

Employment Pathways Programs

Intensive Supported Work Experience –
Ready to Work Program
Training Guide



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Introduction: What is Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways model?

This guide provides a step-by-step process of delivering Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways intensive supported work experience program called Ready to Work. This section provides a brief background on our organization and programs. A full description of our program and related materials are available in our program introduction guide on our [website](#).

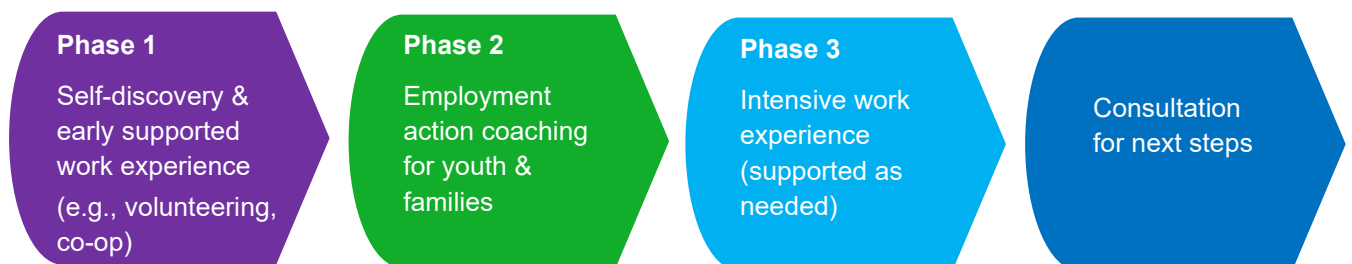
Want to know more about...

More information about the following topics is available in our other resources:

- Our other programs
- Funding Employment Pathways programs
- Organizing and getting leadership on board with this program
- Hiring and training staff

The Holland Bloorview Employment Pathways Model [Bowman et al., 2023] harnesses evidence-based and evidence-informed practices to guide our implementation of start-early employment programs for youth with disabilities. It includes elements such as person directed planning, starting early (during high school), progressive and ongoing support, a supported employment model, family and community involvement, peer learning and mentorship, and evaluation and research [Bowman et al 2023; Jetha et al., 2020; Shogren & Wittenburg, 2020; King, Baldwin & Currie, 2005; Kohler et al, 2016; NCWD, 2019, NTACTION: Predictors of post school success, n.d.; ODEP, n.d.]. The model provides a structure on which organizations can support their progressive employment participation programming. A simplified version of the model is pictured below:

Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways model

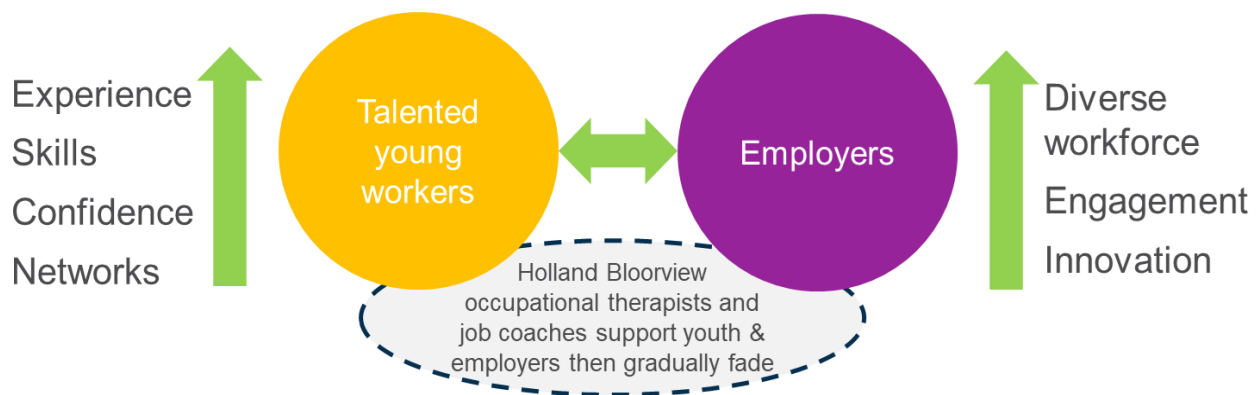


Phase 3: Intensive supported work experience programs and Ready to Work

Community-based experiences in real work environments are invaluable to preparing clients for the workforce. Based upon earlier self-discovery and employment action coaching (EAC) experiences, we work with clients to organize supported work experiences that will be meaningful to their ultimate work goals and appropriate for their level of learning. These programs are “supported” via counseling & job coaching from the time of job seeking through to on-the-job supports. Appropriate support roles should be adapted to meet the client’s needs and can include guidance in job development and job “fit” during the job searching phase, interview preparation, considering appropriate accommodations, and eventual on-the-job training and support. The expectation of fading on-the-job supports over time should be set, and attention must be given to building clients’ skills, capacities, and natural supports in the workplace, including setting up the workplace, workplace mentors, and supervisors. For example, job coaches help clients identify someone in the workplace they can go to for questions. Furthermore, job coaches ensure the supervisors are informed and set up for success. Programs in this phase should also include facilitated reflection on their experiences and planning for actionable steps towards future employment goals.

