



Paul V. Sherlock Center

On Disabilities / Rhode Island College

FEAT-Y

Kerri Collins and Ian Armitstead

March 24, 2026

Family Employment Awareness Training for Youth (FEAT-Y)

A webinar series for families of students and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A partnership between the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College and the Indiana Institute on Disability and the Community Center on Community Living and Careers



Housekeeping



- We want to keep things informal but ask that you keep yourself on mute unless you want to ask a question or make a comment.
- You can also comment or ask questions using the “chat.”
- This session will not be recorded since it is interactive, and we strongly encourage participants to actively engage, ask questions, or share personal examples when appropriate.

Online Materials and Resources



- Glossary
- Activities
- Plan for Employment
- Links to related resources
- Website for resources – www.featri.net
- PowerPoint handouts

Agenda



- Who we are
- Introduction to FEAT
- Employment First in RI
- Employment possibilities
- Family / Parent & School Role in transition to work
- Next steps



Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities



- Rhode Island's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).
- Provide training and technical assistance, research, and information.
- Individuals with disabilities, their families, and those who support them.
- Across the age span.
- www.sherlockcenter.org

Activity – Question for you ...



What is the biggest barrier to successful employment for people with disabilities?

(Type in Chat or unmute to share your thoughts.)

Barriers and Concerns



- Losing benefits (SSI, SSDI, SNAP, Housing Assistance)
- Losing health insurance (Medicaid, Medicare)
- Being treated equally and fairly by co-workers
- Safety at the workplace
- Having the necessary skills to do the job

Contributing, not just Participating!



Why Employment

- Increases Income
- Promotes self-determination
- Gives a chance to use strengths and build skills
- Increases confidence and sense of belonging and community
- Fosters social relationships
- Supports meaning and purpose in life



FEAT MISSION



To raise the expectations of families and people with disabilities about the possibility of finding meaningful and satisfying work in their home communities.

Key principles

1. Everyone with a disability can work when given the right supports and services.
2. Everyone with a disability can have a job or be a business owner that is both enjoyable and satisfying.
3. Everyone with a disability will always make more money working than by relying on public benefits alone.

Path to Employment Success



Research says that students with disabilities are more likely to become employed as adults when:

- Family expects that the student can and will find work they enjoy.
- Student receives instruction in self-determination – being in control of what happens, making choices, setting goals.
- Student engages in several long-term work trials that match their interests in real work settings(preferably paid) before exiting school.

Any questions for us?



Employment First in RI



“... Employment opportunities in fully integrated work settings shall be the first and priority option explored in the service planning for working-age adults with developmental disabilities in Rhode Island.” (2013)

<https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/about/employmentcommunity/>

U.S. Department of Justice Consent Decree, April 9, 2014

- Person-Centered Planning – students age 14 and up
- Career Development Plan – students age 14 and up
- At least two community-based work trials before exiting high school
- www.olmstead-ddnews.org – updates on Consent Decree News

Employment Possibilities



Integrated competitive employment, supported employment, and customized employment

- Created jobs
- Carved jobs
- Resource ownership
- Self-employment
- Business within a business
- Employer-initiated models



Integrated Competitive Employment



- Real work in real businesses
- Minimum wage or higher
- Individualized supports



Check out this APSE – [“Why is Integrated Employment Important”](#) video

Supported and Customized Employment



Supported Employment

- Real work
- Integrated businesses
- Job match
- Assistance from a job coach
- Ongoing support services

Customized Employment

- Real work
- Integrated businesses
- Negotiation between the needs of the employer and the individual
- One person at a time ... one employer at a time

Meet Mike – Works at Gregg's Restaurant



Mike's video

- Gregg's in North Kingstown, RI
- Prep cook
- Agency providing support:
- Spurwink RI



Customized Employment Styles



Carved

Taking elements of a position and developing a new position based on those tasks



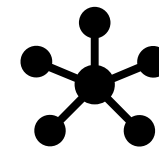
Restructured

Taking parts of more than one position and changing the way they are completed



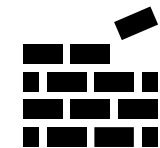
Shared

Completing job functions by sharing parts, time, or tasks



Created

Developing new tasks or enterprises based on unmet needs



Created Job



What is it?

- Establishes a new job or job duties that did not previously exist as a position within a business

Possibilities ...

- Driven by skills and support needs of the individual and the needs of the business
- Negotiated by a skilled developer, job coach, or employment specialist

Carved Job



What is it?

- Redistributes job duties from one position to another, tailoring them to the job seeker's unique skills and abilities
- Creates a job description consisting of one or more tasks from the traditional job in the employment setting

Possibilities ...

- A way to make somebody's strengths and assets become a strength and asset for an employer
- Real tasks, at a real job, that are a cost-effective strategy for an employer

Self-Employment



What is it?

[Sue Babin recording](#)

Additional Resources

- [Women's Business Centers](#)
- [Center for Women & Enterprise](#)

Who can help with funding & plan development?

- [RI Developmental Disabilities Council](#)
- [Small Business Development Center \(RISBDC\)](#)
- [SCORE](#) – Counselors to America's Small Businesses
- Crowdfunding (e.g., GoFundMe or Indiegogo)

Resource Ownership



What is it?

- Purchased equipment, machinery, or other items that an individual owns and brings to the workplace as part of their employment with a business, offering an additional resource to the employer.

