

Employment Pathways Programs

An introduction to implementing our programs



Contents

Welcome.....	3
In our guides, you will find:.....	3
<i>Introduction: Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways model.....</i>	5
How the model works	8
Why a pathway?.....	10
Resources	11
<i>Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways programs.....</i>	12
Phase 1 programs: Self-discovery	12
Phase 2 program: Employment Action Coaching	13
Phase 3 programs: Intensive supported work experience	13
<i>What are ‘the Guides’?.....</i>	14
Self-discovery programs.....	14
Employment Action Coaching programs	14
Intensive supported work experience programs	14
Staff training and coaching.....	14
Administration and funding for your programs.....	14
Cross-program fundamentals: Workplace and life skills.....	14
<i>How to use the Implementation Guides</i>	15
To implement a program	16
To connect a pathway.....	16
To review your programs/pathway using our model.....	17
<i>Evaluation and measurement.....</i>	18
Types of data.....	18
Applications of data.....	19
<i>Other resources and programs</i>	20
<i>References</i>	21
<i>Glossary.....</i>	23

Welcome

Welcome! Through this series of Implementation Guides, you will find the background, context, resources, and tips that you need to implement evidence-informed Employment Pathways and programs in your own organization.

Throughout our guides, we talk to “you”, meaning the person reading, and we hope that you will choose to take steps towards action for yourself as a service provider, your team, your organization, and your community.

Our goal in creating these guides is to promote a more global and systemic culture of disability inclusion in employment. This will be achieved through the broad implementation of evidence-based and evidence-informed start-early programs that are made available and accessible to people with disabilities across Ontario and Canada. This work requires the participation of families, communities, employers, and policymakers so that we can build a cohesive and inclusive workforce that benefits us all. The guide will explain how this mission benefits individuals with disabilities, their support systems, employers, and the public.

In our guides, you will find:



Background information on employment participation of people with disabilities, including why it is important, who must be involved, and what your role can be.



Insights into the different ways you can use the Implementation Guides.



How to set up a program/pathway in your own organization or community.



The ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ of Holland Bloorview’s programs, including information on the programs, supporting evidence, and how we implement them.



Evaluation and outcomes measurement.



How to support sustainability for your programs.



Examples, cases, and stories.



Resources, glossary of terms, and references.

We hope you find this resource helpful and hope to connect with you about starting your own work.

Sincerely,

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On behalf of the Employment Pathways team

Introduction: Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways model

Employment Pathways services at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital were created to meet a need identified by clients¹ and staff. Employment participation looks different for everyone, and it can be helpful to learn how to expect employment for youth with disabilities. Expectations can be fostered by educators, family members, individuals themselves, peers and/or service providers. There are many reasons to start early to build individuals with disabilities’ connections to the workforce.

What is “Employment”?

Throughout this guide, employment includes several citizenship-related activities that contribute to employment experiences. The most held understanding of this is paid work. Our definition also includes unpaid work, internships, co-operative education, volunteering, chores, etc. These activities are part of growing up and building self-awareness, confidence, and skills. Our understanding of the term “employment” relates directly to the client group we serve.

From a client-focused perspective, employment is a social determinant of health that influences social connection, financial stability, and meaningful engagement, all contributing to better overall quality of life [Jacob et al., 2015; National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, 2022]. From a business perspective, employers have noted numerous benefits from disability inclusive employment practices, including employee engagement, consumer loyalty and overall high organizational performance [Lindsay et al. 2018; ODEN, n.d.]. Employers in many sectors are also anticipating labour market shortages, for which this under-accessed population could provide relief [ODEN, n.d.]. From a societal perspective, engaging individuals in the workforce, full- or part-time, is correlated to savings in public funds related to both reduced costs in social programming and gained income tax payments [Bowman et al., 2024].

Beyond any other argument, the right to access employment with reasonable accommodations is firmly held by international, national, and provincial conventions and policies [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. S.O. 2005; Employment Equity Act, 1995; United Nations, 2006]. The ability to access meaningful employment represents respect for personhood and recognition of this group’s value to our society. The multifaceted argument for promoting greater employment

¹ We use the term “client” throughout to refer to a past, current, or potential program participant. In Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways programs, clients vary slightly by program but typically include high school students who want to gain employment experiences. This is the client model upon which our services were constructed. Your “clients” may be a different group, so consider their differing needs throughout the Implementation Guide.

participation of individuals with disabilities presents a clear need for action. Our team operates from the dual practical and moral perspectives when designing and delivering our services.

Yet individuals with disabilities face multiple barriers in attaching to the workforce. Barriers can be found at the client, program, employer, community, policy, and societal levels. For individuals, lack of access to start-early programming to enable building experiences and skills, lack of knowledge, and lack of expectations for work can stand in the way of entering the workforce. For communities, lack of knowledge, funding, or prioritization of supporting start-early programming can block youth with disabilities from even having opportunities to connect to the workforce. Even when youth are well prepared to enter the workforce, many employers still rely on information based on stigma and myth that stops them from hiring appropriate candidates with disabilities. There are multiple barriers keeping youth with disabilities out of the workforce, but many more reasons to make sure that they are included.

Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways team created a model that met these converging calls for inclusive employment based on a set of principles which guide us in program creation, evaluation, and spread. When faced with an opportunity or challenge, the team looks to these guiding principles to consider how to proceed. They include:



Employment is a human right and social determinant of health
(strive for equitable access)

Employment participation must start early
(high school)

Inclusive employment is a shared responsibility
(youth, family, employers, service providers, society)

Our programming is evidence-informed, combining elements of generally accepted post-school success, such as supported employment [[Jetha et al, 2020](#)], career awareness, self-determination, autonomy, and transition best practices [[Shogren & Wittenburg, 2020](#); [King, Baldwin & Currie, 2005](#); [Kohler et al, 2017](#); [NCWD, 2019](#), [NTACT: Predictors of post school success, n.d.](#); [ODEP, n.d.](#)]. As part of this, we use evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices to support our youth [[Mazotti, 2021](#); [NTACT Effective Practices, n.d.](#)]. These include career preparation and work-based learning experiences with supportive coaching, student development activities including life skills and employment skills training, family engagement, personalized transition planning, and connecting activities such as linking to various health and social services. For more information on effective

practices, [visit the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition \(U.S.\)](#). For information specifically on predictors of post-school success, visit their [key resources](#).

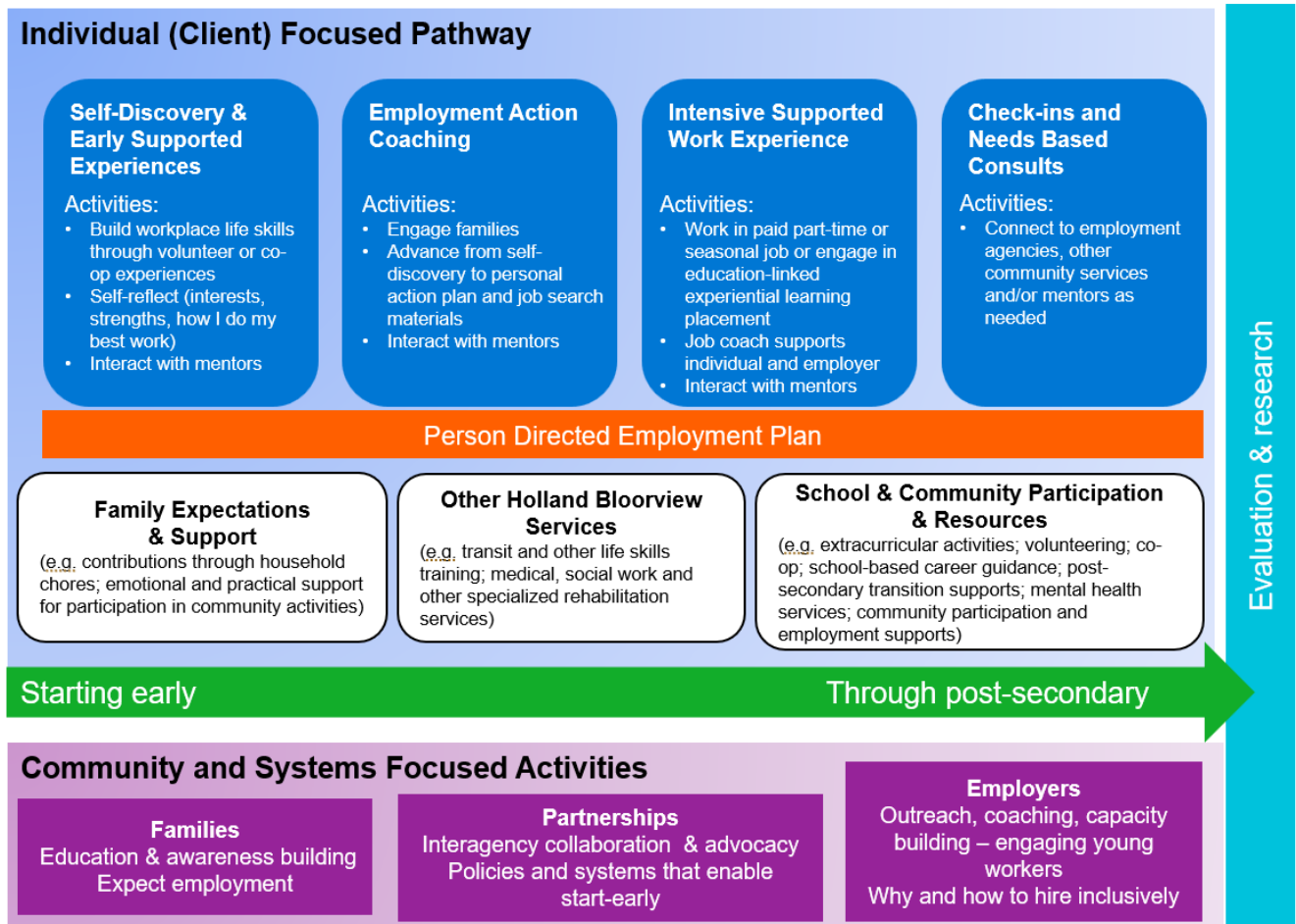
We build these skills in tandem with building community understanding and capacity for disability-inclusive employment, as pictured in the figure to the right, taken from [Melling, Beyer & Kilsby \(2011\)](#).