At Holland Bloorview, we offer an intensive supported work experience program called **Ready to Work**. Our clients’ paid summer jobs have included administrative, hospitality, clerical, environmental services, and customer service roles. The program cannot guarantee that a client will find paid work. If they are not successful, we will support the client’s next steps (e.g. connecting with Employment Service agencies).

As can be seen in our diagram below, the program also offers growth and learning opportunities for employers. Employers who welcome our supported work experience clients learn about diversifying their workforce, increasing engagement of staff with disabilities through accommodation and job coaching practices, and learn about innovation in their teams and ideas.



The program is approximately 7 months in duration and begins in February while the client is still in school. For the first 3-5 months, the client attends individual sessions focused on job searching, application, interviewing, employment skill building, and disclosure. If successful, clients work in paid employment roles during the summer with the support of a job coach or job skills trainer. The job start timeline may vary depending on if clients are in high school or post-secondary education.

Table 1. Ready to Work program duration

	Personal preparations, applications, and interview prep	Job interviews (dependant on employers)	Availability
High school students	February-Summer Individual coaching sessions	May-June	Clients must be available to work for 8 consecutive weeks in July and August
Post-secondary students		Feb-April	Clients must be able to work for a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks May through August

Due to the highly involved nature of the programs, we offer the program once per year. We run our programs in the summer due to the higher volume of seasonal work opportunities and the ability to leverage the availability and funding for youth summer jobs in Ontario, such as the [Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidies](#).

Occasionally we use this program model to arrange work experiences for youth enrolled in post-secondary education programs that require fieldwork experiences.

Deeper dive:

Looking for more resources, information, and training on how to run a summer experience transitions model? Resources and training on the [Summer Employment Transitions model](#) is available, along with other trainings, through the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) and can be found on their training resource page here:

<https://www.odenetwork.com/training/capacity-building-for-employment-service-providers/>

Who is this program for?

Our Ready to Work program is typically offered to clients who:

- Want summer paid work experience and can work independently following up to 3 weeks of job coaching.
- Are between the ages of 15-26.
- Are a student enrolled in high school or post-secondary and will be returning to school the following Fall.
- Are part of or have participated in EAC (Phase 2 programming) AND Youth@Work or VolunteerABLE (Phase 1 programming).
- Have an employment action plan and are ready for paid work experience.
- Need job coaching for part or all of their employment process including job searching, application, interviewing, onboarding, accommodations, disclosure etc.
- Will commit to attending all meetings with staff and remain available for summer work.
- Will commit to working on job search activities at home (minimum of 5 hours a month during the duration of the program).
- Have reliable transportation to work.
- Can engage a support person (e.g., parent, caregiver, sibling who is older than 18) to support them during the program.
- Have not participated in Ready to Work previously.

Priority may be given to youth who have demonstrated:

- Commitment and performance in previous Employment Pathways programs.
- Follow-through with homework assignments as part of job search preparation in EAC.
- Goals, interests, strengths, and needs that are a good match with potential employer partners demonstrated through work simulations and interviews.
- Professional behaviors (e.g., manages their schedule, responds to emails, demonstrates self-management, understand their needs in the workplace, shows initiation).
- Professional communication (e.g., responding appropriately to topics, accepting feedback, initiating conversation, reciprocating conversation).
- Support needs (e.g., attendant care, job coaching) that can be met by program resources.

Priority may also be given to youth who have an up-to-date resume and no prior paid work experience.

Program objectives

In Ready to Work, clients will:

- Participate in a paid work experience.
- Gain work experience & workplace life skills.
- Build confidence in the workplace.
- Actively reflect on their experiences, goals, and next employment steps.

Sample program goals

We typically create a set of standardized goals for all clients in the program group and have individuals indicate which goals are most relevant to them. We then work to rate their goals using two clinical outcome measures, the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS). Goals in our Ready-to-Work program usually include:

1. I am ready to be introduced to a potential summer employer.
2. I work in a paid summer job.

If clients and families do not generally endorse the above goals, the program might not be a good fit.

