



The Family Support Network for Employment (FSNE)

FSNE is a family-led coalition advocating for employment opportunities and jobs in the open labour market for individuals with developmental disabilities who face higher employment barriers.

[Our vision:](#) empowered and knowledgeable families demand the transformation of employment support practices in Ontario with a commitment to Employment First principles, policy, and best practices.

Only one in every five adults with an intellectual disability is currently employed in Canada.¹

We know:

- ❖ when families have high employment expectations for their family member, it is more likely their son or daughter will gain inclusive employment.
- ❖ having a paid job during the school years is the prime indicator of an individual having a paid job after finishing their school years.
- ❖ employment expectations for families should start at birth, in the early years and during the school years.

"Over the school years I did many things intuitively I wish someone had told me then they should have been done intentionally" Mother

Our work

Starting in 2018 with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) we conducted a global study of effective policies and best practices using evidence-informed research and the first consultation process of its kind in Ontario involving individuals with a developmental disability, their families, agencies/service providers, and employers. Results illustrated well known tools and supports necessary to create effective, sustainable, and high-

¹ [Employment - Inclusion Canada](#)



outcome employment services for the above jobseekers; however, implementation of these tools and supports remains sporadic in Ontario. [FSNE – Family Support Network](#)

Further research has delivered additional tools

- the [Learning Path to Employment – FSNE](#) online course for families to develop a vision, understand best practices, and navigate the employment system. It provides the knowledge and tools they need to advocate for, and secure, meaningful paid employment.
- [Life experiences](#) highlight employment challenges and opportunities.
- an online survey [Employment for individuals with developmental disability in Ontario](#) measures the current state of employment for this demographic.
- [No One Left Behind](#) a Conceptual Frame-Guidelines and Principles for a Relationship-Consultative-Selling Employment Model with Third Party Support Representation for job seekers with intellectual disabilities facing higher employment barriers.

Our strategic systems and operating concepts will provide the needed knowledge for all families and senior decision makers to enable employment services shift to long term quality employment opportunities for job seekers with developmental disabilities and higher employment barriers.

To reach more employment stakeholders, we have partnered with LCOworks in 2022-2023 in the project “Real Work for Real Pay - Increasing the Market Share of Employment Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities” to deliver tutorials on the Consultative Selling with Third Party representation model for Ontario employment agencies.

Explore some of these [Resources](#):

Benefit from our evidence-based research on what ideas and concepts underpin employment success for the above job seekers.

- Explore [Module 4 of the Online course](#) which targets families during the school years giving them tools to support their family member at any stage of their employment journey. It goes through what can be done by families during the early years, school years



and post-school years by stakeholders to make the journey towards employment more successful.

- Watch the tutorials for [Employment agencies and employers](#) as well as some [flyers in the Employment issues](#) and some [employment action cards](#).
- **Transition Planning:** FSNE work portrayed in the *Impact* series, from the University of Minnesota, focusing on transition in a global context. Preparing for life after high school—whether that means college, work, or simply living in the community—varies greatly around the world. The authors, from Australia, Bhutan, Canada, Kenya, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Ukraine and elsewhere, share their personal stories and their work in building inclusive transition programs that will lead young people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities toward fulfilling lives of their own choosing.

[Impact: Feature Issue on Transition in a Global Context for People with Intellectual, Developmental, and Other Disabilities | Institute on Community Integration \(umn.edu\)](#)

Additional Information about the Family Support Network for Employment (FSNE)

We have highlighted some videos that illustrate our work and our aim for transformation.

[FSNE – Family Support Network](#)

Our story (5:16) https://youtu.be/LsP0_gTQ-1c

The Family Support Network for Employment (FSNE) is a family-led coalition that seeks to engage families of individuals with developmental disabilities in supportive networks around employment, social infrastructure, and resources. We believe employment is a means of inclusion.

Our vision (0:55) <https://youtu.be/2vGOlqE8UBE>

We seek to help families generate a positive vision about the future of their children and youth with a developmental disability—a future that includes “real work for real pay.”

Inclusion as a core value (3:26) <https://youtu.be/kZ3uxdzke5E>

We believe in inclusive communities where employment rights and opportunities are available for persons with developmental disabilities with higher needs of support.



Government accountability and funding (2:36) <https://youtu.be/66z7GcuFsV8>

Different levels of government offer incentives that seek to promote employment for people with developmental disabilities. How effective are they?

Individuals with developmental disability facing higher employment barriers (2:19)

[Optimize Employment - YouTube](#)

Who are the jobseekers we advocate for?

[Self-advocates – FSNE](#) Employees talk about their jobs and struggles

Julian shares his job (3:04) <https://youtu.be/IPYyW2mCkyl>

**Evidence of success based on Relationship-Consultative Selling and Third-Party Representation
Support employment model**

Models of support based on consultative selling (2:57) <https://youtu.be/WBVSuYYppTA> and third-party representation support as strategies we would like to see implemented by service providers.

Evolving practices (2:28) <https://youtu.be/YIKQD71MjdA>

Employment service agencies need to evolve from job-readiness models to a relationship model connecting job seekers and their skills to employers and their needs.

Third-party representation support (2:45) <https://youtu.be/XHcr6abnZWM>

A model in which a trusted professional third-party source represents the job seeker to the employer in order to build a relationship between the employer and the candidate.

From sheltered environments to real work (1:06) <https://youtu.be/Wtb8P7rYYF0>

Shifting the conversation regarding employment for people with developmental disabilities away from sheltered settings into the competitive job market.



Steps towards employment (1:24) <https://youtu.be/CNrgNdVWnzA>

A third-party agency's role should include developing relationships with job seekers and employers.

Want to learn more take the [Learning Path to Employment – FSNE](#) online course for families

Additional external resources

Examples of employment services best practices:

- Community Living Sarnia Lambton Summer Employment Transitions
<https://vimeo.com/136717952>
<https://youtu.be/k9wjOr12Gig>
- Project Search <http://www.projectsearch.us/>
 - How they do it
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQ-8p5DN26c>
 - Results
 - http://youtu.be/rsHi_-4iyIk
- Project Search in Canada [PROJECT SEARCH - About \(projectsearchcanada.org\)](http://projectsearchcanada.org)
Project SEARCH is a unique school-to-work training program for students with disabilities. Students are immersed at a host business and get more than 700 hours of hands-on work experience geared to in-demand roles in the local labour market. They learn employability skills and plan their careers with guidance from a teacher and skills trainers. A local employment agency supports graduates and their employers.
- LiveWorkPlay, Ottawa “Making employment within the Public Service of Canada accessible and successful for people with intellectual disabilities and autistic persons”
 - [Case Study: “Making employment within the Public Service of Canada accessible and successful for people with intellectual disabilities and autistic persons” – LiveWorkPlay](#)
- Through policies and best practices, including Employment First, Washington State has achieved close to 85% employment of adults with a developmental disability. Hall, A. C., Butterworth, J., Winsor, J., Gilmore, D., & Metzel, D. (2007). Pushing the employment agenda: Case study research of high performing states in integrated employment.



- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6358524_Pushing_the_Employment_Agenda_Case_Study_Research_of_High_Performing_States_in_Integrated_Employment