma programs.

Christian Horizons and Humber College – [Culinary Certificate Students Graduate](#) – This partnership program provides hands on training and work experience for individuals with developmental disabilities looking to work in food services. Participants learn foundational culinary skills from professional chefs, practice other life and employment skills and participate in work placements.

George Brown College – [College Vocational Program](#) – This program provides vocational assessment, upgrading in communications, math, and computers; life skills, career planning and a work experience placement for students with mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities.

Other continuing education programs

[United for Literacy](#) Free volunteer-based educational programs for individuals with a range of abilities and learning needs. This includes Independent Studies for adults with developmental disabilities, basic literacy programs, and academic upgrading. Individual and group options.

[The Learning Hub](#) Free, flexible, non-credit online courses on a variety of topics.

Choosing a Program or Service

Having an idea of your personal goals can help you choose an employment program or continued learning option that’s a good fit for you. Your goals may relate to building specific work or life skills, gaining hands-on experience, having daily structure and routine, and/or obtaining paid employment or volunteer work in a particular field of interest. Knowing and reflecting on your goals can help you prepare to learn more and ask questions.

When initially learning more about a program or service of interest, it is helpful to seek information from a variety of sources. Reading information available online is a good place to start. You can also ask within your personal network to learn from individuals who might have first-hand experience with a particular program or service. Reaching out to a service provider directly to set up a meeting or attend an information session can provide you an opportunity to ask questions.

It can be helpful to brainstorm questions that will help you decide if a program or service is a good fit for your goals. The following are a few examples of questions you may want to ask:

- Are you providing in-person or virtual services currently?
- Can you describe your program/ service?

- Is there a waitlist for your program?
- How do you include families in your services?
- What are your outcomes or success rates for finding employment?
- Can you give me an example of someone you have supported recently?

We recommend contacting more than one program or service provider to ask questions as this can help you compare your options when making a choice.