



# Ready for Work

**High School  
Pre-Employment  
Program**



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# What to wear at work



# Appropriate workplace attire:

What kind of clothes should you wear to work? This will depend on what you need to do in your job. If you work in an office, you might wear different clothes to what you might wear if you work in a shop, which might be different to what you would wear if you work as a gardener.

The right clothing for your job is important because it means that you will be most **comfortable** and allows you to do your best work. The right choice of clothes can keep you safe at work. For example, if your job is building houses, and you wore open toe shoes, you could hurt your foot if you dropped a hammer on your toe. You also wouldn't be able to climb up ladders easily or safely walk around the site. A different example might be if you work in a preschool, you should wear clothes that allow you to run after children – so comfortable shoes like trainers. You might also want to wear jeans and a shirt that lets you help the children do messy activities and you can wash easily at the end of the day.

Some jobs need you to wear a uniform – like the Police, Fire Services and hospitals. The uniform makes it easy because you don't need to think about the best clothes to choose.

# Activity:

Match up the clothing that would be suitable for the job.

The right clothing won't always be on the same line so you will need to draw lines up or down to find a good match.

## Job:

**Retail (shop assistant)**

**Café (hospitality)**

**Office Worker**

**Gardener**

**Mechanic**

**Builder**

**Policeman**

**Teacher**

## Clothing:

Polo shirt with the shop name

Apron. Enclosed shoes.  
Hair tied up.

Shirt and tie. Pants and jacket.  
Skirt, nice shirt and jacket.

Enclosed shoes.  
Hard-wearing trousers. Hat.

Overalls. Enclosed shoes.

Enclosed shoes.  
High-visibility vest. Hard hat.

Special uniform

Comfortable shoes.  
Washable trousers and top.

When you start a new job, it is good to look around at other people in your workplace to see what they are wearing and try to wear similar things. You can ask your supervisor if you need to wear anything special – like a high-visibility vest.

# Things not to wear at work:

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- DO** Try to wear things that make you feel comfortable
- DON'T** Wear things that make other people feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. Such as really tight pants or really low tops.
- DO** Wear clothes that keep you safe.
- DON'T** Wear dress-ups, unless it is a special work dress-up day.
- DO** Think about clothes that will help you do your job.
- DON'T** Wear clothes with rude or silly slogans that might upset people.
- DO** Look at what your co-workers are wearing and see if you can find similar clothes for you to wear.
- DON'T** Wear dirty or torn clothes.
- DO** Wear clothes that are nice and smart.

# Activity:

Can you think of other **DO**'s?

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Can you think of other **DON'T**'s?

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# Personal hygiene:

An important part of workplace attire is **personal hygiene**. Personal hygiene is how well you look after yourself. Sometimes you might need help with this and that is okay.

Before you go to work it is important to make sure that you look and smell good. To do this make sure you have:

- **Brushed your teeth**
- **Had a shower or bath**
- **Your hair is washed and brushed**
- **Your clothes are clean**
- **Your shoes are clean**
- **You don't have any dirt under your finger nails**
- **You are wearing deodorant**

Sometimes you will need to check these things while you are at work. Some things that you can check at work are:

- **Do you have food in your teeth after lunch?**
- **Do you need to change your shirt if you just finished a job that got you dirty?**
- **Do you need to reapply deodorant on a hot day?**



When you look and feel your best, you will feel more confident. The people you work with and see at work will see that you are happy, comfortable and confident and they will enjoy spending time with you.

## Question:

What are some of the things you can do for your personal hygiene before you go to work?

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## Activity:

Pick a work appropriate outfit from the clothes available and then pick a non-work appropriate outfit.

# Communication



# What is communication?

Communication is how we express our feelings, wants and needs. Everyone communicates with each other.

In this module we will learn three things:

1. **What is communication**
2. **How do you communicate**
3. **Why is communication important**

Communication is how we give and receive information. When we communicate with the people around us we share our ideas, feelings, wants and needs. People communicate with each other and with other animals like cats and dogs.

## Question:

Who do you communicate with?

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# Why do I need to communicate well?

As you get older and get ready for your first job you will meet lots of different people. Being able to understand and communicate well will help you be understood at work and will also help you understand the different people you meet.