As a team, we also evaluate a common GAS goal, available in Appendix B.

If formal outcome measures are not relevant for your program, we suggest asking at least one or two program evaluation questions at the end of the program to help determine if clients are achieving the intended outcomes. See our wrap-up meeting template in Appendix C for examples of potential program evaluation questions.

For more information on our outcome measurement, see our Employment Pathways Program Introduction Guide, available on our [website](#).

Clients will walk away with

- Paid work experience.
- References and a network (connection with co-workers, contacts, professional development opportunities).
- Updated resume and cover letter.
- Increased understanding of their individualized disclosure and accommodation needs.
- Job application and interview experience.
- A copy of their accommodations request letter for an employer.
- Opportunities to develop next steps plans.

Roles and responsibilities

Many individuals are involved in the Ready to Work program including the client, their support person (e.g., family member), staff, and employers. Each individual and employer plays an important role in supporting clients towards their employment goals. As the last step in the Employment Pathways program, clients are expected to take an active role in preparing and searching for a paid job. After providing 1:1 job search support and 1-3 weeks of on-the-job support, staff gradually decrease coaching supports. When employed, clients are expected to follow the employer's code of conduct, practices, policies and meet all workplace standards.

We clearly set these expectations upfront to promote individual accountability and program success. The table below highlights key roles and responsibilities for youth, employers, and program staff. These roles and responsibilities are reviewed with clients during their intake meeting.

Table 2. Ready to Work roles & responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
<p>Client (with help of a support person, e.g., parent) as needed</p>	<p><u>Job search & preparation</u></p> <p>Complete job search/job readiness assignments outside of meetings with staff (estimated 8-10 hours per month) including searching and applying for jobs of interest.</p> <p>Attend scheduled meetings (or provide 48-hour notice with reason for cancellation).</p> <p>Remain available for summer work.</p> <p>Make use of any personal networking strategies.</p> <p>Regularly check email as part of job search activities.</p> <p>Obtain materials required by specific workplace (e.g., police reference check, medical information or other pre-placement screening).</p> <p><u>On-the-job</u></p> <p>Demonstrate appropriate work behaviours.</p> <p>Work assigned shifts as scheduled by their employer. Youth jobs sometimes involve working on the weekends and evenings. If clients are sick or need to request time off, it is <u>their</u> responsibility to notify their employer.</p> <p>Participate in training and workplace safety orientation as required by their employer.</p> <p>Follow the workplace dress code or wear uniform or personal protective equipment.</p> <p>If working in-person, clients will be responsible for arranging transportation to their worksite and for transportation costs.</p> <p>If working in a virtual role, clients will be responsible for ensuring they have computer and internet access along with an appropriate workspace.</p> <p>Clients are responsible to perform their assigned duties and follow the rules and policies of your employer. The employer has the right to terminate their employment if they are not meeting attendance, performance, behavior or other workplace standards.</p>

	<p>Transition to working independently after initial job coach support (Ready to Work will not be able to provide daily job coaching supports beyond week 3).</p> <p>A support person (e.g. family member) may be required to support the client in meeting any or all the above responsibilities.</p>
Program Staff	<p>Connect with potential employer partners in the community to develop potential jobs for clients.</p> <p>Contact employer partners in the community on the behalf of clients to recommend as candidates.</p> <p>Support the employer and clients during the interview phase (e.g. providing tips for interviewers, attending the interview).</p> <p>Staff will work with clients and their supervisors during weeks 1-3 of—as needed – to assist clients in performing their job tasks. After 3 weeks in their paid position, if clients are not independently meeting performance criteria for their job, their employer may terminate the client’s employment.</p> <p>Staff may participate in arranging and paying for attendant care supports if needed.</p>
Employers	<p>Set the client's work schedule.</p> <p>Provide clients with orientation and training.</p> <p>Provide Workplace Safety Insurance (WSIB) coverage. WSIB provides wage-loss benefits, medical coverage and support to help people get back to work after a work-related injury or illness.</p>

Resourcing

We recommend at least 1 team lead (e.g., occupational therapist), 1-2 job coaches for 8-12 clients. The number of staff and clients will depend on available jobs, the number of youth who apply, and client factors (e.g., learning and support needs).

A team lead can take responsibility for overseeing program operations, including developing and maintaining employer relationships creating weekly coaching/support schedules, checking in with job coaches, checking in with supervisors, addressing any challenges and organizing an end of program celebration.

Recruitment and intake procedures

We advertise Ready to Work and invite applications from our existing pool of clients who have demonstrated eligibility through participation in our phase 1 and phase 2 programming (EAC).

