



THE ADVOCATE

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THE FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM: ASSISTING FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER

The Tennessee Family Support Program provides aid and assistance to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to remain together in their homes and communities. Services are flexible and responsive to families and their needs. The Family Support Program is a community-based, state funded program. Its services are sensitive to the unique needs, strengths and values of the individuals and the family and should be responsive to the needs of the entire family.

The policy of the State of Tennessee is that individuals with severe or developmental disabilities and their families be afforded support that emphasizes community living and enables them to enjoy a typical lifestyle. They are best able to determine their own needs and should be empowered to make decisions concerning necessary, desirable, and appropriate services and supports.

The Family Support Program’s goals include keeping families together, providing needed assistance to live independently, helping families find and use available supports, respecting cultural,



economic, social, and spiritual differences, assisting with exorbitant healthcare expenses, and providing respite for caregivers.

The Arc of Washington County provided Family Support services to roughly 330 individuals and their families in the 2023-2024 fiscal year in Washington, Carter, Johnson, Unicoi, Hancock, Hawkins, and Sullivan counties. Many of the families were served for the very first time. Every year we continue to get applications from new families needing assistance. Being able to help these families keep their loved ones home or be able to stay home independently is why Family Support is available.

Each family has a story about the difference the funding received from Family Support has made in their lives. We

are fortunate to hear about the ways the funding has helped. Different families reach out to the coordinators to let us know what the funding has done for their family. Here are a few comments from families:

“If it wasn’t for the Family Support Program, my daughter wouldn’t have the means to receive the medication she needs for her eyes due to insurance not paying. This in turn makes our lives much easier.”

“The Family Support Program has allowed me to stay home with our son and this has helped improve his quality of life.”

“Our family is so thankful for the Family Support Program; without its supports I’m not sure how we would make it.”

FALL RESPITE FUN

After cooling down from participating in both the Appalachian Fair and the Arc’s Absolutely Able Festival, our respite program has had plenty of time to find new fun things to do on respite nights. A few weeks ago, one of our respite groups did some tie dying to

customize their very own t-shirts. In groups of three, they came outside to create designs with tie dye on their shirts. This activity was so much fun for the kids and staff and everyone got to go home with a shirt of their very own creation.

The older kids have really enjoyed helping the staff cook dinner as well. Last week, three of our teens helped prepare and serve a spaghetti dinner for the whole respite group. Cooking

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UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES: EMPOWERING YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES TO THRIVE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

As we progress toward a more inclusive and accessible society, it's crucial that we bring young adults with disabilities along on this journey for equality. These individuals often encounter distinct hurdles when joining the workforce, such as discrimination, inadequate accommodations, and restricted opportunities for career progression. Nevertheless, with appropriate support and resources, they can unleash their full potential and flourish in their professional lives. This article from The Arc Washington County will delve into how we can empower young adults with disabilities to excel in their careers and make significant contributions to the labor market.

Opportunities for Networking

One of the primary benefits of a career in business is the opportunity to network and build relationships with other professionals. This is especially important for young adults with disabilities who may face social isolation or barriers to in-person interactions. Attending conferences, industry events, and networking sessions can help them build connections and gain exposure to new ideas and perspectives.

A Variety of Opportunities

The field of business also offers a vast array of options to choose from, ranging from marketing and sales to finance and management. This makes it easier for young adults with disabilities to find a field that aligns with their interests, skills, and career goals. They can tailor their job search and focus on positions that match their expertise and qualifications.

Real Estate and Business Angles

For those with a knack for sales, a career in real estate can be a great choice. The field provides a range of opportunities to work independently or as part of a team, and the ability to earn a commission can provide financial motivation and independence. Additionally, there are countless business angles that individuals with disabilities can explore, from starting their own consulting firm to developing new software or apps.

Potential for Leadership, Management Tracks

Pursuing leadership and management positions can be a great way for young adults with disabilities to advance their careers and achieve their professional goals. Many businesses offer training programs and mentorship opportunities to help employees develop the skills they need to succeed in these roles. These opportunities can also help them build their confidence and self-esteem.

Ability for Remote Work

Remote work is becoming increasingly popular in the field of business. This can be an ideal option for young adults with disabilities who may face mobility or transportation challenges. Working from home or a disability-friendly workspace

can help them stay productive and engaged while also reducing stress and improving their overall quality of life.

Stand Out with a Great Resume

To succeed in the competitive field of business, it is crucial to have a strong resume that showcases your skills and qualifications. Young adults with disabilities can go here to tailor their resumes to each position they are applying for to highlight their unique strengths and experience. This can help them stand out from other applicants and increase their chances of landing their dream job.

Keep Your Objectives Clear

As a professional adult with disabilities, it's crucial to ensure your career objectives align with your personal desires and aspirations. This is because your career isn't merely a job, it's a significant part of your life that can contribute to your sense of fulfillment, purpose, and self-worth. When your career objectives match your wishes, you're more likely to be motivated, engaged, and productive in your work. Moreover, this alignment can lead to higher job satisfaction, better mental health, and improved quality of life.

