

PEER TO PEER

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Finding & Applying for Jobs

Searching for a job can be a difficult process for anyone, and it is common to be nervous about the process. This guide will walk you through the steps of planning and preparing for the job search and interview process.

The Importance of Having a Job or Career

Although finding and applying for jobs can be challenging, there are many benefits to having a career. Whether you are in a volunteer position or are looking for paid employment, getting and keeping a job can have a positive impact on you and others in your community.

- **Reach your goals:** Having a job creates a chance for you to set goals, overcome challenges, persevere, and ultimately achieve those goals.
- **Get out of your comfort zone:** Having a job gives you the opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people. Getting your first job can lead to many possibilities, both professionally and personally.
- **Benefit others:** Many jobs allow you to have an impact on others around you. Whether you work in the service industry, manufacturing, technology or the arts, your work impacts others by the goods or services that you provide. Even if you do not have daily contact with community members, your work can impact those in your neighborhood, city, state, or even across the country.

Build Your Connections

In addition to creating a resume, it can also be beneficial to begin connecting with people and organizations online to build your network. In doing so, you can expand your contacts which can benefit you as you begin searching for available jobs. The more people you are connected to, the greater your chances are of learning about job opportunities and being connected to potential employers. Online sites that support professional networking include LinkedIn, Indeed, Meetup and Facebook, among others.





Think About Your Strengths & Interests

In searching for a job, a helpful first step is to write down your strengths and aspirations. Consider having a conversation with a friend or another trusted adult that knows you well. Here to the right are a few questions you can think about when starting your job search.

Writing down these ideas will help you organize your thoughts about your skills, strengths, and interests to help you determine what kind of jobs might be a good fit for you.

Here is an example of what your list may look like:

- **What are your strengths? What are you good at?**
- **What skills do you have?**
- **What do you enjoy doing?**
- **What do you see yourself doing in the future that will make you happy?**
- **What jobs interest you?**
- **What do you hope to accomplish?**

Skills

- Good at organizing
- Microsoft Word
- Foreign languages

Strengths

- Time management
- Communication
- Detail-oriented

Jobs of Interest

- Library assistant
- Programmer
- Receptionist

Find Potential Jobs

There are many resources that specifically help individuals with ASD to find jobs.

Vocational Rehabilitation Agency: There is a Vocational Rehabilitation Agency in every state that helps qualified individuals with disabilities prepare and search for jobs. Their services include vocational evaluation, placement, and training. A VR case manager works with you to develop a work plan and to guide you toward gainful employment. Go online to <http://www.askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies/> to find an agency near you.

The Spectrum Careers: The Spectrum Careers is a free website that is designed to help individuals with autism in their job search. The website connects with businesses that hire people on the autism spectrum. It involves a simple process of answering a few questions about yourself and uploading your resume. Then the job search begins right away. Additionally, The Spectrum Careers has tools to help individuals build their resumes. <https://www.thespectrumcareers.com/>



Create a Resume



The next step in the process of finding a job is to create a resume, or a summary of your education, work experience and skills. It is important to take the time to prepare a thorough and professional resume. This document will be your first impression to a potential employer. There are many ways you can format your resume. With just a quick search on Google (enter terms like 'sample resume' or 'resume template'), you can find thousands of templates to help you get started. Some of the things that you should include on your resume include (to the right):

Here is an example of what your resume may look like:

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

Address · Phone
[Email](#) · [LinkedIn Profile](#) · [Twitter/Blog/Portfolio](#)

Use this section to briefly state your career objective or summarize what makes you stand out. Use language from the job description as keywords.

EDUCATION

MONTH YEAR
DEGREE TITLE, SCHOOL

It's okay to brag about your GPA, awards, and honors. Feel free to summarize your coursework too.

EXPERIENCE

DATES FROM - TO
JOB TITLE, COMPANY

Describe your responsibilities and achievements in terms of impact and results. Use examples, but keep it short.

DATES FROM - TO
JOB TITLE, COMPANY

Describe your responsibilities and achievements in terms of impact and results. Use examples, but keep it short.

ACTIVITIES

Use this section to highlight your relevant passions, activities, and how you like to give back. It's good to include Leadership and volunteer experiences here. Or show off important extras like publications, certifications, languages and more.

SKILLS

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List your strengths relevant for the role you're applying for• List one of your strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List one of your strengths• List one of your strengths• List one of your strengths
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- **First and last name**
- **Home address**
- **Telephone number**
- **E-mail address**
- **Education:**
 - **Where did you go to school?**
- **Work history:**
 - **Where have you worked for pay? When did you work there (list the date range)? What did you do at each job?**
- **Volunteer/internship experiences:**
 - **Where have you worked without pay? When did you volunteer or intern (list the date range)? What did you do there?**
- **Other skills and related knowledge:**
 - **What can you do or what do you know that the employer might find helpful? NOTE: You can refer to your list for other skills and strengths to include here.**



Prepare for an Interview

Once you have successfully applied for a job, you may receive an invitation to interview with a company. It is important to practice interview skills. The interview process can be difficult for everyone – you are not alone if you feel nervous about it! To the right are some ways to ensure that you are prepared for what is to come:

Watch “how-to” videos that walk you through common interview questions. This gives you a chance to view other people going through the interview process. An example interview video can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/3tlqglv>

- **Search online for examples of interview questions and think about possible answers. Here are a few questions that you may be asked during your interview:**
 - **Why do you want this job?**
 - **Why should we hire you?**
 - **What are your strengths and weaknesses?**
- **Have a family member or a trusted friend pose as the interviewer and practice saying your answers out loud.**
- **Ask for feedback. Were you making appropriate eye contact? Did you fidget too much? Were you clear when answering the questions?**
- **Consider videotaping your practice interview so you can identify areas to improve.**

Other Things to Do Before an Interview

- A day or two before the interview, practice going to the interview site, so you know how to get there, how long it takes, and what the building looks like.
- Research the company and think about any questions that you have about the position or the company. If your questions are not answered during the interview, you may be given the opportunity to ask any remaining questions at the end of your conversation. Be sure these questions are specific to the position and will help you decide if the job is the right fit for you. It may be helpful to write these down before the interview. For example: What are the job duties? Is there a dress code? What is the pay rate?
- The day of the interview, plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- First impressions last, so make sure you dress appropriately for your interview. This will show your future employer that you are professional and serious about the position you applied for. This website describes what you should wear based on what kind of job you are applying for: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-dress-for-an-interview-2061163>
- With enough practice and preparation, you can go into that interview with confidence to impress your future employer.



Additional Resources

Autism Speaks: 12 Steps to Help Adults with Autism Find the Right Job

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/12-steps-help-adults-autism-find-right-job>

The SPECTRUM Careers

<https://www.thespectrumcareers.com/>

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

<https://www.csavr.org/stateagencydirectory>

Organization for Autism Research: Writing a Resume - Where to Begin?

<https://researchautism.org/writing-a-resume-where-to-begin/>

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion

<http://www.askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies/>



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