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Transition Works

Where your future begins

Nebraska VR

Nebraska Department of Education

A Student's Story: Positive Thinking

Ivy Mackey is an excellent example of someone who knows the power of positive thinking. As she begins her first year of college, she says she is trying to think optimistically. Why is being positive so important for Ivy?

As a young woman with a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome and anxiety, Ivy says she is easily stressed, doesn't like talking to unfamiliar people, and gets upset if things don't go according to plan. Fortunately, she has learned strategies to help her in situations where she feels uncomfortable. She knows that techniques such as using a stress ball, listening to music, reading, and surrounding herself with people she knows well all help her get through stressful situations.

Angie Gangwish, Ivy's Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) Employment Specialist, says Ivy has made great progress in gaining self-confidence and in her ability to tolerate

changes. This progress didn't happen by accident. Hard work, perseverance, new experiences, and the support of others all contributed to her growth. Kim Mackey, Ivy's mother, says, "We never let her use her Asperger diagnosis as an excuse. We worked closely with her teachers and psychologist to set up an IEP that would help her be successful. Working with VR has also been extremely beneficial." VR provided a variety of career exploration



~ Ivy Mackey

activities and set up job shadowing situations to provide experience in Ivy's area of interest. VR also partnered with Educational Service Unit #7 to bring in an autism specialist to help with college planning and ideas to assist in the transition to college.

A summer internship at the David City Banner-Press newspaper provided valuable experience for Ivy. Duties included photography, typing, interviewing, and editing and will serve her well as she pursues a Journalism degree at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. However, her goals don't end there. Ivy also plans to major in Music Performance. She plays the flute, sings, and says she may even try out for school plays in college. *(Continued on page 3)*

What's Appening



myHomework

Looking for a way to keep track of your classes, homework, and tests? Tired of shuffling papers? Is carrying a planner

or a calendar not your thing? Then the myHomework app may be right for you! Enter your deadlines and see at a glance what you need to do. It will also remind you of due dates. Teachers can use the app to enter class information and assignments. Check it out! Free for Android, iPhone, iPad and iPod touch.



Job Search Tips

Want some quick tips on searching for a job? Watch the brief videos on this app that cover topics such as: sending e-mails

to employers, avoiding mistakes on your resume, and tips for getting an interview. Download the app and get started now! Free for Android, iPhone, iPad and iPod touch.





Employers Speak

Nebraska employers have provided us with simple tips for success for students as they prepare to enter the world of work. Whether you're a high school student, an educator, or a parent - read on!

Educators, you play an important role in preparing students for employment and these tips may be useful for sparking classroom discussion or in developing activities to practice these skills. Parents, your children (whether they admit it or not) do learn from you and you can use these tips for reinforcement as you assist them in preparing for a job. And, last but certainly not least, students listen up! These tips could make the difference in getting and keeping a job.

Tip #1: When filling out an application or submitting a resume, remember that the hiring manager doesn't know you. You have to tell them who you are and what skills and knowledge you bring to the table.

Source: Briana Morriss, Manager, Recruitment
The Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha

Tip #2: Take a pen with you! I never hired a person who didn't have the foresight to realize they were going to need a pen to fill out an application. I always had a green pen for the receptionist to give to applicants if they asked for a pen. When I reviewed the application, if it was completed in green ink, I knew they didn't bring a pen with them.

Source: Al Cox, Lead Automotive Instructor
Metropolitan Community College, Omaha

Tip #3: Most things in life you cannot control. The one thing you CAN control is your attitude!

Source: Nick Vuko
Walker Tire/Quick Nick's, Lincoln

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions from parents, students, and educators

Q: What is Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation)?

A: Nebraska VR, previously known as "VR" or "Voc Rehab", is a program that has a primary goal of assisting individuals with disabilities to get and keep a job. VR can assist students with disabilities in coordinating information and resources as they transition from high school to adult life.

This is a time-limited program. Generally speaking, once an individual is employed for at least 90 days in a job agreed upon by the individual and the VR counselor, services are ended.

Q: At what age should a student apply for services?

A: We encourage schools and others, such as medical specialists, counselors, state agency professionals, parents and students themselves, to make referrals toward the end of the student's sophomore year or beginning of the junior year of high school. Referring a student while in high school allows time for students and their VR counselors to start working towards the students' employment goals.



A Student's Story: Positive Thinking

(Continued from page 1)

Ivy is fortunate to have a strong support system, including her parents and VR. Her mother says an unlimited talk and text cell phone plan allows Ivy to contact her family at any time with questions, concerns or just to chat. Her VR Counselor Angie also remains in contact with Ivy, providing support and help with resources as needed. VR will be available to provide placement services when Ivy is ready to search for a job.

It appears Ivy is not the only one with positive thoughts. Angie sums it up by saying, "She has a wonderful smile, is always happy, and has a positive comment to add to a conversation. I cannot wait to see the positive changes in store when she attends college." Now that's positive thinking.

Transition: The Who, What, When, Where, Why and How

It is likely you've heard the term "transition" when discussing education for a student with a disability. If you haven't heard this exact term, you may be familiar with the concept. Or, maybe this is all new to you. Regardless, now is a good time to review the who, what, when, where, why, and how related to transition.

Who? Students with disabilities must have a transition plan, beginning at age 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the Individual Education Program (IEP) team. In addition to the usual IEP team members, representatives of adult agencies (such as VR or the Developmental Disabilities Division) may be included in the IEP meetings (with parent/guardian consent) if it is anticipated that services from those agencies may benefit the student.

What? The transition plan is a part of the IEP designed to help the student identify goals for life after high school and to develop a plan to accomplish those goals. Transition planning involves linking the student with services or programs needed after graduation. Specific areas must be addressed in the transition plan, including: training, education, employment, and independent living (when appropriate).

When? Once the student reaches age 16, the transition plan must be reviewed, at a minimum, annually.

Where? The transition plan is typically developed at the regularly scheduled annual IEP meeting for the student.

Why? First of all, it's required by federal and state law. There is good reason for this law, as the final years of high school provide an excellent opportunity to ensure that the student is prepared for adult life.

How? Transition planning first involves assessing the student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests. Questions such as the following may be asked to help determine the student's goals for life after high school.

- What does the student want to do after high school (such as further education or training, employment, military, etc.)?
- Where and how does the student want to live after high school (such as dorm, apartment, family home, group home, with support or independently)?
- How does the student want to be involved in the community (including recreation or community activities and transportation needs)?

Based upon the strengths, needs, preferences, and interests of the student, the IEP team will then develop a plan to help the student reach his or her goals. **Want to know more?** A good place to start is the Nebraska Department of Education's Transition website: <http://ndetransition.site.esu9.org/>. This site contains information for students, families, educators, and agency professionals. Check it out!



VR

Makeover: Nebraska VR Edition

Nebraska VR (previously referred to as Voc Rehab) has a new look, a new tag line and a new website with a section just for students with disabilities, their families, and educators. The website features frequently asked questions, student success stories, parent resources and contact information. Please check out our site at: vr.nebraska.gov. Contact us with questions, comments, and suggestions by e-mail at: marketingteam.vr@nebraska.gov.

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Connect with Us

Nebraska VR has a long history of providing transition services for youth with disabilities as they transition from school to work. We partner with parents, schools, and employers to help students prepare for the future. Transition Works, published by Nebraska VR, is intended for students with disabilities and their families, as well as educators.

Find additional resources for students at:
vr.nebraska.gov/youth

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Nebraska VR - *Where your future begins*