Recruitment can be undertaken from your existing pool of clients or can include wider calls for engagement. Consider using a flyer for recruitment. An application form will help determine if potential program participants meet the basic eligibility criteria and may be a good fit with the program. We recommend collecting information from interested clients using an online survey (e.g., google forms).

Consider tailoring an application form to your program that includes items such as:

- Whether they are returning to high school in the fall (if yes, which grade).
- Their neighborhood/location.
- Transportation plan for attending their job.
- Their availability for the dates and hours required for your program.
- Their employment goals.

Work simulation and interview

We recommend conducting an in-person work simulation and interview to maximize the fit between employers and clients. This will help you understand the client's strengths, job coaching needs, and any supports that will promote their success in the workplace. This will influence the number of clients who can be accepted into the program and how staff resources are used. Furthermore, it is important to provide employers with workers that are a good fit for their roles and organizations to help sustain partnerships long-term. By conducting work simulations and interviews, we know *who* we are connecting with employers.

During the simulation and interview day, applicants have the opportunity to demonstrate a variety of important workplace life skills (e.g., communication, self-determination) and try tasks similar to jobs potentially available through the Ready to Work program. Examples of job trials include:

- Administration/project work (e.g. data entry, photocopying, organizing/filing, checking emails, use of Word, PPT, Excel, checking website links, updating templates).
- Delivery of mail and restocking office supplies.
- Environmental/maintenance- cleaning (e.g., sweeping, dusting, painting, other cleaning tasks).
- Kitchen prep and sanitization (e.g., dish washing, cleaning, food prep).
- Customer service (e.g., role play survey administration, greet customers).

In addition to work simulations applicants participate in a 1:1 interview with staff. Examples of interview questions can be provided with a consultation with our team.

To assess applicants, we recommend developing observation rubrics that are relevant to your program.

Intake procedures

After our work simulation and interview day, we offer spots in the program and book an intake meeting with each client. Getting to know each client better helps us to promote their success in our programs and our staff's success in running effective programs.

We use the intake procedures summarized in [Appendix A](#). Detailed versions of these procedures are available with a consultation with our team.

The procedures that we use may not exactly align with your own organization's or program's intake procedures. That is alright. Your program's intake process should align with your organization's policies and procedures and any regulatory health professional college standards of practice and guidelines if applicable.

We encourage you to consider the different facets of our intake procedures, and how they might align with and enhance your current process. The final intake procedures are up to you. There are elements that are strongly recommended:

- Discussion of motivations for employment experiences, interests, and experiences to date.
- What the program is, when the program takes place, who will be involved, and what is required (e.g. attending all meetings, remaining available for summer work, demonstrating appropriate work behaviors).
- Setting employment goals.
- Discussion – is the program focus and format a fit with client's current goals?

Job development

Partnering with employers is a critical part of the Ready to Work program. Employer partners offer invaluable real-world work experiences that will help clients move towards their employment goals. When a partnership is successful, employers benefit from having motivated and high-performing workers that are a good fit for the role and organization. Job development involves connecting with existing employer partners and establishing new employer partnerships to identify potential jobs for clients. Start by considering the types of work opportunities that you would like to provide during the program, and then reach out to the organizations, departments, or individuals that you will need to engage.

Before reaching out to internal and external partners, be prepared to build awareness and buy-in for your program. Highlight the value and benefits the Ready to Work program can bring to employers.

Ready to Work staff can work with employer partners to:

- Identify entry level roles in their organization.
- Match roles with highly motivated and well-qualified candidates.
- Identify and resolve accessibility issues in the workplace.
- Provide on-site job coaching to promote successful onboarding and training of young workers with disabilities.
- Offer education activities (e.g., presentations, lunch and learns) in the workplace to build awareness of inclusive employment best practices and the benefits diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

We typically start by conducting a brief introductory presentation. Consider using a presentation template to provide an overview of your program. Additional materials (resources, videos, toolkits) for awareness and education about the benefits of including young people with disabilities in the workforce, as well as practical information such as tips for interviewers and role of a job coach can be found at Holland Bloorview's [Employer Resource Hub](#). We recommend sharing a handout like this [employer guide](#) with potential partners.

To develop relationships with partners, we recommend:

- Identifying partnerships and internal jobs within your own organization.
- Reaching out to internal departments (e.g., leadership team) to network for potential external partners who might want to connect with your organization to provide summer jobs for young people with disabilities.
- Connecting directly with employers in your geographic area or building a partnership with a local employment service organization.
- Considering client and family networks. For example, if a relative works at a potential partner organization, ask for an introduction.
- Linking through business networks, events or cold-calling.