Good communication will help you:

- **Not upset other people.**
- **Help you from getting upset.**
- **Help you understand what you need to do.**
- **Help you ask for help.**

## Question:

How can good communication help you in the workplace?

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# What are different types of communication?

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There are many different types of communication. Everyone uses different types of communication for different things.

Types of communication are:

- **Verbal** (speaking, sounds, words you choose to use, and tone of voice)
- **Aural** (listening and hearing)
- **Non-verbal** (facial expressions, body language, and posture)
- **Written** (journals, emails, text messages)
- **Visuals** (signs, symbols, and pictures)

## Question:

What type of communication do you use the most?

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## Question:

When you apply for a job and you send in a resume, what type of communication is that?

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# Verbal communication:

Verbal communication is the use of sounds and words to give a message. The message can be how you feel, what you think, what you want or what you need. Verbal communication is the most used communication style when communicating with lots of different people.

## Challenges than can affect verbal communication:

Verbal communication is the use of sounds and words to give a message. The message can be how you feel, what you think, what you want or what you need. Verbal communication is the most used communication style when communicating with lots of different people.

### **1. Tone of voice**

Your tone of voice should support what you are saying. If something makes you happy, use a positive tone of voice rather than a negative tone of voice.

### **2. Different perspectives or ideas**

When people come together, it is normal for them to have different views on things or ideas. This can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and arguments. If you are speaking to someone, always make sure you are actively listening and ask questions if you are confused.

Remember, if someone has a different perspective or idea to you, it does not mean they are wrong. Respect each other's differences.

### **3. Different languages**

If someone did not grow up speaking English like you at home, this can sometimes make verbal communication tricky. There are many words that are similar or sound similar in other languages. When you are communicating with someone who did not speak English growing up, always ask questions if you are confused.

### **How can you improve your verbal communication?**

There are four steps you can take to improve your verbal communication.

#### **1. Think about what you are wanting to say first.**

When you are having a meeting with someone, or you have something important to say, remember to think about the main points you would like to say. This will help you stay focused and will help listeners from getting confused.

#### **2. Pay attention to what you say and how you say it.**

Remember to use words that can be understood by everyone and use a tone of voice that matches your conversation.

#### **3. Speak as clearly as you can.**

Speak loudly and as clearly as you can. Try to avoid saying words like “um, uh, er, like”.

#### **4. Be aware of nonverbal communication**

As you are speaking, and listening to what other people are saying be aware of your body language and the body language of others.



# Non-Verbal Communication:

Non-verbal communication is when people's bodies express how they are feeling. Non-verbal communication can be done on purpose, or it can be done without the person knowing they are doing it.

There are many different types of non-verbal communication:

## **1. Facial Expressions**

Facial expressions show what emotion we are feeling on our face. Facial expressions are a main form of non-verbal communication and there are many languages throughout the world that have the same facial expressions.

## **2. Body Language**

A person's body language and posture can show a lot about how that person might be feeling.

## **3. Personal Space**

Your personal space is the distance around you that you consider yours. It is important to remember that everyone has different personal space and being in someone's personal space might make them uncomfortable.

## **4. Eye Contact**

Eye contact can help show people that you are listening to what they are saying. If you are looking at the person speaking, it shows that you are listening.

## **5. Touch**

How you touch a person is a form of nonverbal communication. If you are with friends and family, you may want to hug them. It is important to remember that while you are in the workplace, it is not appropriate to hug your work mates or boss.

## **6. Appearance**

Your appearance is the first thing people will notice and is important in nonverbal communication. When you are at work always dress appropriately and make sure you look “clean and tidy”.

# **Activity:**

Positive non-verbal communication vs. negative non-verbal communication.

# Time Management



# Effective personal time management:

An important part of being independent is good time management. This is when you manage your own time to be as productive as you can.

People who practice good time management:

- Are more productive.
- Are seen as trustworthy.
- Have more energy for important tasks.
- Feel less stressed.
- Have more free time.

There are many ways that you can manage your time. We will go through what are some good time management behaviours and what are some bad time management behaviours.

## **Keeping Workplace Tidy**

This is a good thing to do. You should always aim to keep your workplace tidy. When your workplace is tidy, you will be able to find things quickly when you need to use them.

