



SST8 Family Newsletter

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How Teaching Soft Skills Can Help Prepare Students with Disabilities for Employment

When we think about preparing students for the workplace, we typically think about the technical or academic skills they will need to accomplish a specific task at a job. For instance, operate a specific machine, how to use computer software, how to manage a cash register. However, as our economy continues to move away from the work of production and more to a service-oriented workplace, preparation for the workplace must go far beyond teaching production skills and incorporate what are known as “soft skills” and behaviors that students must internalize to maintain interpersonal relationships, manage emotions and navigate the world of work.

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Self-Advocacy is one of the most important skills to teach students with disabilities. Being able to tell people, what you want or need, is important in all aspects of life. Self-advocacy is important in the very early stages of transition planning. For example, students who can self-advocate for themselves can tell what kinds of opportunities they want to pursue and what they are not interested in, which can help parents better support them in pursuing their interests. Within the workplace, the student can advocate for himself/herself when discussing asking for a promotion, a raise, concerns on the job, and other areas vital to job satisfaction.

Collaboration is another important soft skill. Working collaboratively with others is expected in nearly all workplace environments. Collaboration is more than just getting along with others, but requires students to ask meaningful questions to accomplish tasks as a group and solve problems. Teaching students to ask questions, offer and receive feedback, and engage in problem solving behaviors, which are important assists in any workplace and will benefit them, their employers and colleagues.

The impact of soft skills on postsecondary success is vital to students with disabilities. These skills go a long way in helping students in finding and keeping their first jobs. Learning soft skills is a process. Soft skills are necessary for youth to succeed in education, job training, independent living, community participation and the workplace.



The Mission of Weaver Industries is to maximize the independence and personal fulfillment of individuals with disabilities through community, business, and family partnerships. We provide this through vocational training and employment opportunities.

Weaver Industries is comprised of several different businesses.

- Weaver ProPak provides professional production services at competitive prices. They offer: Assembly, Packaging, Kitting, Labeling, and Fulfillment
- Weaver TruClean provides customers with a top quality professional service that exceeds expectations by using environment-friendly cleaning products and trained employees to achieve optimal results.
- Weaver EarthCare offers full-service commercial grounds maintenance, that includes: Spring and Fall Cleanup, Regular Mowing Services, Plant Bed Maintenance (including weeding and mulching) and Shrub Pruning.
- Weaver SecurShred is a NAID AAA Certified shredding company dedicated to providing the best service and support to its clients in the area of confidential and secure information destruction.
- Employment Services Division is a work in partnership with individuals with disabilities (employees) to help them prepare for and obtain competitive employment. They work with eligible employees to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence.

Weaver Industries is located at: 520 S. Main Street, Suite 2441, Akron, OH 44311

Phone: 330 379-3660

Fax: 330 379-3665

Website: <http://www.weaverindustries.org/>

The remainder of the PAC Meetings for the school year will be:

February 14, 2018 from 9:30 am—1:30 pm Recreational Opportunities with representatives from various providers who offer recreational programs for persons with special needs and disabilities.

April 18, 2018 from 9:30 am—1:30 pm What's New in Ohio? Gary Tonks, Executive Director of The Arc of Ohio will provide information in an open forum on legislative issues, waivers, changes and updates in DD and Medicaid Services.

Both meetings will be held at the Summit ESC, and reminders will be sent out closer to the meeting dates.

**Happy Holidays from
SST8!**



Contact Us

State Support Team Region 8
420 Washington Ave.
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221
(330) 929-6634 sst8.org



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