

Family Views on Integrated Employment

At-a-Glance:

While recent legislation has called for the expansion of integrated employment of people with disabilities, a large number of adults with severe disabilities still work in segregated settings. To find out why so many families are attracted to segregated settings, researchers examined the views of family members of individuals with severe disabilities from nine communities. They learned that families are influenced by their high value on safety, availability of personal supports, and opportunities for relationship development.

Key Findings

Across the geographically and economically diverse communities, families mentioned safety, availability of personal supports, and opportunities for relationship development as important.

Here are some other findings:

- Safety of their child/family member in integrated work settings was a concern to almost 82% of participants.
- Relationship building opportunities with peers and staff, and also the chance for their loved one to have friends, was mentioned by many participants.
- Scheduling, staffing, routines, and a controlled environment were frequently mentioned as being important.
- Some of the reasons families were reluctant to consider integrated employment were:
 - Safety concerns.
 - Insufficient supervision.
 - Lack of acceptance or understanding from others.

Putting It into Practice

Rehabilitation professionals, local programs and state agencies

Provide support and assurance in these areas to families considering integrated employment:

- safety on the job.

- access to job coaching.
- Access to an individually assigned support person.

Be prepared to address with families how:

- transportation will be provided.
- supportive employers will be identified.
- time-limited job coaching or ongoing supports will be arranged.
- disability benefits will be impacted.
- training will be made available by employers.

State agencies and employers

Implement ongoing systems change efforts to include:

- identify supports needed on an individual basis.
- train a co-worker to serve as a support on the job, as opposed to using an outside provider.
- use or create other community services that could help with ensuring a consistent schedule for the individual.

More About this Research

A total of 93 family members of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities from nine different communities participated in the eight listening events. They were asked to share their perspectives on converting their loved ones' work experiences from sheltered to integrated environments.

Learn More

Carter, E.W.; Bendetson, S.; & Guiden, C. (2018). **Conversations on Conversions: Family Perspectives on Pathways to Integrated Employment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities.** *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 43(3), 145-164.

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Questions? Feedback?

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