## **Listening to Instructions**

This is a good thing to do. When your supervisor gives you instructions – or gives you a task, you must listen carefully so that you know what you need to do. If you don't understand the instructions, you should tell your supervisor that you don't understand. It is really good to let your supervisor know which part you do not understand. It is fine to let them know that you understand some of the task but that you are confused about what to do next. Ask your supervisor to:

- Break the task into steps.
- Write the steps down clearly for you.
- Start some of the task with you and when you are comfortable let you continue on your own.

## **Wasting Time**

Wasting time is not good workplace behaviour. Sometimes it is hard to know what your supervisor thinks is wasting time and what you think is wasting time. When you are at work, you are expected to do work. You can do some relaxing things and talk to people in your breaks (lunchtime, morning tea or afternoon tea).

Here are some things that your supervisor might think are wasting time:

- Playing on your phone at work
- Looking at social media at work
- Look at books or magazines that are not for your job
- Talking to other workmates a lot (a little bit of talking is nice and friendly)
- Spending a really long time in the bathroom.
- Looking out of the window.
- Making lots of cups of tea.

Your workplace is for doing work – remember that you can do fun things when you leave work and go home.

## **Playing on your phone at Work**

Do not play on your phone while you are supposed to be working. If you need to make a personal phone call (not a work phone call), you can do that – but try to keep it short and get back to work as soon as possible. You can play on your phone when you are on your break. It might be best to do this in the tearoom away from your desk so that when you are at your desk, you know that you need to work.

## Creating a list of Daily Activities that need to be completed

This is a good thing to do. Sometimes this will be done for you and sometimes you might need to do this for yourself. If you are not sure what needs to be done first, ask your supervisor. Your supervisor should help you work out what you need to do. You can write a list with a checkbox next to each task and put a tick in the box when you have completed the task. It feels good to put a tick in the box next to each task to show that the job is finished.

### Question

Write a list of all the things that you do to get ready in the morning.

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## **Asking for help when needed**

This is a good thing to do. This shows your supervisor that you are thinking about each task carefully. It is good to ask for help as soon as you realise that you need it. Don't wait until the end of the day.

Sometimes your supervisor won't have time at that moment to help you. This is fine – but it is good to ask your supervisor when they can spend a few minutes helping you with your task. If you can't go on with the next task on your list, ask if there is something else that you can do while you wait for some help. This shows good work ethic to your supervisor.

## **Taking set Lunch, Morning or Afternoon Tea Breaks**

This is a good thing to do. Taking breaks is an important part of being healthy at work. You need to eat and drink to have the best energy for your day. A way to make sure you are eating and drinking is to set a time for your breaks. Sometimes your supervisor will tell you what time you need to take your break, and sometimes you will need to manage this yourself. Talk to your supervisor about when you take your break.



## **Setting Alarms To Remind You Of Things You Need To Do**

This is a good thing to do. This can be good with some jobs and you might not need to do this for different jobs. If there are tasks that you keep forgetting to do, setting an alarm can be really helpful to remind you to do that task. Some people set an alarm to give themselves a certain amount of time to do a task, but not everybody finds that helpful. If you are not sure if this will be a good strategy in your workplace, you can ask your supervisor.

## **Focus on Tasks**

This is a good thing to do. Focusing on a task means concentrating hard and doing your best. Some people find it is easier to focus on tricky tasks earlier in the day. If this is you, you could put the harder tasks that need you to focus better at the top of your to do list.

There are things that will help you focus on your task. Some of these things are:

- Having a quiet place to work.
- No distractions – like people talking around you.
- Putting your phone away.
- Starting something new after a break.
- Having a neat, tidy desk.

## Question:

What are some things that distract you from concentrating?

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## Activity:

**Laminate cards with pictures.**

**Cut up Picture cards. Use two sets to make a matching game.**

## Activity:

**Each member of the class pick a Time Management card and act out the behaviour on the card.**

**Tell the group if you think that this is a good or bad way to act at work.**

# **Social Media and the Workplace**



# Personal social media:

Social media are websites or apps where you can connect to other people online. Most people have personal social media pages. For most people, they only have friends and family that are their “friends” on Facebook or follow them on twitter. However, even if you are very careful with what you put online, your personal social media can affect your employment.

In some cases people have lost interviews, job offers, and have even lost work because of what their boss has found online about them. To protect yourself, you should assume that everyone can see what you post, even if you aren't connected to them on social media. Always make sure that what you put on social media is not:

- Illegal
- Inappropriate
- Offensive or rude
- Disrespectful of others

## Question:

What social media do you use?