Finding Work-Life Balance

Many businesses prioritize work-life balance, which can be particularly beneficial for young adults with disabilities who may need to balance work with medical appointments or other needs. Flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting or flexible scheduling, can make it easier for them to manage their work and personal lives. This type of flexibility can also make it easier for them to pursue additional education or training to advance their careers.

A career in business offers a wealth of benefits and opportunities for young adults with disabilities. From networking and professional development to work-life balance and leadership opportunities, pursuing a career in business can help them achieve their professional goals and improve their overall quality of life. By creating a strong resume, and pursuing leadership and management positions, young adults with disabilities can build fulfilling and rewarding careers in business. (Tanya Lee, Ability Village)



HOLIDAY COOKING AND BAKING FOR ALL AGES

The holidays are fast approaching, and families will be spending more time in the kitchen preparing for holiday meals and making and baking goodies. It's never too early to start letting your little ones help with age-appropriate tasks in the kitchen, your school aged children will be out of school for the holidays and can help, and children of all ages can learn so many valuable lessons as kitchen helpers. In addition, most of the time if children are involved in the preparation of the food, they will be more likely to eat it; this is an added bonus for those picky eaters. Also, this is a great opportunity to incorporate more family time into your family's routine.

It is important to get your children into the kitchen at a young age to help them master simple cooking skills before they get older and begin to practice more complex ones. The following are age-appropriate tasks to not only start building those skills at an early age but also to get your kids excited and cooking and eating healthfully.

Between the ages of 2-5, children typically love to be kitchen helpers but will need close supervision. They can choose a fun apron to wear, help find the appropriate mixing bowls, measuring cups, utensils, etc. (if safe and not breakable), help gather all needed ingredients for cooking/baking, sort fruits and vegetables, wash fruits and vegeta-

bles in a bowl of water or in the sink, help wash plastic, non-breakable items in the sink, use a pastry brush to brush bread with olive oil, and choose cookie cutters and cut out shapes with those cookie cutters. (And an added bonus!! What a great opportunity to build vocabulary by naming items and talking about what your child is doing, learning colors, shapes, sizes, and opposites, sorting skills, counting, etc. The list of learning opportunities is endless!)

At ages 6 to 7, fine motor skills are further developed, so children can help with more complex kitchen tasks. They could crack eggs into a bowl, use a vegetable peeler, or use blunt scissors to cut onions or other herbs. You could also teach your children how to de-seed fruits and vegetables, shuck corn, or mix ingredients to prepare a colorful salad. They could also mix ingredients needed to make all those delicious holiday meals and goodies.



At ages 8-9, abilities may vary, so the tasks you give your children should be tailored to their individual stage of development. Some ideas include opening canned foods with a can opener, beating eggs, measuring ingredients for baking, reading a food thermometer, or pounding meat such as chicken or steak to tenderize them.

At ages 10-12, children are entering those pre-teen years and can typically begin to be given more independence in the kitchen. This would be a good time to incorporate meal planning, making a list, and grocery shopping with your child/children so they will be more involved in the meal preparation process. Again, tailoring to your child's stage of development is important to remember as well as maintaining supervision as needed. Some children in this age group may be ready to boil water for cooking pasta or vegetables, follow simple recipes, slice and chop vegetables, or bake their own creation in the oven.

By helping in the kitchen, not only are your children learning valuable skills that can be carried into adulthood, but priceless memories are being made together as a family.

Source: Johnson City Press/
Food City Registered Dietician,
Elizabeth Hall, PhD, RDN,
LDN, 8/18/21

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RESPIRE FUN... (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

has become one of the group's favorite activities to do together.

We have also had several opportunities to involve animals in our respite center. We have had both kittens and dogs come to respite on different nights to hang out with the kids. This has given an opportunity for the kids to learn how to interact gently with the animals and find warmth and comfort in a four-legged friend. One of our respite families even adopted one of the kittens who was looking for a home.

Most recently, we had a respite Halloween party the week before Halloween. This involved dressing up in costumes, Halloween crafts, and of course, candy! Some of the costumes included Barbie, an alien, an axylotl, a vampire, a flamingo, and a poodle skirt wearing lady from the 50s. We painted and decorated pumpkins, ate themed snacks, and watched a Halloween movie.

Our respite program has a lot to look forward to in the coming months! We have had several

wonderful volunteers from ET-SU and Milligan, who we look forward to having more of soon. Our respite program is also growing and getting more children involved with the program.





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The Advocate is a quarterly newsletter of The Arc of Washington County. This newsletter is dedicated to promoting the growth of nurturing communities where all people have the opportunity to join in fellowship and valued contribution to family, friends, neighborhood, work, spiritual, and community life.

HALLOWEEN AT THE ARC IS ALWAYS A GREAT TIME!