After introducing the program to potential partners, collaborate on developing potential roles for clients. Consider the work location, area/sector, department, required and recommended skills, examples of tasks/projects, format (e.g., virtual/in-person/hybrid) and schedule (full/part time, work schedule).

Job matching

Job matching entails finding the right fit between the organization's needs and the client's interests, education, skills, strengths and learning/support needs. The information gathered from the client's application form, job trial and interview, intake meeting, and any past experiences with employment programming in your organization can support the job matching process.

Job preparation

To help prepare clients for the job, staff will work with clients to:

- Update and customize their resume to the role.
- Update their candidate profile (1-page summary of experiences, accommodation needs, learning needs, and interests). A candidate profile template is available upon consultation with our team.
- Prepare for the job interview.
- Describe what strategies or accommodations will enable them to perform the job. Write a letter of accommodation if required. An accommodation letter template is available upon consultation with our team.
- Develop plans if they require attendant care.
- Discuss what the first day and first week of what job coaching will look like and ensure they feel comfortable.

- Plan for their commute to the workplace (e.g., practice with a parent, job coach will accompany client on their first day of work).

To support employers, staff will:

- Explore the employers' preferred hiring process.
- Collaborate with employers on the interview process. This may include making recommendations for recruitment accessibility including potentially use of work simulations, presentation of work experience in alternate formats such as a visual or video resume, suggesting a format or flow for the interview, etc.
- Attend the job interview (depending on the employer's preferences and client needs).
- Act as a resource to provide information and problem-solve.

After the client has received their formal offer letter, staff will support them in ensuring the necessary paperwork is completed and submitted on time. Staff will also ensure that clients are connected to supervisors and mentors within the organization before starting their job.

Job start-up

The team lead is responsible for scheduling and arranging job coaches for all clients. Each client should have a job coach the first day of work and daily or frequent check-ins during week 1. The first week is a critical time of completing training, learning new job tasks and meeting new people. Different tasks may be easier and harder for individuals to complete requiring variation in job coaching supports and it is important to ensure carry over from one day to the next and general application of understanding of work procedures and guidelines.

- Commuting to and from the workplace if needed.
- Accessing what they need for their job.
- Understanding and following their work schedule (establishing a workplace routine).
- Understanding work instructions, tasks, and expectations.
- Socially connecting with at least 1 or 2 staff in the workplace.
- Implementing accommodations (e.g., physical access) and strategies (e.g., taking breaks, assistive devices, task modifications).
- Understanding who they can go to for questions.
- Setting up emergency contacts and personal supports on the job.
- Understanding how to address personal health considerations at work

During the initial coaching period, staff discuss with the client and employer what the week 2, week 3 and ongoing coaching supports should look like.

Job check-in

After 3 weeks of job coaching, the job coach will transition to conducting check-ins with the clients. Job coaches will check-in with the employer and client to determine how the client is performing their role and if there are increased job coaching needs based on tasks changes or new projects. If there are challenges, the job coach may set up a meeting with the client and the supervisor to determine support plans and next steps.

The job coach will also check in with the client to discuss updates, upcoming work tasks, schedules. The job coach and client will also explore any needs on the job and create job coaching plans and accommodations.

Job wrap-up

Staff meet with each youth to:

- Ensure a thank you card is sent to appropriate co-workers (e.g., supervisors, workplace mentors).
- Ensure youth have asked for a reference or a letter of reference (if appropriate).
- Consider any remaining job tasks of “to-dos” that need to be completed.

We recommend sending a message of gratitude to your employer partners and collecting feedback to understand the impact of your Ready to Work program on the organization, teams, and clients. Gathering feedback from supervisors and mentors will also help you make program improvements. Consider sending an email invitation with a link to an online survey.

To help maintain your relationship with employer partners, we also recommend reconnecting over the holidays and informing them of any upcoming program sessions. Maintaining relationships with employers is critical to the success of the program. Employers who hire consistently and multiple clients at a time will help you use staff resources more efficiently.

Wrap up meetings

To set clients and families up for success in their employment journey, you need to conduct a wrap up meeting. A wrap-up meeting provides opportunities to discuss next steps and connections to resources to support clients’ next steps related to work related experience. Procedures for the wrap-up meeting are flexible depending on the individual client and family’s employment goals. We summarize procedures for the wrap-up meeting in [Appendix C](#).

End of program celebration

We hold a 1-hour virtual end of program celebration with clients, families, and participating employer partners (e.g., workplace supervisors, mentors, People and Culture and Human Resources team) to celebrate clients' accomplishments and thank employer partners for creating meaningful work opportunities for youth. Clients and employer partners are encouraged to speak at the celebration and share any highlights.