# What you should do:

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Other than carefully selecting what you put on social media, it is important to check what other people are putting on social media about you. This includes tagging you in posts, photos, or videos. You might not be able to control what other people share about you on social media, but it is good to ask your friends and family to make sure that they know that you would like only respectful things put online.

If you are unsure about whether something is appropriate to post on social media, you should check with a trusted person or do not post it at all. It is also important to not post a photo of yourself having fun with friends when you have called in sick from work.

Always try to show your maturity and professionalism by making good choices on social media.

## **Social Media Profile Pictures**

Your profile picture is the first thing people will see. Your photograph should always be an appropriate photo of yourself. Your profile picture can be you having fun, or a nice photograph taken by a photographer. Your profile picture should never be of you doing something inappropriate or illegal.

## Social Media Messages

Most people in the workplace will have the same social media as you. In most instances this will be Facebook. You can always ask people if they would like to be your friend on Facebook. By being “friends” this means that you can see what each other is doing over the weekends. While this is great for friendship, it is important to know when it is and is not appropriate to contact people via messaging apps.

When you are at work, it is important to not use social media, this includes messaging. Most employers will not want you to spend all of your time on social media and not working. It is ok to look at a little bit of social media when you are on your break, but when you go back to work, put your phone away.

When you are at home, it is important to remember that your work mates are also trying to relax. Not everyone will be comfortable or happy that you are sending them messages about work when they aren't working. Keep any conversations about work, for work time and not home time.

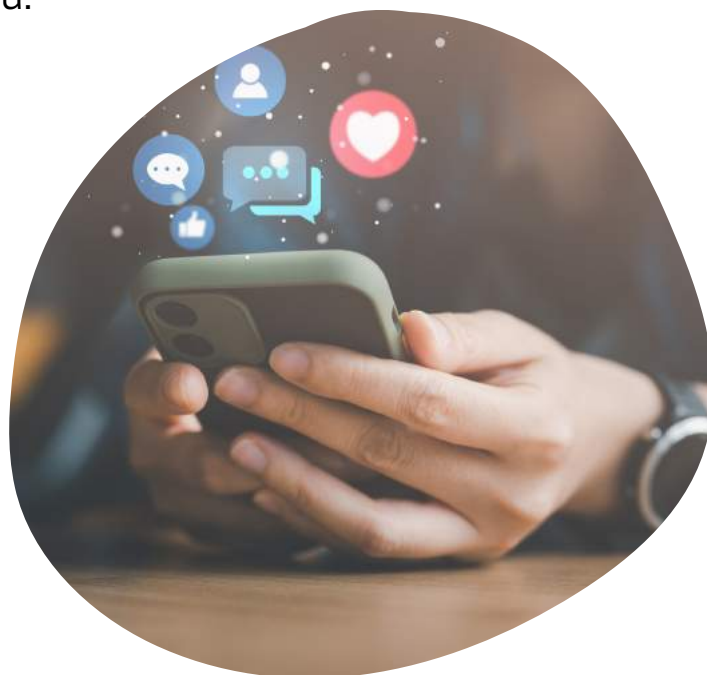
It is also important to remember that not everyone will use social media as often or as little as you do. If you send a message to a workmate and they don't respond right away, do not follow up with many messages in the same night. Wait until you see them next and then talk to them about what you had sent.

## Social Media at work

It is important to know what your workplace rules are about using the internet and social media at work. There are different rules for different workplaces, the rules at your workplace could be:

- You are not allowed to use your work computer for anything other than work.
- You are not allowed to use social media at all unless you are on your break.
- You are not allowed to use your phone while you are at work unless it is an emergency or you are on your break.

The internet can be a big distraction and use up time when you should be working. Ask what the rules are where you work, so you know what is and isn't allowed. If you aren't sure what the rules mean, ask someone to help explain them to you.



# Social media checklist:

## DO:

- ✓ Ask if your workplace has rules about social media.
- ✓ Follow any social media rules your employer has.
- ✓ Be mindful of everything you post. What you say online is showing everybody what you are thinking.
- ✓ Keep your personal social media out of the workplace.

