

# Read This First !

## How to Interpret Job Preferences

Your Employment Selections (YES) is designed to identify job preferences for numerous youth and adults with a variety of characteristics. In addition to individuals without reading skills, such as many individuals with severe mental retardation, YES may also be a valuable tool for youth and adults with 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading skills and those learning English as a second language.

Because of the breadth of its application, some jobs may not appear appropriate to each individual's skills, intellectual abilities, or career potential. Keep in mind that the program was developed only to identify job preferences, not to match preferences to skill levels. When an individual selects a job that appears inappropriate, we ask that you not dismiss it. Instead, decide if there is a way that the individual can perform parts of the job, or perform a different job with similar characteristics. Here are some questions for you, the individual participant, and your team members to ask. First, can the participant perform one or more of the essential tasks in the job while another worker performs the remainder? Second, can one or more essential tasks be modified to accommodate the participant? Third, can a new job be created with different tasks? Fourth, can a small group of workers combine their skills to perform the various tasks required of one job? See Section 7 and Appendix C for information on how to adapt preferred jobs to characteristics of individual participants.

Today's educators and adult service providers are under great pressure to identify individual preferences and to include their choices in program planning. For example, the 1997 Re-Authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) emphasizes developing transition plans starting at age 14 and including information on the participant's interests and preferences. In fact, IDEA states that

*Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that . . . is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests . . .* (34 CFR Part B)

The YES Program has been developed to assist educators, adult service providers, and individuals with disabilities in identifying specific job preferences. Good luck in your job placement efforts!

**Please read the entire manual before using the YES Program with participants.**

# Your Employment Selections

## Section 1: Introduction

### **What is the *Your Employment Selections* (YES) program?**

The YES program provides information on jobs by showing motion video on CD ROM. It is designed to (a) provide participants who have disabilities with maximum information about community jobs in a short period of time, (b) present realistic information about jobs by showing motion video, (c) increase participant choice-making about job prospects, and (d) assist with transition or community employment planning. The goal is to allow participants to identify job preferences. For special educators, it is consistent with the 1997 Re-Authorization of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which requires that transition planning include the youth's preferences and interests (34 CFR Part B). See Appendix A for a description of the development and evaluation of the YES program.

### **Who are the participants?**

YES can be used for participants who have developmental disabilities such as *mental retardation, autism, specific learning disabilities, or multiple disabilities*. No reading skills are required, although words labeling jobs will appear on the computer screen. A narrator will verbally describe jobs as they are shown on video. The YES program is best suited for youth and adults whose reading limitations prevent them from using other career inventories. The program may also be applicable to participants who have visual limitations or who are deaf, given special adaptations.

### **Who can be a facilitator?**

The facilitator can be a school teacher, transition specialist, career counselor, vocational teacher, supported employment specialist, rehabilitation counselor, psychologist, parent, or other professional. As a facilitator, your responsibilities are to establish rapport, familiarize the participant with the computer, start the program, prompt the participant to respond to selections, answer questions from the participant, communicate results to others, such as IEP or Support Team Members, and print results.

## **How much assistance is needed from the facilitator?**

The facilitator must remain with the participant at the computer terminal through each phase of the YES program, unless the participant shows clear evidence of operating the program independently. Even if the participant performs independently, the facilitator should remain readily available to answer questions or to provide additional information.

## **What information does the YES program provide and how can it be used?**

The YES program allows a participant and facilitator to gather information on jobs and print out a “short list” of 5-10 jobs that are preferred, that is, jobs that match the participant’s desired working conditions and are repeatedly selected over other jobs.

A participant’s support team may use job preferences to guide goals/objectives of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) related to transition planning, shape vocational education activities, or assist in identifying preferred job placements. The YES program will also support the inclusion of students with disabilities in “school-to work” activities,” and may be useful in career education (job awareness) activities. The YES program may play numerous roles leading to job placement. For example,

1. Administer the YES program to identify preferences.
2. Administer other assessments to identify skills, vocational capabilities, etc.
3. Meet with the participant’s family to communicate and confirm job preferences.
4. Meet with the Support Team to develop the Individual Education Plan (or, for adults, the Individual Program Plan or Person-Centered Plan).
5. Target career goals related to job preferences.
6. Target objectives leading to career goals.
7. Implement school-based instructional procedures to meet targeted objectives.
8. Arrange brief community placement (job samples) related to job preferences.
9. Evaluate success of community placements related to preferences.
10. Develop jobs related to preferences.
11. Place participant on community job related to preferences.
12. Support participant on community job by implementing instructional procedures to meet employment standards.
13. Identify career advancement objectives related to preferred job.
14. Evaluate job performance and progress leading to career goals and objectives. Re-administer the YES program as necessary.
15. Keep Support Team informed of progress towards goals and objectives and meet periodically to discuss changes in job placement, job carving needs, etc.