



Transition through Discovery

Stage I: Career Awareness

Helping students identify their interests and recognize their strengths is a powerful first step in guiding them toward meaningful career paths. By fostering self-awareness, students can begin to see the connection between what they enjoy, what they're good at, and the wide range of careers available to them. Introducing aligned career options at this stage encourages curiosity, builds confidence, and lays the groundwork for informed exploration and future planning.

Discovery Process

Discovery is a process that helps teams get to know their students with complex needs and understand their interests, skills, accommodation requirements, and the skill gaps they have, as they support them in successful postsecondary transition.

The Discovery Process is also an authentic assessment that identifies the strengths of the student as a foundation for postsecondary employment. Structured student and family interviews, work-based assessment, and observation in the school, community, and home are used to collect information. Information gathered can help develop meaningful IEP goals and guide programming decisions. The learning activities can easily align with the Extended Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. Examples of lesson plans that align with the extended standards are included in this resource tool, and there is a template that can help teachers develop their own career awareness standards- focused lessons.

The infusion of the Discovery Process into learning activities does not greatly increase the daily workload of the teacher, but rather helps to add meaning and purpose to those benchmarks and standards that the teacher is working on with the student. It serves to increase expectations and improve long-term outcomes. Beginning with the development of the Life Book at Stage I, information is added to and updated in an on-going process. When the student enters the middle grades, the Life Book transitions to the Career Portfolio throughout Stage II and is further developed during Stage III. It provides a living document to capture the strengths and capabilities of who this student is while focusing on the long- range goal of post- secondary transition into meaningful lifelong success. For more detailed information, see the Introduction to Discovery webinar below.

Trainings

- [Introduction to Discovery.](#)

Documentation of Interests and Employment Skills

For elementary school students, a Life Book is developed as a way to document the interests and skills of the student at home and school. Detailed information on the structure of a Life Book and how to create one can be found in the Trainings/Webinars section below.

Trainings

- [Stage 1: Life Books.](#)

Resources

- [Life Book Template.](#)
- [Career Plan Template: Part I.](#)
- [Terms and Definitions.](#)
- [Expectations for Employment.](#)
- [14 National Career Clusters.](#)
- [Model Release](#) – Because photos of the student are used in the Life Book and Career Portfolio, permission should be obtained from the parents. Please use your district-approved required photo/video release(s).

Implementation Plan

As a team focuses on implementing Discovery at the elementary school level, their focus will be on identifying interests and skills, creating opportunities for the student to explore their community, and developing jobs at home and school.

Trainings

- [Stage 1: Career Awareness.](#)

Resources

- [The Ultimate List of Age-Appropriate Chores for Children and Teens.](#)

Instruction and Supports for Vocational Activities

At this stage, teams should be aware of predictors of employment success. Meaningful person-centered planning focused on employment should contain:

- Inclusion in the general education classroom and instruction aligned with grade-level standards.
- High parental expectations.
- Skill development related to self-determination, self-advocacy, decision-making, and goal setting.

At the elementary level, this can easily be embedded in existing classroom instruction. It does not require additional curriculum, but rather planning and instruction focused on post-school outcomes.

Resources

- [Extended Standards - ELA.](#)
- [Extended Standards - Math.](#)
- [Extended Standards - Science.](#)
- [Wyoming Parent Information Center.](#)
- [Childhood Disability SSI Program: Guide for School Professionals.](#)
- [Pre-Employment Transition Services \(Pre-ETS\).](#)
- [Family Resources to Support Student Transition.](#)
- [Person-centered planning \(PCP\).](#)
- [Self Determination/Self Advocacy Checklist.](#)

Real World Application

As the team identifies interests, current skills, and skills which need to be developed, they initiate pre-employment exposure by touring local businesses and highlighting jobs occurring in the student's school and community. Instruction is also designed to address employment skill gaps. School and home chores are utilized to create a foundation of understanding about employment expectations and opportunities.

Resources

- [Integrating Discovery into the Curriculum.](#)

Connection and Collaboration with Outside Agencies

The educational team can support parents in making initial connections with community services and resources. These may include:

- WYABLE Account.
- Social Security.
- Guardianship Supports.

Resources

- [WYABLE Tax](#) - Free Savings Accounts.
- [Social Security Red Book](#) - employment-related provisions.
- [Social Security Disability Determination Services.](#)
- [Getting Ready for When Your Child Reaches the Age of Majority: A Parent's Guide.](#)
- [Developmental Disability Waiver.](#)