## DON'T:

- ✗ Threaten, lie, gossip or bully people online. This includes saying hurtful things about workmates.
- ✗ Do not say bad things about your workplace on social media. Your boss might see it and feel angry.
- ✗ Do not forget that potential employers can see what you post.
- ✗ Do not send too many messages to teammates outside of work hours.



# Understanding Workplace Hierarchy



# Who do you work with?

You will need to understand many things about your workplace when you start working in a new job. Different workplaces will have different levels of people in charge and it can be complicated to work out where you fit in when you first start. You will have lots of questions:

- **Who is the boss?**
- **Who is your supervisor?**
- **Who are your workmates?**
- **Where do you fit in?**

## The Boss

The boss is usually the person in charge of everybody. Different workplaces might call the person in charge different things. The “boss” in an office job could be the Chief Executive Officer – the CEO. In a restaurant or café the head chef might be the person in charge most of the time, but the owner of the restaurant owns the place and is in charge of the head chef. In a school, the Principal is in charge of all the teachers and students.



# Activity:

Try to match up the boss with the work.

Sometimes the boss in different workplaces can be called the same thing - this can be tricky!

## Workplace:

Restaurant

Office

Police Station

School

Shop

Construction Site

Business

Government Department

Aeroplane/Airplane

## Boss:

Head Chef

Business Manager

Police Chief

Principal

Shop Manager

Building Manager

Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer

Captain or Pilot

## Your Supervisor

In your workplace, you should have a supervisor. This person might be the boss of the whole workplace, or they might be someone responsible for helping you do your work and telling you what to do next. If you have any questions or problems, you should talk to your supervisor first to see if they can help. Your supervisor will probably have a supervisor too – someone who makes sure they do their work on time and gives them tasks to finish. If you don't know who your supervisor is – you **must ask** and find out.

## Your Workmates

Your supervisor should take you around and introduce you to the other people who work with you. It is important to know who you can ask for help – even if you are asking the way to the toilet! It is important to know what everyone does at your workplace so you know where you fit in and how you can help your workmates. You will feel more like part of the team when you meet everyone you will be working with.



# Work Ethic



# Introduction

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Everyone talks about the importance of having a strong work ethic. A work ethic is how important you think your work is. The more important you think your work is, the more effort you will put into the quality of work.

A strong work ethic means that no matter how small the task, you take pride in your work and try hard to finish the task to the best of your ability.

Sometimes, people do not think that the task they are doing is important. They do not take pride in their work, and do not complete it to the best of their ability. This is called a poor work ethic. When someone has a poor work ethic, they might rush to finish a task, or they might procrastinate starting the task.

## **Why is having a strong work ethic important?**

To be successful at work, it is important to have a strong work ethic. Having a strong work ethic is another positive workplace behaviour. In most cases, people with a strong work ethic also say that they enjoy their job more than people with a poor work ethic. This can be because when you work hard you feel like you are accomplishing something.

There are a few things you can do to help improve your work ethic. These things are:

- **Set small goals throughout the day.** Sometimes big tasks can be scary. Try breaking down the task down into smaller tasks so they don't seem too scary.
- **Take the initiative.** Once you have completed your assigned tasks, ask if there is anything else you can do to help your team mates.
- **Be willing to learn.** Working hard and showing a strong work ethic also means being willing to learn new skills. New skills are important to learn to continue growing.
- **Be aware of how long your breaks are.** If you have a coffee break or morning tea break, make sure that it only lasts 15 minutes. You can set a timer on your phone to remind you to get back to work.

## Setting Goals

It is helpful to have a plan for what you will do for the day. Depending on what your job is, your days can be exactly the same or they can be completely different. Setting goals will help you stay on task and make sure that all your jobs are done when they need to be.

One way to help you stay on task and set goals would be for you to write a schedule or a to-do list.

## Activity:

**Think about what you need to do to get ready in the morning.**

**Write your own to-do list to help you in the morning.**

Sometimes you will need to talk to your boss about your to-do list. When you talk to them it is important to make sure you understand what they need you to do so you have **clear goals**. You can make sure you set clear goals by:

- Asking your boss to look at your to-do list.
- Asking lots of questions if you are confused.
- Say your goals aloud.



