AutismONTARIO

Find Your Fit

Youth Employment Support Guide

01 Looking for a job

Looking for a job can feel exciting, and a little overwhelming. A good place to start is getting to know yourself. Think about what you enjoy, what you do well, and what you're curious to try.

For example, what subjects feel easiest or most engaging at school? What skills come naturally to you? Choosing something that matches your strengths and interests can help you do well.[1]



Tip: Consider talking to your school guidance counsellor, or an employment support organization who can help you look for jobs that match your strengths and interests.

02 Applying for a job

When writing a resume, include all your experiences. This does not have to be paid work. You can include volunteering, school activities, hobbies, and any training or certificates. These all show your skills and what you can do.

For more information on how to apply for jobs, visit Autism Career Connections.

03 Preparing for an interview

Tip: Did you know that a job interview is an opportunity for both you and the employer to learn more about each other? An interview is not only a chance for the employer to learn about you, but also an opportunity for you to decide whether the job is a good fit for your needs, strengths, and goals.

Practice [2]

You will be asked questions about your skills and experiences and how they relate to the job. It can be helpful to research the business or organization you are interviewing with to see what the work would be about.

Common questions might be:

- "Describe a time you worked on a team."
- "Give an example of good customer service."

Prepare examples ahead of time to show your strengths

- A good tip for answering questions is to first explain what was happening and what you needed to do, then share what you did and how it turned out.

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Explain What was happening and what you needed to do	**Share** What you did	**How it turned out** The result and what you learned

Example scripts

Here are some examples or "scripts" you can use or adapt:

Question: "Describe a time you worked on a team."

"In school, I worked on a group project where we had to create a presentation. My role was to organize the slides and help with research. I made sure we divided the tasks clearly and checked in with my group members. In the end, we completed the project on time and got positive feedback from our teacher."

Question: "How do you handle challenges?"

"When I am given a task I am unsure about, I ask for clarification or written instructions. For example, when I was learning a new task while volunteering, I asked them to show me once and then wrote down the steps so I could follow them on my own next time."

Dress for success

- Shower or freshen up before your interview.
- Brush your teeth and use deodorant.
- Wear clean, wrinkle-free clothing.
- Choose well-fitting clothes that are comfortable and professional. Avoid clothing with large logos, offensive language, or distracting graphic.
- Double-check that your outfit matches the workplace dress code. You can ask for this information before your interview.

Arrive on time

If your interview is in person:

- Plan how you will get there.
- Practice the route if it helps you feel more comfortable.

If your interview is online:

- Test your technology ahead of time (camera, mic, internet).

Have what you need to be successful

- Bring what you need to feel ready. Have helpful items nearby (e.g.,headphones or a fidget tool) to stay calm and focused.
- Ask for anything you may need to make the interview easier, such as having questions in writing.

04 Being successful at work

Tip: Did you know that reasonable accommodation is a legal requirement in Canada? This means that employers and organizations must make changes to remove barriers so people can take part fully, unless it would cause major difficulty or very high cost.[7]

Once you start a job, you may need to ask for support. People with disabilities have the right to get support at work. These supports can help you do your job well. This is protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a law that helps make places more accessible. [3]

Starting a new job can bring a lot of new information and expectations. It's normal to need time to adjust. Paying attention to your energy levels and recognizing when you may need support can help you stay well and feel more confident in your role. Open communication with your employer about your support needs gives them the opportunity to help you feel successful at work.

Set boundaries and communicate your needs

Setting and maintaining boundaries is an important part of workplace success. This includes knowing what you need to do your best work, recognizing when you need support or a break, and speaking up if something does not feel right. It is not always easy to advocate for yourself, especially in a new workplace, so practicing how to communicate your needs can help.

Clear and respectful communication helps build understanding, create mutual respect, and support a healthier work environment. Practice saying what you need out loud, writing it down, or role-playing with a trusted person. Preparing simple phrases ahead of time can help you feel more confident and make it easier to communicate clearly and respectfully when support is needed.

Key terms for requesting support

Accessibility means making products, places, and services so they can be used by as many people as possible. [5]

Accommodation refers to adjustments that help a person perform their job successfully. Accommodations can include changes to the physical workspace, flexible work plans, and assistive technology.

Note: In some cases, accessing accommodations may involve sharing information about your needs. However, if you are able to work in a way that feels supportive without accommodations, you may choose not to disclose. [6]

Modifications involve adjusting job duties or expectations so they better align with an employee's strengths and needs.This can include flexible hours, frequent breaks, task restructuring, and extra training.

Use strategies that work for you

There are many different ways to support yourself at work, and what works best will look different for everyone. It can be helpful to try out different strategies and notice what helps you feel more comfortable, confident, and successful in your role.

Some strategies might include:

- Breaking tasks into smaller, easier-to-manage steps.
- Using written notes, lists, or visual reminders.
- Asking questions when something is unclear.
- Watching or being shown how to do a task before trying it.
- Checking in with a supervisor or coworker when needed.
- Using tools, routines, or supports that help you stay on track.
- Taking a moment to reset if something feels overwhelming.

Tip: It is okay to adjust your approach over time. The goal is to find strategies that help you do your best work in a way that feels manageable and supportive for you.

Free online course

Autism Career Connections

If you're looking for more information on this topic: Autism Ontario is pleased to offer the Autism Career Connections online course for autistic youth and adults across Ontario. This free, self-paced course helps participants understand what to expect when looking for or starting a job. Learners can explore practical topics like preparing for work, planning for and practicing virtual interviews, and building confidence in employment settings. Developed and delivered by autistic people, this course offers real-world insight and support to help participants move forward in their employment journey.

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3. The Conference Board of Canada. (2015). Employers' toolkit: Making Ontario workplaces accessible to people with disabilities (2nd ed.). The Conference Board of Canada.
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6. Community Literacy of Ontario. (2024). Disclosing a disability in a workplace. https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/skills-for-success/disclosing-a-disability-in-a-workplace