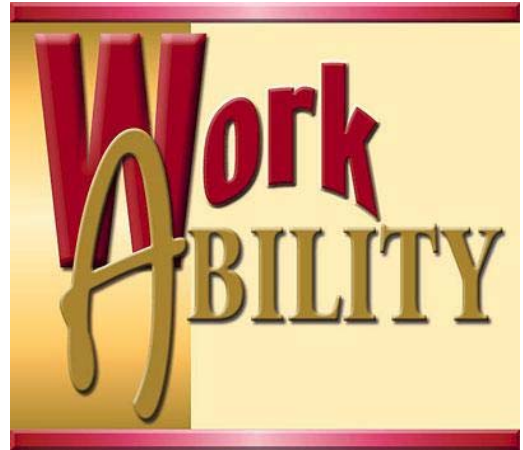


TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK:

We believe that a partnership with the schools is critical if the transition of individuals from the schools into the world of work is to achieve optimal levels of success.

Opportunities for career development and lifelong learning must be provided to Aiken County's citizens with disabilities from school-age through adulthood. This means that Tri-Development Center and the Aiken County Board of Disabilities must join with business, government, and public and private education so that students can be provided with meaningful vocational training opportunities. We believe, not only that vocational assessment should be available to students with special needs, but also that such assessments should be based on actual work experiences that reflect an individual's choices and interests. Education for employment should include training that will allow students to be employed as adults. We support the conversion of traditional classroom services to the provision of job supports in integrated settings, and are eager to assist our area's school personnel as they strive to make this transition. We believe that transition services should be flexible and based on individual need. Such services should include, but not be limited to, vocational exploration, the development of appropriate job behavior, transportation, therapies, on-the job assistance, and follow-along.

Service Coordinators of the Aiken County Board of Disabilities work with children and their families as advocates during the development of annual Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Tri-Development Center's job coaches and other Adult Training and Support Services personnel are also eager to assist in the development and implementation of effective transition plans. We believe that it is not necessary for each student with special education needs who leaves the public school system and, who still needs supports provided through our agencies, to enter into a sheltered workshop setting. Having been provided with the appropriate training and with the necessary supports being available, many students can enter directly from the public schools into inclusive employment settings. Our goal is to help make such a transition as smooth as possible and to ensure that these former students continue to have the support services necessary for them to be successful. In some instances, the S.C. Department of Vocational Rehabilitation will be able to provide the supports needed by an individual who can meet the criteria of that state agency and who can be



expected to be competitively employed within the time parameters governing the services by that agency.

It is unfortunate that many individuals are not able to receive needed vocational supports upon their leaving school. This is due to Tri-Development Center's not having sufficient revenues with which to serve these individuals. We do realize that with the provision of appropriate services many individual with disabilities can be more successful in community living and in becoming productive and more independent members of society. We pledge to remain strong advocates for the individuals who are awaiting services, but recognize that people with disabilities, their families, and other interested persons in our community must also make their needs known to governmental officials at the federal, state, and local level.