## **Focusing on your task**

It is good to concentrate on what you are doing and not talk too much to other people around you. A bit of talking is nice and friendly, but too much talking can be distracting to you and your team mates. If someone is talking to much it is important that you politely tell them that you are busy and need to get back to work.

## **Activity:**

**Watch the video on Down Syndrome Australia's website:**

**<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/right-to-work/looking-for-work/>**

## **Activity:**

**Find a partner and take turns role playing being in the workplace with a chatty team mate.**

# Workplace Behaviours



# Introduction

It is always important to display positive workplace behaviours while you are at work. You should display positive workplace behaviours:

- While you are working
- On your break
- At work parties

**Positive** workplace behaviours (behaving professionally) include:

- Being honest
- Being safe
- Being respectful to others
- Being responsible
- Being a team player
- Working hard and doing your best at all times.



## Being Honest

It is important to always be honest. When you are honest, it shows your boss and your teammates that you are trustworthy. When someone is trustworthy, people are happier to help you when you make mistakes or need help.

A way to show you are honest, is to not cover up or blame someone else for the mistakes you make. It can be hard sometimes to tell people when you have made a mistake. It is important to admit your mistake, apologise for it and ask for help from your manager or teammate to correct it.

Sometimes you might have access to “sensitive information”. Sensitive information are things like:

- Peoples names
- Where people live
- How to contact people, such as an email address and phone number
- A person’s age
- A person’s medical history
- Secret recipes
- New product designs
- Anything else that your employer says is “**secret**” or “**sensitive**”

Sharing any of this information with your family, friends, or anyone else who does not work with your employer could have serious consequences.

Being honest also means that you don't take things that are not yours.

Do not take someone else's food out of the staff room fridge or take things from a co-workers desk without asking if it would be ok first.

## **Be respectful of others**

Being respectful to others is an important positive workplace behaviour.

You can not control how other people act, but you can control how you react to them. You should always speak calmly and respectfully to everyone you interact with at work, including teammates and customers. Try not to talk loudly or shout or wave arms around. If you are having a disagreement with someone, you should never confront, accuse or embarrass someone in front of others. If you are having a disagreement with someone, it is more professional to address the situation privately. If you are uncomfortable speaking to someone one-on-one, you can ask a teammate or supervisor for support.

Other examples of respecting your teammates are:

- Being on time to work (punctual)
- Do not be late coming back from a break
- If you know that you will be away, tell your boss beforehand.
- Always focus on the person speaking to do – do not multitask
- Being polite
- Never yell
- Never curse
- Never gossip, snoop on, or spread rumours about your teammates

# Teamwork

Your actions and attitudes at work impact your team. Promising to have a task done by a certain time and not accomplishing it, has a negative impact. Never overpromise what you cannot do or give excuses if you miss a deadline. If you do this, your teammates who will be relying on you to do your work will be held up and their work will be late. This is called poor time management and can show that you are not trustworthy. If you are working as a team to complete a project or task, do not be afraid to ask questions. It is better to ask questions earlier than at the very end when you can not do a task people were relying on you to do.

Always be honest with your teammates about what you believe your abilities are. If you are unsure about your ability to complete a task, speak to a teammate or your supervisor.

Being a good team player also means being polite, helpful, and having a positive attitude with teammates.

Being a good team player is also trying your best to complete your work and work hard. It is also good to keep your working area tidy and not leave a mess. Nobody likes cleaning up someone else's mess.

## Being Dependable

Being a dependable member of the team brings together all of the things that we have talked about today. Being dependable takes a bit of time to get to know what you need to do in the job. When you get to be good at doing your tasks and do them well all of the time – then you are dependable. Being a dependable member of your team feels good and your team is happy that the work is going smoothly and your boss is happy that the staff are doing good work together. You should aim to become dependable.



# Other Helpful Resources

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**JobAccess** - <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/downloads>

## **Down Syndrome Australia:**

**Right to Work website** - <https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/right-to-work/>

## **Employment Toolkit -**

<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/resources/toolkits/employment-toolkit/>

## **NDIS Links**

**Employment (NDIS resource)** - <https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/how-ndis-supports-work-menu/mainstream-and-community-supports/who-responsible-supports-you-need/employment>

## **Finding, keeping and changing jobs -**

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/finding-keeping-and-changing-jobs>

## **Inclusion Australia, Everyone Can Work -**

<https://www.everyonecanwork.org.au/>