We also incorporate mentoring and peer-to-peer connection into our programs. According to the U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy ([ODEP, n.d.](#)), youth development requires exposure to leadership, role models, and mentoring. Our peer-to-peer connection and mentorship come in the forms of establishing adult and/or older-peer mentors with and without disabilities, building strong relationships with trusted adults, training in skills such as self-advocacy, and opportunities to begin taking on leadership roles.



Reprinted from [Melling, Beyer & Kilsby \(2011\)](#)

The Holland Bloorview Employment Pathways Model [[Bowman et al., 2022](#)] harnessed the evidence above to guide our implementation of best practices for start-early employment for youth with disabilities. It builds upon elements including [person directed planning](#), [starting early](#), progressive and ongoing support, a supported employment model, [family and community involvement](#), peer learning and mentorship, and [evaluation and research](#). The model (pictured below) provides a structure on which local groups can support their progressive employment participation programming.



Reprinted with permission from the authors, original version in *Disability and Rehabilitation* (Bowman et al., 2023)

How the model works

The Holland Bloorview model is divided into three layers of action/intervention and has three underpinning concepts. We will start by explaining the concepts and then go into the layers of action. For detailed information, please see our publication [Bowman et al., 2023; available upon request].

Underpinning concepts

Person directed planning

Person directed planning is a common practice in employment participation. Through this type of planning, curricula and program goals are created in collaboration with the individual (and their family) and alignment with their personal goals for employment, their interests, their strengths, and their abilities.

Starting early

Early employment experiences contribute to lifelong workforce attachment. By early, we usually mean while the individual is still in high school. There are several reasons for this, including building essential workplace skills and experiences at an important developmental time, the expectation of

shorter-term and learning-oriented roles for high school students, and the building of essential resume components before fully entering the workforce.

Evaluation and research

Evaluation and research are depicted at the end of the model, and it is essential at every step. Each program should be created based on best practice evidence to serve the clients. Each program should also include evaluation to make sure that it is meeting its stated goals. Our Employment Pathways programs were built on best available evidence in the transition-to-work field and continues to evolve based on our own evaluation and broader emerging research.

Layers of action/intervention

The programs, services, and actions included in the model are divided into the following three layers:

Individual (client) focused pathway

The individual pathway is what most people think of when we talk about employment supports. Programs are offered to support participants' progressive growth towards their personal employment goals. Details of the different programs and program phases are given in the accompanying program specific Implementation Guides.

Complementary supports and services

Employment requires many skills including community navigation, interpersonal skills, life skills, self confidence and self-efficacy, along with opportunities for practice. Through the purposeful identification of relevant supports and services that *already exist* in your organization and the community, you can round out the roster of employment readiness experiences available to your clients.