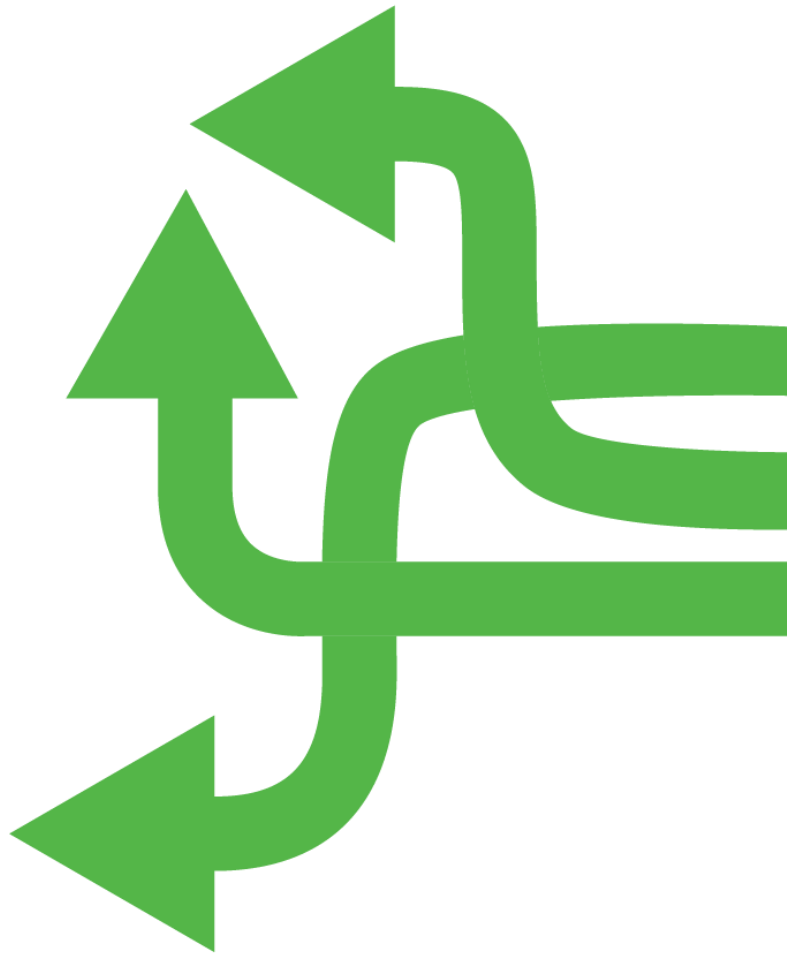
A typical celebration agenda includes:

- Welcome and icebreaker
- Introduction to Ready to Work
- Acknowledging and thanking all employer partners
- Clients' reflections from the summer
- Employer perspectives
- Resources (e.g., [Employer Resource Hub](#)) and tips for inclusive employment
- Program metrics (e.g., # of employers, # of mentors, # of mentorship hours, total hours worked)



Appendices

<u>Appendix A</u>	Summary of intake procedures
<u>Appendix B</u>	Sample GAS Goals
<u>Appendix C</u>	Summary of wrap-up procedures
<u>Appendix D</u>	Real life stories



Appendix A: Summary of intake procedures

Note: Detailed procedures are available upon consultation with our team.

Consent (permission) to participate in the intake meeting

We review the purpose of the meeting and ask for the client and family's permission to take part.

Consent (permission) to participate in program

We go over what is involved in the program and make sure it is a good fit for the client's goals.

Questions about you (the client)

In this section we ask clients questions to get to know their goals. Questions include information on education, chores, previous volunteering experience, diagnoses, and assistance required to participate in work activities.

Setting goals for the program

Setting specific goals helps people accomplish their dreams. Goals can also help support program development and program evaluation and promote more buy-in from clients and families.

The Ready to Work program is structured so clients can accomplish 2 goals:

- I am ready to be introduced to a potential summer employer
- I work in a paid position in summer [year]

Questions about you (the client)

Questions ask about emergency contact information, support needs at work, and any medically relevant information that might impact their performance during the program.

Media consent (optional)

We ask permission to take photos as part of the program. This is entirely optional and will not impact the client's ability to participate in the program. Photos are primarily used to document clients' work tasks and share their progress at the end of the program. If your organization does not have a photo consent form, examples can be provided upon consultation with our team.

Skills development questions

We ask clients about their skills related to volunteering and working. These questions contribute to our broader program evaluation and give us a sense of their experience to-date. Questions ask about the client's skills, employment goals, employment planning, and how optimistic they are about their ability to achieve their job goals.

