

Fact Sheet #2

September 2026

TECH-Prep Study and Online Course:

- The Technology Early Career Preparation Intervention project (TECH-Prep) is a research intervention designed to introduce students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to careers in technology, particularly students who are disempowered (e.g., from diverse racially, culturally, or linguistically groups, receive public benefits, attend or graduated from a Title I school). One part of the TECH-Prep program consists of a facilitated online training for students with IDD that focuses on careers in technology and soft skill development for work. The online training takes place after school and lasts approximately 10-12 weeks. This online course is followed by a paid internship aligned with the interests they identify during the course.

Importance of Navigating Bias and Disability Disclosure:

- People with disabilities have the right to the same employment opportunities as everyone else. Unfortunately, disability bias and ableism are an ugly reality of the society we live in and the places we work in. Talking openly about ableism and bias can provide a space for youth with disabilities to talk about their own experiences and learn strategies for navigating bias. It is also important for youth to have knowledge about when and how to disclose their disability in the workplace and their rights and protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to receive equal opportunities and receive reasonable accommodations.

How TECH-Prep Was Used in the Online Course:

- A major focus of the TECH-Prep curriculum is on providing youth with IDD with the soft skills needed in high-demand jobs and workplaces in technology fields. One of the areas of focus is in explaining what disability bias and ableism are and providing a space for students to reflect on their own experiences and feelings around microaggressions they've encountered in school, community, and work settings. We then share strategies and listen to what students have found to be helpful approaches and then roleplay

scenarios to put them into practice. In a later lesson, we expand on disability awareness to explore what rights people with disabilities have and what disability disclosure is and when it could be useful in requesting workplace accommodations. Students then get to practice disclosing their disability to an employer in a roleplay setting and the process of requesting and negotiating accommodations.

Next steps for transition teams in digging deeper into empowering youth with tools to navigate bias and know when to disclose their disability:

- There are several great resources available to draw from for transition professionals looking to start similar conversations with youth around these topics. Below are a few that have been used in the TECH Prep project to consider.

The Job Accommodation Network (<https://askjan.org/>) is a wonderful resource hub with a wide range of resources, fact sheets, videos, and teaching materials that explain the ADA, disability rights, what potential accommodations for different types of disabilities might be, and how to navigate the disclosure process.

For those looking to start conversations with youth around ableism, implicit bias, and microaggressions in the workplace, the organization Docs with Disabilities has created an introductory video explaining these concepts in easy-to-understand terms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOGunH10ofk>

- **Learn More** <https://idd.vcurrtrc.org/research/rs3.cfm>

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