Possibilities

- Resource ownership increases the value of the employee (similar to having a college degree).
- Resource ownership benefits the business by increasing profits or service capacity in some way.

Business within a Business



What is it?

- Develop a self-employment venture within an existing business setting.



Possibilities

- Offer something the business does not have but would enhance their market.
- Established customer base.
- Access to coworkers and natural supports.
- A win-win situation.



Project SEARCH
video clip



Questions?



Family / Parent Role



Building a support network



Contributing to the employment process



Creating partnerships



Monitoring service quality

Building a Support Network



- Inviting people to become a support
- Person-centered planning
 - PATH – Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope
 - MAPS – Making Action Plans
 - Person-Centered Discovery Process
 - LifeCourse Framework Tools

Inviting Support



- Find at www.featri.net
- Who are the
 - People in your life?
 - People who have helped?
 - People who have information?
 - People with whom you would like to connect?

Inviting Support

Family Employment Awareness Training

Think of the people already in your life. Who is there when you need support?

- Immediate family
- Extended family: cousins, uncles, grandparents
- Friends
- People at work
- Teachers



Who has helped or supported your family in the past?
Support can be a ride to school, money, or even a simple smile.



Who has information you need? Who can help you make new connections?



Meet Jacob – Works at Seven Stars Bakery



Dream Job – Jacob’s Story



Thank you to CPNRI -



**COMMUNITY
PROVIDER NETWORK**
OF RHODE ISLAND

Transition to Employment is a partnership



Roles of

- Family
- School – IEP Team and Transition Supports
- Connecting to adult supports
 - Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)
 - Department of Behavioral Healthcare Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) – Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

Contributing to the Employment Process



- Look for the individual's contributions and passions
- Assist with brainstorming business/job ideas
- Encourage creativity
- Plan for employment through IEP transition goals
- Network – Share job contacts
- Inform the job coach/employment team of any problems or issues
- Participate in problem-solving

Partnership Strategies



- Build trust - communication, respect
- Shared responsibility
- Common goals
- Strengths-based
- Celebrate successes
- Offer solutions and be willing to be part of a solution

Meet Jessica – Baltimore Maryland



Jessica's Video

- Partnership:
 - Personal strengths
 - Family
 - Employment supports
 - Employer



Questions?



Activity



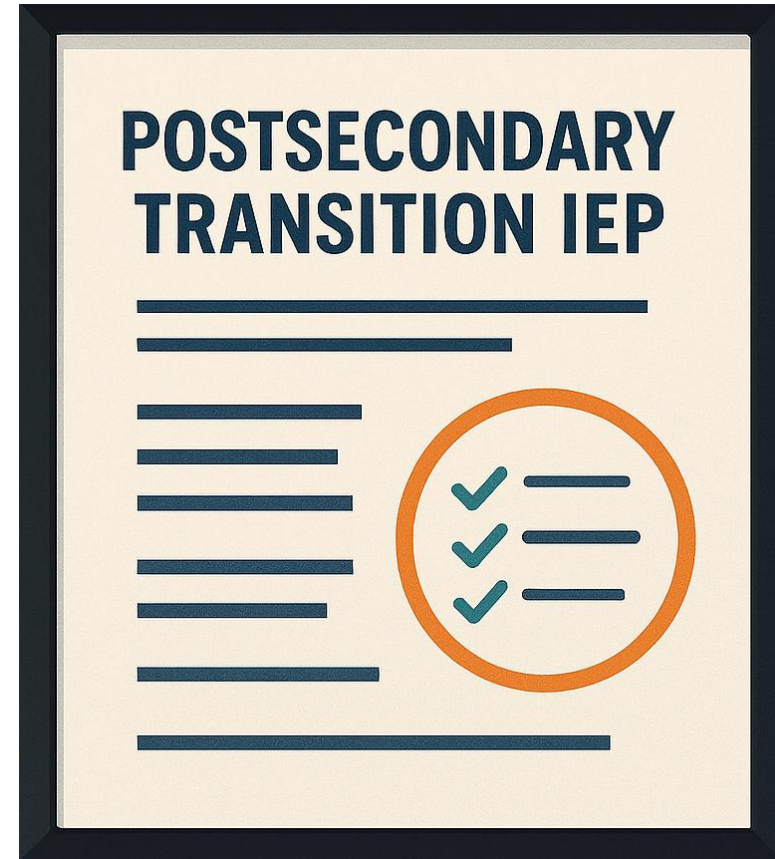
- What are your child's postsecondary goals in their IEP?
- What career assessments has your child participated in?

School – Transition to Work (ages 14-22)



- IEP Transition Provisions
- Planning Process

[Watch Video](#)



Discovering Passions Activity




Family
Employment
Awareness
Training



- What are my family members' passions?
- Environment
- Activities
- Possible employment ideas?

Discovering Passion


What kind of environment does _____ enjoy being in?

- Sound – noisy or quiet?
- People – many or few?
- Location – indoors or outdoors

 _____

 _____
 _____

What kind of activities does _____ prefer?
What activities does he/she enjoy doing for extended time periods?

 _____

Considering environment and activity preferences, what are some possible employment ideas for _____?

Questions?



Sherlock Center on Disabilities

www.sherlockcenter.org

- Available for follow-up and to answer individual questions
 - Ian Armitstead
 - Email: iarmitstead@ric.edu
 - Call: 401-456-2760

Thank You!



Evaluation for Today

- Click on this [link](#), find it in the chat, or use the QR code.
- Please complete!

See you next Tuesday, 3/31!