Next steps

We end with an overview of next steps, booking the next meeting and discussing any actions steps that need to be taken beforehand.

Appendix B: Sample GAS Goals

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a helpful way for staff to work progressively with clients in achieving the goals. GAS goals can be aligned with intended program outcomes and provide measurable outcomes for client tracking and program outcome measurement.

GAS is a 5-point scale, with the goal of reaching the mid-point, labeled “expected outcome, 0”. To use GAS, all clients are expected to start at “Present level (-2)”. By the end of program, the GAS rating details can be used to recommend next steps to individual clients and families, and can help program staff explore how clients progress through the expected goals and where potential programmatic shortfalls may be interfering.

See 2 GAS goal examples below:

Goal #1: I am ready to be introduced to a potential summer employer

GOAL AREA	ACTION TO FIND POSITION
Present level (-2)	Right now, I am not ready for summer job search [modify if have some steps already completed]
Some progress but outcome somewhat less than expected (-1)	(Some progress towards expected outcome by end of Ready to Work) I prepare my written and in-person job search marketing strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customize my resume and cover letter for jobs I’m applying to - Practice interviews and prepare any interview support strategies (e.g., 1 page profile, interview, visual resume, etc.)
Expected outcome - by end of program/service period (0)	(Expected outcome by April of Ready to Work program year) I am ready to be introduced to a potential summer employer
Outcome somewhat better than expected if accomplished within program/service period (1)	(Expected outcome by October of Ready to Work program year) I participate in a wrap-up meeting to reflect on my job search materials and approach.
Outcome much better than expected/ anticipated 4-6 months after program/service (2)	(Much more than expected outcome by end of Ready to Work) I modify job search materials if needed and have them prepared for my next job search.

Goal #2: I work in a paid position in summer 2026

GOAL AREA	ACTION TO FIND POSITION
Present level (-2)	Right now, I do not have a job for this summer (of program year) [modify if have some steps already completed]
Some progress but outcome somewhat less than expected (-1)	(Some progress towards expected outcome by end of Ready to Work) I interview for at least 1 position for summer of program year
Expected outcome - by end of program/service period (0)	(Expected outcome by August of Ready to Work program year) I work in a paid position during summer of program year (insert additional detail if relevant)
Outcome somewhat better than expected if accomplished within program/service period (1)	(Expected outcome by October of Ready to Work program year) I participate in a program wrap-up meeting after my summer job experience to reflect on my experiences and next steps.
Outcome much better than expected/ anticipated 4-6 months after program/service (2)	(Much more than expected outcome by end of Ready to Work) I am working part time or have a job offer for next summer OR I pick an employment support service provider that I can connect with next time I am ready to job search.

Appendix C: Summary of wrap-up procedures

Note: Detailed procedures are available upon consultation with our team.

Check-in

In this section we ask clients and families questions to determine what their best hopes for the final wrap-up session. We ask if they have any questions since their last meeting, what their best hopes for the day are, and what they would like to focus on before wrapping up the program.

Reflection questions

We ask clients to reflect on their experience in their summer job and the program.

Review program goals

We ask clients to re-rate the goals they identified as personally important (rated 7+) at the start of the program. Clients consider their ability to perform in the area after taking part in the program, and their satisfaction with how well they perform on a scale from 1 to 10 via the COPM. The goals are also re-rated by a staff member using GAS.

Accommodation request form

We review and update any workplace accommodation requests.

Summarize next steps re: employment goals

We discuss any employment related next steps after the program including volunteering, paid work, and building on life skills and experiences and discuss any supports that would support the client in achieving their goals.

Skills development questions

To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the program, we ask about the client's experience in the program and program impacts. Questions ask about the client's preparedness for the workforce, program satisfaction, skills related to working, and any changes the client has noticed after taking part in the program.

Next steps

We summarize the client and family's next steps and actions towards their employment goals. Next steps will depend on each client and family's unique needs and goals.

Appendix D: Real life stories

To bring this program to life, we want to share stories from recent youth in our programs. Our clients have had great experiences in our Ready to Work program. See some examples below:

Charlie

Charlie, a high school student and Ready to Work participant, worked as a customer care specialist at Aqua-tots Swim Schools in the summer of 2023. In this role, Charlie greeted swimmers and families, kept the coffee station clean and stocked, and mopped the wet floors to keep swimmers and staff safe. During his time in this role, Charlie was helped by his job coach Nancy. Nancy helped Charlie with challenges related to reading and communication skills and helped to build practices that supported success and confidence. Learn more by reading our story linked [here](#).