Community and systems focused activities

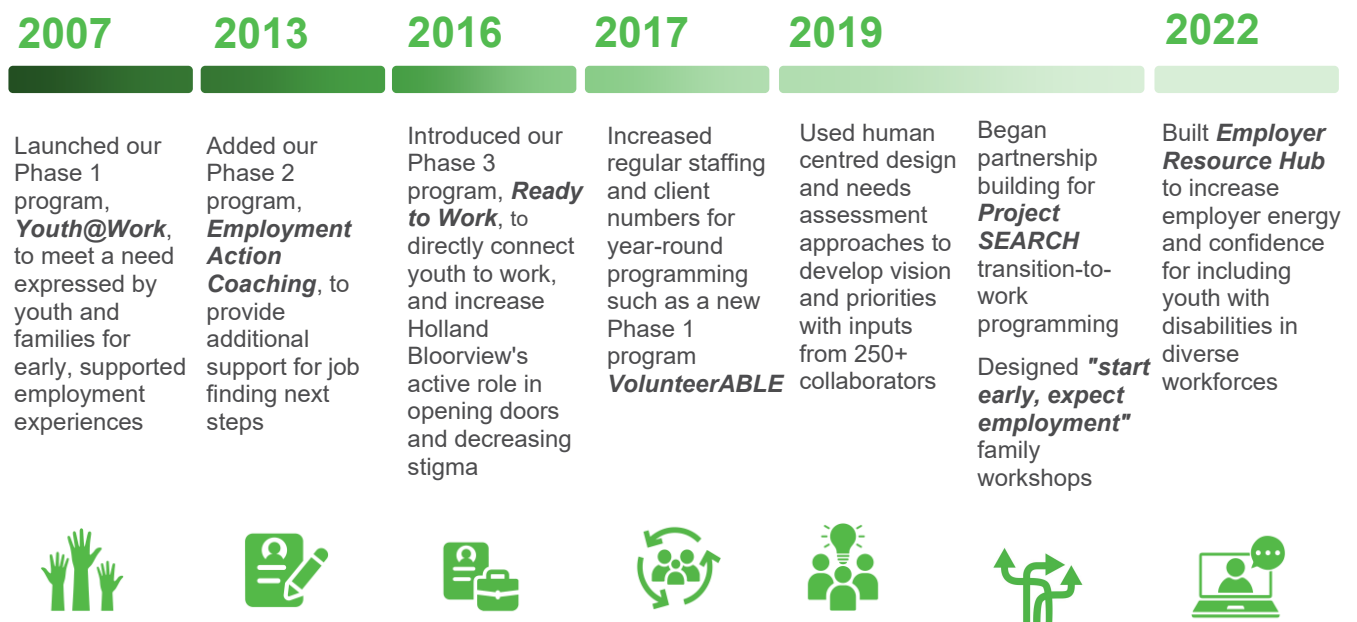
As part of our work with youth and with communities, we see both practical and justice-based arguments for making sure the workforce that we are helping them prepare to enter is also a workforce that is prepared to confidently engage the skills and talents of workers with disabilities. We therefore engage in activities that promote awareness, advocacy, and direct coaching for employers, families, and community partners. Through this type of work, your group can engage your community in disability inclusive employment practices.



Why a pathway?

Effective employment supports are personalized and strengths-focused. Supporting the skills and practices for employment is complex, and includes education, social, practical, and technical skills that fit with an individual's needs, goals, and learning style. No single program can offer the necessary degree of flexibility to meet the needs of all clients and all communities.

Our Employment Pathways came about as a result of needs that were shared by our clients, families, and community. Our journey is outlined below:



We proposed a progressive, stepwise, 'pathway' approach to employment supports that facilitate skill-building at a personalized pace and in relevant environments. A pathway of programs can offer manageable, short-term steps towards long-term goals for individuals. It allows for continued self-discovery, opportunities to pause and re-enter programming as needed. From a resource and community perspective, a pathway also presents unique opportunities to harness what is *already working* in your community and organize your existing programs and partnerships into a comprehensive pathway so that clients get the follow-along they need within an existing structure (with existing resources, staff, funding, etc.).

Resources

Below are a few sample resources to get you started in considering the reasoning and evidence behind building program pathways and starting with some of the programs we have built.

Can't find what you're looking for? Would you like introductory slide decks or a discussion on how to make these recommendations practical? Please [contact our team](#) and we will work to get you the information you need!



Holland Bloorview Employment Pathways model

Our article on Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways Model can be found here:
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2022.2140846>

A justice argument

You can view our chapter on inclusive employment as a justice issue in this book: Bowman, L. R., McDougall, C., & Menna-Dack, D. (2024). A Justice Perspective on Ecologically-Based Employment Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities. In *Intellectual Disabilities and Autism: Ethics and Practice* (pp. 221-235). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Holland Bloorview's employment-related materials

- Employment Pathways Programs: <https://hollandbloorview.ca/services/programs-services/youth-employment-pathways-programs>
- Employer Resource Hub: <https://hollandbloorview.ca/employer-resource-hub>
- A toolkit to support funding employment inclusion for Ontario youth with disabilities: <https://hollandbloorview.ca/advocacy/disability-workplace/funding-employment-inclusion-ontario-youth-disabilities>

Foundational works that underpin our model

- Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Programming: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/transitnprogtxnmy>
- Guideposts for Success 2.0: A Framework for Successful Youth Transition to Adulthood <https://capeyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2021/02/Guideposts-for-Success-2.0-1.pdf>

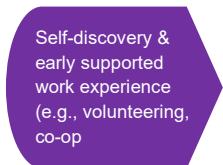
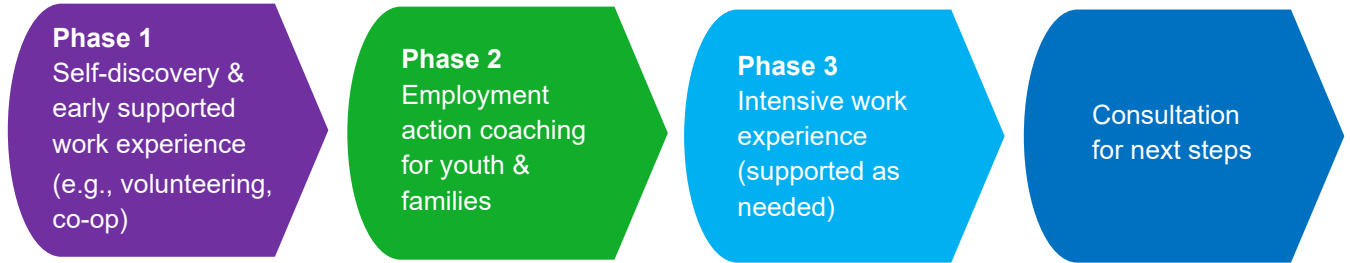
A practical guide for clinicians, clients, and families:

