



## Negotiating the school to work transition

This article is from Down Syndrome Australia's Voice magazine, August 2019.

Matthew Ford wrote the original article. He works at Disability Services Consulting, Australia.



The article is about the different work choices and supports for young people thinking about what they want to do when they leave school.



We have written this article in an easy to read way.



You can get help to read it.



Work is important for all of us.

We earn our own money. We feel good about who we are.

Work helps us connect with other people in our community.



Moving from school to further education and work is a big challenge for everyone.

Young people with disabilities can find it harder.

They may need more support to move to adult life.



There are different kinds of work to choose from, depending on your goals.



And there are different kinds of support to help you get to your goal.



## At school – Start early!

It is a good idea to start thinking about employment in years 9 and 10 at high school.

Students and their parents should talk to everyone who can support the young person to reach their employment goals.

This includes teachers, employers and support services.

Schools can help with work experience. They might also be able to help with traineeships and apprenticeships.



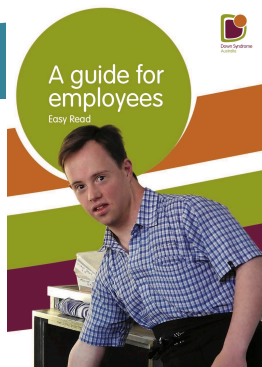
**Ticket to Work** is an organisation in some areas that can help schools, employers and support to work together.



**GET READY!**  
For Study and Work



Top tips for young people  
with disability



There are Easy Read workbooks to help you get ready for moving from school to study or employment.

UNSW has 'Get Ready' workbooks.

DSA has 'A Guide for Employees'.



## On Leaving School

When young people leave school, they have different choices.

These could be:

- Open employment. This is a regular job in the community.

A Disability Employment Service (DES) could help with this.



- Learning skills and getting experience to get ready for a job.

Young people getting ready to leave school can get money in their NDIS plan to pay for School Leavers Employment Supports (SLES).



- Going to work in an **Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE)**. These are separate workplaces for people with disabilities.

People can get money in their NDIS plans to support them in ADEs.





School leavers may also be able to:

Go to TAFE or university to study.



Do an apprenticeship, where they learn a trade while they are working.



Be a volunteer. This means working without pay. It can be a good way to learn work skills and get involved in your community.



If you want to work in open employment, with DES support, you need to show that you are able to work at least 8 hours a week.



SLES helps people get ready for employment.

Then they might move to a DES, or set up their own business or work in an ADE.





## **Ready for Open Employment: DES – Eligible School Leaver Program**

DES help people find jobs with employers in the community.

DES help people to be confident and learn skills to help find and keep a job.

DES also help employers to give their employees the help they need in the workplace.

## **Not Ready for Employment yet: SLES**

SLES can start when you are still at school.

You should choose a SLES provider that suits what you need.

Think about how you want SLES to help you. You can ask them questions like:

What kind of support could they give you?

Do they help people find experience in open employment?

How have they helped other people to get a job?





Some SLES services use **Customised Employment**.

This means helping young people to work out their goals and what kind of employment would suit them best.

They do a **Discovery Process**.



This is looking at the person's interests and skills and helping them make a plan to get ready for work.



Customised Employment can give young people the support they need to move from school to work.

Service providers need to:

Let people make their own choices.

Treat people with respect.

Help people find out what they are able to do.

Provide just the right support in ordinary community places.

Make sure people get good work opportunities and the support services they need.



## Self-Employment

Some young people have an idea for a business that fits their skills and goals.

Having your own business can be good in different ways.

You might be able to work from home, and you can mostly work the hours that suit you.

You can get support to run your business through your NDIS plan.

Here are some young people with disabilities who have their own business.



Cameron Whitelaw and his colleagues will go to people's homes and wait for deliveries. While they wait they can also do gardening, car washing and house maintenance.

Emma Lynam runs a confidential paper shredding business.



Jackson West has a mail and parcel delivery service.





## Supported Employment and Social Enterprises

Supported Employment means ADEs. These are businesses set up to provide work for people with disabilities.

People might do different kinds of jobs, depending on the ADE they work in.

This could be packaging, recycling, gardening, cleaning and food services.

But sadly, hardly anyone who works in an ADE moves to work in open employment.



Some ADEs are changing to become **Social Enterprises**.

This means they will provide a better kind of workplace for their employees with disabilities.

This should include being seen as real employees with rights and responsibilities.

ADEs are paid to support employees through their NDIS plans.







The most important things about moving from school to employment are:

Young people should get the support they need to make a successful move from school to work.

They should get help from service providers to make their own choices.

