

A man with Down Syndrome and glasses, wearing a light blue polo shirt with a 'CITY' logo, is working in a cafe. He is using a manual coffee press to pour coffee into a silver pitcher. The background shows a kitchen area with shelves holding various items like a fan, speakers, and boxes of baking paper and BioCling.

Right to
work

A guide for employees

This document has been produced by Down Syndrome Australia.

Down Syndrome Australia is the peak body for people with Down syndrome in Australia. Our purpose is to influence social and policy change, and provide a national profile and voice for people living with Down syndrome. We work collaboratively with the state and territory Down syndrome associations to achieve our mission. Our vision is an Australia where people living with Down syndrome are valued, reach their potential, and enjoy social and economic inclusion.

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In the workplace for employees

This guide is designed to set you on the right path towards employment. It will help you think about what job might be right for you. It will also help you think about what you might need to work on to be able to do that job.

Are you thinking about getting a job when you leave school? This information will help you think about the work you want to do, get job-ready and help with finding a job.

Before you start looking for a job, you need to think about a few different things such as:

- why you want to work
- the kind of work you would like to do
- how to get ready to work and who can help you
- how to find a job.

Let's think about each of these. You might like to talk with your family and friends, to help you think about the work you would like to do. You could make some notes as you talk. This will be useful later to help to remember everything. You could write on this paper or use a separate piece of paper.

Why do you want to work?

People go to work for lots of reasons:

- to earn money
- to meet new people
- use your skills
- learn new information and skills

Why do YOU want to go to work?

What kind of work would you like to do?

You could start by thinking about the kind of place you would like to work in. You will want to work in a place that you like, and feel comfortable in. Thinking about where you would like to work can also help you work out the kind of job you want.

There are many different types of workplaces.

Here are some questions to help you decide where you might like to work.

- **Do you like being around other people, or being more on your own?**
- **Do you want to work inside or outside?**
- **Do you like busy places, or places where you can take your time?**
- **Do you like quiet places or are you ok being where it is noisy?**

What kind of places do YOU like?

Now let's think about you and the things you like to do. If there are things you really like, or you are good at something, you might like a job that lets you use your knowledge and skills.

You might be good at:

- organising or keeping things tidy
- making or fixing things
- sport

You might love:

- reading or cooking
- working with children or animals
- helping others

You should also think about things you don't like. If you don't like animals, or being with lots of people, or being in busy or loud places, or getting your hands dirty, then write these down too.

Here are some questions to help you think about what kind of job you would like.

What are you interested in?

What do you like to do?

What are you good at?

What don't you like?



Do you have some ideas of the kinds of jobs you might like?

Or jobs you would like to get more information about?

Write them down.

Getting ready to work

There are different stages for getting ready to work. You might need some help with these. Your family or friends may be able to help with some things, or you might need other people to help with a few things or with everything throughout the whole process.

You might be able to use NDIS funding to help you learn to do things that will get you ready for work. Some people may get NDIS funding to help them find a job and give them the support they need in their job.

Or you might be able to get help from a Disability Employment Service. They can help you get ready to get a job, look for a job and give you some support in the workplace when you get a job.

So, let's look at each one and write down the things you need to do, and the help you will need.

**Do you want to learn new things or find out more about different jobs?
Who could help?**

**Do you need to do some studies or training to help you learn the skills you need?
Who could help?**

**Are there some skills you could learn and practise in your everyday life?
Who could help?**

Do you want to do some volunteer work or work experience to try a job or learn some skills? Who could help?

Do you need some help to learn how to use public transport? Who could help?

Looking for a job

There are different ways of finding a job:

- ads in newspapers and online
- in the window of shops or cafes
- community notice boards in shopping centres
- through people you know at community or sporting clubs or volunteer work.

You can also find jobs advertised on websites or use an online job platform to find the latest jobs available. Some examples are **seek.com** and **indeed.com** but there are many others.

 <https://www.seek.com.au>

 <https://au.indeed.com/>

Tell your friends, family and the people you know that you are looking for a job. Personal connections are a good way to get work experience, volunteer work or a job.

There are different people who can help you look. Your family might help, or a support person, maybe using your NDIS funding. You can get help from Disability Employment Services to find work too. They will help you make a plan to get ready and look for jobs.

Do you need help to look for a job and apply for jobs? Who could help?

Applying for jobs

When you apply for jobs, there can be different ways of applying. Sometimes you might need to fill in a form. Usually, you will need to give the employer some details about yourself, and sometimes you will need to write about why you would be a good person to do the job. Here are some tips about writing your application. You will be able to get help from family, friends, a support person, or a person from your DES.

Filling in an application form

The form is usually for writing your name and contact details, and the job you are applying for, and it may have information on when you need to get your application in and who to send it to. The main tip is to read it carefully before writing in it. If you aren't clear about any of the information or what to write, ask someone to explain it to you, and help you with what you could write in the form.

Preparing a resume

You should also have a resume which is a document that talks about you and your skills. This is sometimes called a CV. A resume is usually a written document but sometimes people make a video resume. You might also need to write a cover letter to go with the resume.