- The Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) Inclusion & Employment Awareness training for youth, families, and clinicians: <https://learn.odenetwork.com/resources-families-educators/>

Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways programs

Our pathways include different types of programs. In this section, we will review the three ‘phases’ of programming and how we facilitate them. In subsequent sections, we will talk about how we connect those programs into our comprehensive and progressive pathways.

Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways model



Phase 1 programs: Self-discovery

The crux of person directed planning is a person who has an idea of what they want. Many youth enter our programs knowing that they want to work towards employment, but are not sure the types of jobs, tasks, or occupations that would be most meaningful, fulfilling, or suited to them. Self-discovery is an ongoing process that occurs throughout one’s working life, and a dedicated focus at an early stage can set youth up for a clearer and more direct early employment participation. Our first phase is therefore self-discovery. Self-discovery programs allow youth to learn about the realities of employment while also learning about their interests, skills and strengths. Youth also learn what strategies or accommodations help them do their best work and gain confidence. Such programs tend to include:

- Education about necessary workplace skills.
- Experiential opportunities to learn and grow.
- Facilitated/supported reflection on broader goals and desires.



Through facilitated self-discovery opportunities, youth can work with families and service providers to tailor subsequent employment plans to meet their new and evolving goals.



Phase 2 program: Employment Action Coaching

Our Employment Action Coaching (EAC) program is designed to provide more directed guidance towards a client’s goals. Each client sets a personally relevant “next step” goal, which could include volunteering, school based experiential learning, self-employment, paid employment or other. Clients are asked to identify a support person to participate, typically an adult family member.

At Holland Bloorview, we typically offer the EAC program once per year. Three group sessions usually take place virtually on weekends over 6-8 weeks, and 3-5 individual sessions with clients and families and our staff members occur at a mutually agreed upon time over the 2-5 months following the group sessions.

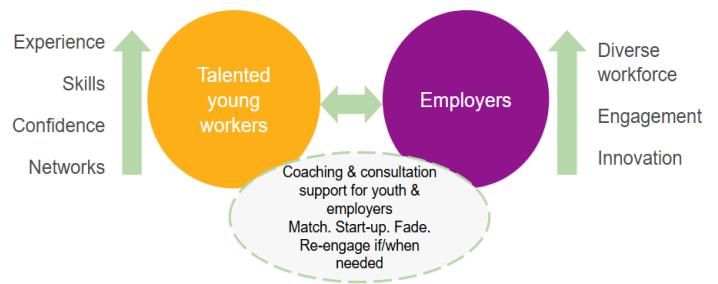


Phase 3 programs: Intensive supported work experience

Community-based experiences in real work environments are invaluable to preparing clients for the workforce. Based upon the self-discovery and action coaching experiences, we work with clients to organize intensive supported work experiences that will be meaningful to their ultimate work goals and appropriate for their level of learning. In our intensive supported work experience programs, clients will have assistance from our team to apply to, interview for, and engage in real work experiences. These work experiences include paid work roles in real positions, usually held over our clients’ summer breaks or multi-month experiential learning (unpaid) placements that are part of credit-bearing educational program (secondary or post-secondary level). They may also be education-linked experiential learning placement, such as a co-operative education (co-op) placement or a school-to-work transition training program. Our team will support youth in all steps of the hiring and training processes, with the goal of fading staff support as youth become more adept in their roles.

These programs are “supported” via job coaching from the time of job seeking through to on-the-job supports. Appropriate job coaching roles should be adapted to meet the client’s need and can include support in job development and job “fit” during the job searching phase, interview preparation, considering appropriate accommodation, 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. Programs in this phase should also include facilitated reflection on experiences, and planning for actionable steps towards future employment goals.

In addition to preparing youth for employment, our intensive supported work experience programs allow us to work with employers to open doors to opportunity. We purposefully use the time to educate and prepare employers and teams to work with employees with disabilities so that they may continue with these practices in the future. As



pictured here, we raise knowledge and awareness on both ends to ultimately contribute to a more disability-inclusive workforce.

What are ‘the Guides’?

The series of Implementation Guides that we created can help you and your team to set up your programming and consider your delivery. We have Implementation Guides outlining the following areas:

Self-discovery programs

See the [Phase 1 programs: Self-discovery](#) description on page 12.

