

Plain Language Summary

Complex Employment Journeys: Case Studies of Four Families of Adults with Intellectual Disability

A Quick Look:

Many adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) want to have a job. But finding a job can be hard. Families often help with this process. Parents often turn to one another for help and advice. Mentorship has been helpful in many settings, so this study looked at whether it could also help families support employment.

This study followed four families for one year as they helped their loved one with IDD find a job. Each family was paired with a parent mentor who had experience helping their own child find a job. Researchers wanted to learn what helps and what makes it harder to find work.

Key Findings:

- For many people, finding a job is a long journey, not something that happens quickly.
- Families play a big and important role in helping their loved one look for and keep a job.
- Every person's path to a job is different. There is no one "right way."
- Parent mentors can help by giving advice, support, and encouragement.
- People need many kinds of supports (like job coaching, transportation, and natural supports) to succeed at work.

Putting It into Practice

These findings show ways to better support families and improve employment outcomes:

- Include families when helping someone find a paid job. They are important partners.
- Offer mentoring programs so families can learn from each other.
- Make sure people know about services and supports in their community.
- Provide ongoing support, not just help at the beginning.

More About This Article

This study followed four families over one year while they helped their loved one look for work. Some people found jobs, and others did not. The study shows that families need support, better access to employment services, and clear information about how to find jobs. It also shows that mentoring and strong support systems can make a difference.

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For more on this topic, view the research study webpage: <https://idd.vcurrtc.org/research/rs1.cfm>