Some things to include in the resume are:

- your name and contact details
- any further education and training you have done
- where you have worked before
- any volunteer work you have done
- your hobbies and interests
- your best personal qualities
- life experiences that you could use in the job
- references – these are names and contact details of people who could talk about your ability to do a job.



Writing a cover letter

Sometimes you will need to write a cover letter. This is a short letter to go with your application and resume. It is a good way for employers to start to get to know you. So it's a chance for you to tell them about your best qualities, for example your friendly personality and that you work hard. You should also explain briefly why you want the job and why you think you will do the job well. Don't forget to say you will be glad to have an interview, and make sure you include your best contact details so they can get in touch with you easily.

Preparing for an interview

An interview is where you meet the person who is hiring someone for the job. They usually have interviews with people to help them decide who would be good for the job. Then they offer the job to the person who they think will do the job best.

During the interview, the person doing the hiring will ask you some questions. Sometimes they might give you the questions before the interview starts, but other times they may not. When they make the appointment for an interview, you could ask if you will get the questions before so you can prepare your answers. As well as answering questions, you also want to make a good impression with how you look, your confidence and your good manners. Here are some tips to help you have a good interview.

Before the interview:

- Find out more about the place you want to work.
- It's ok to ask for the interview questions before the interview.
- Practise doing an interview. Ask the person who is helping you to pretend to interview you, by asking you some questions about yourself and the job. This will help you feel more confident before the real interview. If you have the actual questions, this will be really helpful, but you can do it without these.
- Tell the employer if you need anything to help you at the interview. This might be a bit more time to answer questions, to have your support person there or to have questions in plain language.
- Check when the interview is, and how to get there. If you need support, organise who will help you.

On the day of the interview:

- Arrive 5-10 minutes early.
- Dress professionally in clean smart clothes. For example, smart pants or skirt and a button up shirt or smart top.
- Make sure your hair is neat and tidy.
- Say hello and shake hands with the interviewer.
- Always be honest in your interview – Remember if you are successful, they will call your references and ask specific questions around what you said in the interview.
- It is normal to feel nervous, and you can tell the interviewer if you like that you are a little nervous.
- Take your time answering questions.
- Be friendly and professional, and show them you want the job.
- Thank the interviewer at the end of the interview.

Starting work – tips for your first day

You may be nervous and excited about starting in a new job. Here are some things you can do to be ready:

- Practise getting to and from work before your first day.
- Make sure you have work clothes right for your workplace.
- Prepare your clothes to wear and pack your lunch the night before.
- Make sure you arrive on time on your first day.
- Remember to take in any forms or paperwork you may have been asked to complete.
- Ask questions if you aren't sure of something.
- Make sure you know where the bathrooms and the kitchen are.

Help and support available

If you are having trouble finding a job, there are people that can help you. These people might be friends, family members, a support worker or support from a Disability Employment Service. You can also contact your Down syndrome association if you would like support or information about employment.

Here are some helpful tips if you aren't finding work:

- Contact a Disability Employment Service (DES) and make an appointment to talk about employment options.
- Think about using your NDIS funding. Ask the disability service providers in your area if they can help you with Customised Employment. Customised Employment is a way of giving you lots of help to work out the things you are good at, matching you with an employer who needs your skills, and making sure you get ongoing support. Sometimes, people might be supported to set up a micro-enterprise, which is your own small business doing things you are good at.
- Think about some training that might help you get a job. For example, a course at your local TAFE or training organisations. This could include short courses on different topics as well as certificate courses.
- Try some volunteer work. This might help you get more experience in the area you are interested in.

Good luck!

You can find more information on our Right to Work website.

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

You can also find more resources here:

The IncludeAbility website

 <https://includeability.gov.au>

The Everyone Can Work website

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

Finding, keeping and changing jobs on the NDIS website

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

Associations

National: 1300 881 935

New South Wales

Down Syndrome NSW

T: 1300 881 935

E: admin@dsansw.org.au

W: www.downsyndrome.org.au/nsw

Victoria

Down Syndrome Victoria

T: (03) 9486 9600

Toll Free 1300 658 873

E: info@dsav.asn.au

W: www.downsyndrome.org.au/vic

Queensland

Down Syndrome Queensland

T: (07) 3356 6655

E: office@downsyndromeqld.org.au

W: www.downsyndrome.org.au/qld

South Australia

Information Service South Australia (Down Syndrome Australia)

T: 1300 344 954

E: infoSA@downsyndrome.org.au

W: www.downsyndrome.org.au/sa

Western Australia

Down Syndrome WA

T: (08) 6253 4752

E: office@downsyndromewa.org.au

W: www.downsyndrome.org.au/wa

Tasmania

Down Syndrome Tasmania Inc.

T: 1300 592 050

E: info@downsyndrometasmania.org.au

W: www.downsyndrome.org.au/tas

Northern Territory

Down Syndrome Association NT

T: (08) 8985 6222

W: www.downsyndroment.com.au

Australian Capital Territory

Down Syndrome Association of ACT Inc.

T: (02) 6290 0656

E: admin@actdsa.org.au

W: www.downsyndrome.org.au/act

Disclaimer

The information in this resource is general in nature and does not constitute advice. Down Syndrome Australia will not be held responsible for any decisions made as a result of using this information. The contents of the resource do not constitute legal advice and should not be relied on as such.



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