Employment Action Coaching programs

See the [Phase 2 program: Employment Action Coaching](#) description on page 13.

Intensive supported work experience programs

See the [Phase 3 programs: Intensive supported work experience](#) program description on page 13.

Staff training and coaching

Our programs are guided by a deeper philosophy and require understanding of certain fundamental concepts to be delivered most effectively. In this guide, we provide an overview of the outlooks and practices that support our program philosophy, baseline employment participation and youth disability knowledge, and training materials for your staff that are applicable to all our programs.

Administration and funding for your programs

Over the years of developing and refining these programs, we have gained many insights into the operational elements of running our Employment Pathways programs. In this guide, we provide insights, reflections, tools, and templates regarding funding, supporting, embedding, and sustaining the programs.

Cross-program fundamentals: Workplace and life skills

Across all our programs, there are fundamental skills and expectations that we hold for our clients. In this guide, we outline these expectations and provide examples of how we create space to learn, grow, and practice the myriad skills needed to participate in the workplace.

How to use the Implementation Guides

The guides are meant to be flexible in helping you to implement Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways programs and model in your context. The guides provide background and theory to help understand the need for employment participation programs for youth with disabilities. If you are not sure of how to get started, we recommend considering some of the questions in the box below.



Where to start?

Consider the following questions about your programming needs:

Principles and values questions:

Who do you serve?

What is your organizational mission?

How does youth employment participation fit into your organizational mission?

What are your principles (guideposts)? How are they aligned with the principles of the Employment Pathways programs?

Practical questions:

What is your program participation capacity?

What is your staff capacity? Is there a possibility of providing partial capacity to the program from staff in related roles?

How might you fund programs like this? (and do you have funding?)

What is your desired timeframe?

Have you run similar programs in the past?

Collaboration questions:

Who do you know that already does similar work?

Who would be interested in collaborating in this work? (e.g. Who can you approach to develop job opportunities?)

To implement a program

If this is your first time running an employment participation program, try starting with one of the program structures below. Most groups start with implementing a “self-discovery” program that will allow your clients and your team to familiarize themselves with the ideas and requirements of this Employment Pathways model.

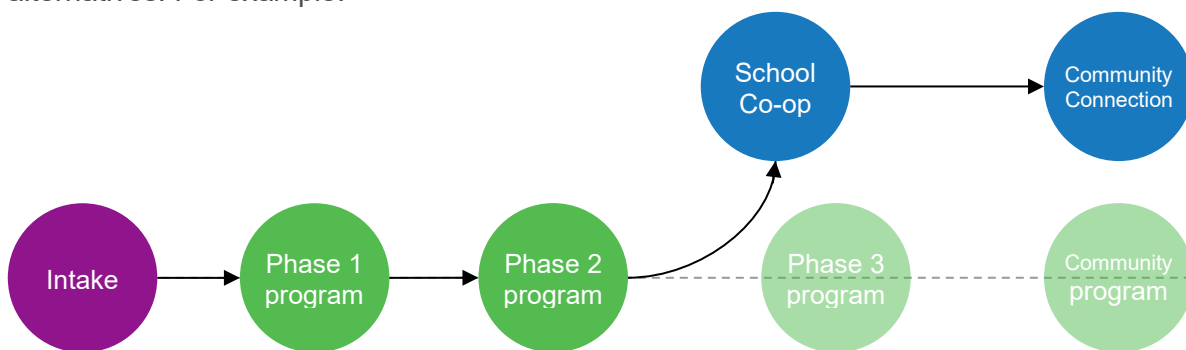
For each program, our guides provide information related to the following areas (as applicable):

- Organizing and funding start-up
- Administrative oversight
- Proposed budgets
- Staff training
- Client recruitment and intake
- Program timelines and curriculum
- Schedule templates
- Program lesson presentation slides
- Suggested evaluation template

To connect a pathway

The importance of providing reliable, evidence-driven programs cannot be understated. Offering reliable programming in a pathway format can help your team remain agile in supporting individuals in achieving their personalized, evolving employment-related goals. To be clear, having programs that you offer in a logical order is one (albeit important) part of creating a pathway.

A pathway requires oversight and expertise to progressively guide clients through person directed planning towards their employment participation goals. This may be through the client’s participation in your pathway programs but may also require connection to community options or creative alternatives. For example:



A pathway model requires a suite of progressive programming (whether all hosted by your organization or a process for referrals to the community) AND community connections or alternatives that can be included to best meet the evolving needs of the individual.

Whether connecting your existing programs, gathering a selection of programs from across your community, or implementing Holland Bloorview’s full Employment Pathways, this guide can help you

consider the elements that will help you make a cohesive programming pathway that can build clients' skills and solidify community partnerships.