Bav

Bav, an undergraduate student studying computer science, worked with the Ready to Work team for his summer job at Fidelity. Bav was ready to apply his knowledge and drive in a real workplace. The Ready to Work team helped him prepare a list of accommodations that he would need (e.g. flexible in-person hours). Job coaches helped Bav set up an accessible work environment and worked with Fidelity to understand how everyone involved can have a productive summer, including Bav, his manager, his co-workers, and the company. Learn more by reading our story linked [here](#).

Isaiah and Annie

In the summer of 2024, Isaiah and Annie each had a unique, supported Ready to Work experience. Isaiah worked at BASF in Toronto, a manufacturing and distribution centre. Isaiah's learning included taking Wheel-Trans to get to and from work, setting alarms to help with time-management, and the technical skills for working in manufacturing and distribution.

Annie has a passion for food and wants to enter a college culinary program after high school. Through her Ready to Work experience, she explored the feasibility of working in the field and how she would physically navigate the kitchen environment. Annie worked for Lane Four Consulting. Annie noticed important growth in her culinary skills and knowledge, along with important workplace skills, including job safety and communication in the workplace. Learn more about Isaiah and Annie in our story linked [here](#).

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Glossary

We have defined the terms below according to how we use them. This may be different from how you use them, and that is okay! If you are unsure, consult the list below to see the context of how the term is being used in this implementation guide.

Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM): The COPM is a clinical tool through which clients can assess their own performance on a goal and their satisfaction with said performance, both on a scale of 1 to 10. Clients will usually rate their performance before and after an intervention, so that they can see if the intervention has made a meaningful difference. For information, see <https://www.thecopm.ca/>

Employment Action Plan: A person-directed plan that outlines immediate next steps for employment participation (e.g. paid work, volunteering, co-operative education). This plan can be developed in programs such as our EAC program, or with a therapist, job coach, teacher, or family.

Employment Pathways model: Holland Bloorview's model that outlines the evidence-informed programming model that we created to improve participation in employment for youth with disabilities through direct, community, and system-based intervention (Bowman et al., 2023).

Evaluation: In this guide, we primarily refer to program evaluation. This type of evaluation is used to understand the outcomes and impacts of a program, service, or intervention through data. Data is collected in many ways (outcomes data, experiential data, observational data) and used to determine the successful delivery of programs. Evaluation outcomes can help to steer future program iterations and provide essential feedback to clients and staff (see also, Research).

Experiential work opportunity: A chance to try out a work skill or role in a true-to-life context. This might be a volunteer or work setting, or a simulated setting. Examples include volunteer placements, short-term job opportunities, and cooperative work experiences.

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS): GAS provides individualized and criterion-referenced measures of change following an intervention. Based on the client's goals, a range of outcomes are defined, with their current ("baseline") level being set at "-2", their expected outcome being set at "0", and +1 and +2 representing progressively better-than-expected outcomes. For more details, see [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232092303 Goal Attainment Scaling's Use in Evaluating Pediatric Therapy Programs](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232092303_Goal_Attainment_Scaling%27s_Use_in_Evaluating_Pediatric_Therapy_Programs)

Job coach/job coaching: A job coach can provide on-the-job support for a worker with a disability and their employer to enable job performance and workplace inclusion. The coach supports as the individual learns the job tasks and acclimatizes to the workplace culture and expectations. The coach may assist in adapting training materials and demonstrating communication strategies. The coach gradually fades support and may re-engage to support changes or as needed.

Person-directed planning: 'Person-directed planning services and supports' means services and supports to assist persons with disabilities in identifying their life vision and goals and finding and using services and supports to meet their identified goals with the help of their families or significant others of their choice (Services and Supports, 2008).

Research: While research comes in many forms, in our guides we use the word “research” to refer to the methodical and scientific study of a topic, usually communicated through peer reviewed sources or trusted agencies/organizations. Research-based evidence drives our work and provides a credible, reliable source for program design and delivery (see also, Evaluation).

Start-early (*starting early*): In our work, we define a “start-early” program to begin before an individual completes high school (Bowman et al., 2023).

Workplace life skills: These are often grouped with what are called “soft skills” and represent the different types of knowledge that contribute to success across different workplace settings that are *not* the technical skills required for a specific job. These include appropriate communication, hygiene, punctuality, etc. Examples include [Canada’s “Skills for Success”](#) and [Ontario Ministry of Education Learning Skills and Work Habits](#).



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For information on our programs and pathway model:

<https://hollandbloorview.ca/services/programs-services/youth-employment-pathways-programs>

For information for employers, see our Employer Resource Hub:

<https://hollandbloorview.ca/employer-resource-hub>