To review your programs/pathway using our model

If you have a program or pathway of programs that you implement, you may want to use the structure and resources outlined in this Implementation Guide as part of your program evaluation. You may wish to:

- Consider how the information and evidence highlighted in the guide aligns with your work and where you see opportunities.
- Explore the evolving needs within your community.
- Connect with local businesses or employment service agencies to explore how your work aligns and where you might be duplicating efforts.



Evaluation and measurement

We have touched on evaluation and measurement previously, but it warrants deeper consideration. The data that you collect becomes your window into when, why, how, and by whom your programs are being used, which can provide essential insight into how to adapt your program to meet the ongoing needs of your community. Our team collects several data types to inform our processes and program delivery, to monitor our outcomes, and to consider where we reach out to expand our programs based on who we see accessing them.

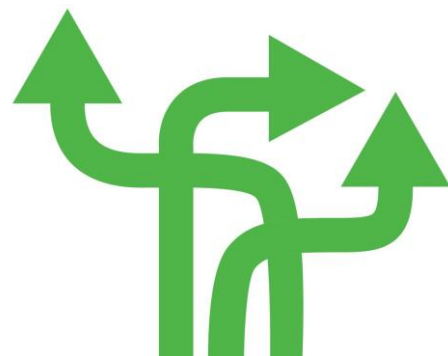
In this section we provide an overview of types of data that you may wish to collect, at which points, and how to evaluate them for the following purposes: program flow, program redesign, and community connections.

Types of data

As indicated in the direct program guides (Self-discovery, Employment Action Coaching, Intensive supported work experiences), we collect pre- and post-program data for all clients in each program. When possible, we try to keep the types and methods of data collected as stable as possible so that comparisons can be made over time and within/across programs in the pathway. The data is regularly considered in light of best and emerging evidence in the field. The data includes:

- Demographic/sociodemographic information: name, age, location (community, school board), race/ethnicity, gender, social needs (current non-medical needs that impact health and wellbeing).
- Disability-related factors: type of disabilities, consideration for daily activities, existing accommodations, medical considerations.
- Employment participation experience: previous experience with employment participation, including chores, volunteering, cooperative education opportunities, paid employment.
- Goals: overall employment goals, program goals.
- Program performance/outcomes: using the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) to measure change in goal attainment during the program.
- Program experiences: satisfaction, reflection, next steps.

We try to collect data pre-program, immediately post-program, and 2 years following program participation to understand experiences and outcomes.



Applications of data

There are several ways in which we use this data that inform program delivery, funding, and spread.

Program flow

- *For the individual client:* We measure pre- and post-program outcomes as well as program satisfaction for each client so that we can plan for next steps, see what programs will fit them, see if *this* is the right program for them or if other opportunities may better suit their needs.
- *For the group of clients:* For a cohort of clients participating in a program, we monitor client demographics, outputs, outcomes and satisfaction to understand how we are delivering the program and how to better meet client needs.
- *For staff reflection:* Staff can review the outcomes from programs and/or pathway of programs to see how individuals or groups are doing, and best plan for program re-vamps or amplify activities that show success.

Program redesign (QA/QI)

- *Data summaries:* Different elements of the data can be summarized and compared over time, such as program outcomes, satisfaction, participation rates, demographics, the types of disabilities of participants, and employment goals.
- *Emerging evidence:* Data can be reconsidered based upon emerging best evidence. Program reviews for delivery, outcomes, practices, and evaluation can and should be regularly considered in light of changing research.
- *Program pain and gain points:* Yearly or multi-year data can be explored to see where the program is doing well according to the data, so that we can explore what is supporting these “gains” and how we can amplify the supporting practices. Teams can also explore “pain points” either from what the data indicates or to consider how the data might address questions about what the team has noticed. These pain points can be supported by evidence and then swiftly dealt with.

Community connection

- *Who are you serving?* Regular data reviews can help your team to identify who it is that is being served by your program. Such information can help to better connect with your engaged communities and undertake outreach to explore whether they are getting what they need out of the program. It can also help you consider which communities or groups are *not* being reached by your program, so that you can reach out to them to see if there are ways you could better communicate, connect, and provide for them.
- *Who are your partners?* In identifying who it is that you are serving, you can consider who *else* is serving these communities/groups. This can allow you to connect and work with other community agencies so that you offer complementary (not duplicating) services and can mutually refer appropriate clients. Consider building these groups into your program!

Other resources and programs

The design of Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways intentionally invites other forms of education, experience, and programming. What you offer or recommend to your clients will depend upon your clients and your local resources. Our team offers a mixture of handouts/information, community connections, and additional learning opportunities. Below we provide a few examples to help you consider the resources that you may *already* have available that can support your program delivery and client success.

Information handouts

In addition to the support we provide during our programs, we like to make sure that we summarize the information that our clients will need for quick and easy reference down the line. They are based on our local context and consider what our clients and families are asking for. We have prepared handouts on topics such as:

- Chores and why they are important
- Career exploration
- Employment experience opportunities
- Life after high school - local programs and resources

All handouts are available on our website: <https://hollandbloorview.ca/services/programs-services/youth-employment-pathways-programs>

Community connections

In building our community partnerships, we intentionally explore what is already available in our community for our clients. This allows us to make meaningful connections and referral pathways and helps us to avoid duplicating available services. Examples of services that we connect our youth with include:

- Cooperative education in the school boards
- TTC (public transit) training and navigation
- Social skills and life skills and recreation programs available at Holland Bloorview, other local organizations serving youth with disabilities and/or serving youth

Additional learning opportunities

We offer “pop-up” learning opportunities for our clients that are intended to supplement our programs. Examples of these include:

- Legal guardianship
- Life after high school with [Connectability.ca](https://connectability.ca)
- Transition to post-secondary education
- Holland Bloorview offers Bridging to Adulthood on-line learning opportunities on a variety of topics <https://hollandbloorview.ca/services/programs-services/transitions/transition-pop-ups>

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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/>

Client-focused perspective: A client-focused perspective and approach is one that recognizes and values the strengths, experiences, knowledge, and agency of clients. In our work, we practice at the junction of evidence-based practices and client-identified goals.

Employment participation: In our model, employment participation includes any activity that intentionally builds employment experiences and life skills. Examples include work (paid and unpaid), internships, volunteering, chores, and cooperative educational activities.

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).

Employment supports: “With an emphasis on matching an individual with an appropriate employer and work environment, it involves individualized, rapid placement and ongoing support, training, and assessment that take into account the person’s vocational and personal needs” (American Psychological Association, 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).

Evidence-based programming: Programming that uses current best evidence to drive decision-making based on research and empirical outcomes. (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011)

Evidence-informed programming: Programming that uses current best evidence and practitioners’ best clinical judgment and knowledge of the clients’ and program’s context. (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011)

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.

Family and community involvement: In this work, family and community involvement include both functional and emotional support of those in the client’s environment as they work toward employment goals. Such support can lead to natural opportunities to practice or extend the

employment skills clients are learning (e.g. chores in the home, finding volunteering in community), and provides the confidence and comfort to know that they are believed in. Functional or logistical support is important to many young people, some examples include scheduling appointments, planning transit routes to new destinations, updating resumes to apply for jobs, etc.

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_ScalingIts_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 models training and communication approaches to the employer and co-workers and promotes the development of “natural supports” within the team and organization. The coach gradually fades support and may re-engage to support changes or as needed.

Pathway (Program Pathway): A programming model “that progresses and adapts along with the [client], considering their needs, goals, and context... contains a dynamic set of interventions and supports that facilitate early and ongoing work experiences... provides a template for service providers and organizations to design/align programs and services to prepare youth for employment participation” (Bowman et al., 2023)

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).

Personalized supports: Aligning with person-directed planning and a client-focused perspective, personalized supports involves providing goals, connections, opportunities, and next steps that align with the individual client’s needs with consideration for their goals and context. This differs from providing blanket recommendations and interventions to all clients.

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).

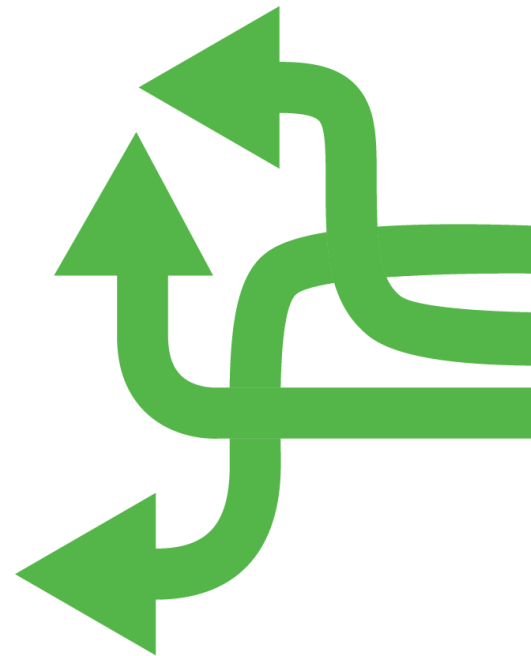
Service Provider: In this guide, we use the term ‘service provider’ to indicate the individual representing themselves or their organization that works directly with a client. The role or designation of the service provider may look different at different organizations.

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).

Solution-focused approach: A solution-focused approach involves collaborating with clients and families to focus on solutions rather than problems. Service providers support clients and families in taking meaningful steps towards their goals and preferred futures by amplifying their strengths and resources.

Strengths-focused: Programs and services that take a strengths-focused approach will build goals and plans that leverage the strengths of the client as well as the environment, rather than solely focusing on a problem to be solved. Strengths-focused interventions tend to have a degree of flexibility to account for what works best for the individual client.

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
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<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>