

Career Plan Workbook

For jobseekers with
Down syndrome
and their whānau



Nau mai, Welcome!

This book is designed to help you and your whānau with planning for your career and finding a new job!

You can work through this book on your own, or work with a support person, friend or someone in your whānau to get a good plan for finding a new job.

This is for you to use at any age, for any type of job you might be looking for. If you are still in school, or you are older and rethinking about what you want to do, this book is for you to make a plan!

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Get to know Yourself!

To get started, let's think about why you might be looking for a job, what your values are, and what you might like (or not like) in a job, so we can think about what might be right for you!

What kind of job is right for you?

When you're looking for a new job, it sometimes helps to think about why you want a job. You can choose to have a job for many different reasons like the ones below. Tick the ones that fit with you.

Independence

Doing things for yourself and having your own life.

Identity

Lots of people talk about work and their jobs, and having a job can help build your identity, who you are and what is important to you

Meeting People

You can meet lots of new people, build friendships and work with others through having a job.

Teamwork

Working can teach you to get along with different people. You can work with all different types of people in the workplace, and this can help with your social skills and connection to different groups.

Having a Routine

Having a job can help to build good habits and make plans for your day and week.

Improving your Skills

Having a job can help you to learn new skills and keep your skills updated by learning and practicing different things.

Staying Active

Being active is very important for your mind and body.

Meaning & Purpose

Doing work means you can improve your skills but also help others and make a difference.

Money

You might want some more money in your bank account and this might be your focus for working.

What are your values?

Do the activity below to think about what is important to you when you're working:

Trying new things

Making decisions

Being around people

Solving problems

Meeting new people

Working at your own pace

Working by yourself

An exciting, fast workplace

Being part of a team

Competition

Learning new skills

Helping people

Being creative

Using special skills

Making things

Doing a good job

Having responsibility at work

Helping your community

A calm workplace

for some more tools about values check out the tools below

Values Exercise

This values exercise helps you think about all the values that might be important to you.

[View values exercise](#)

Work Values Quiz

This values exercise helps to find a career that fits with you and will take about 15 minutes.

[View work values quizz](#)

Now let's keep thinking! Work through the table below to think about what is important to you — what are your skills, interests and experiences? What do you like or don't like?

Questions

Your Answers

What is important to you?

Meeting new people, being independent, being creative, helping others.

What do you like learning about?

Drama, science, cooking, fixing things.

What are you good at?

Taking care of animals, drawing, folding laundry, making people laugh.

What do you like to do in your spare time/your hobbies?

Gardening, cooking, baking, helping in the community, making things, using a computer, playing sports.

What are some things you don't like to do?

Counting things, cleaning, working by myself, reading.

Have you volunteered or worked in the past? If so what kind of work did you do?

Helping others, delivering food, playing with children, helping with groceries

What makes you feel good about yourself?

Finishing a task, helping people, being unique, solving problems, being independent

What are some things you're proud of?

Learning how to type on the computer, keyboard, finishing school, playing sports

What are some things you find hard?

Working with people, learning something new, understanding instructions

Interests Checklist

Use this interests checklist as an additional brainstorming tool, and look for common themes in your interest areas.

[View interests checklist](#)

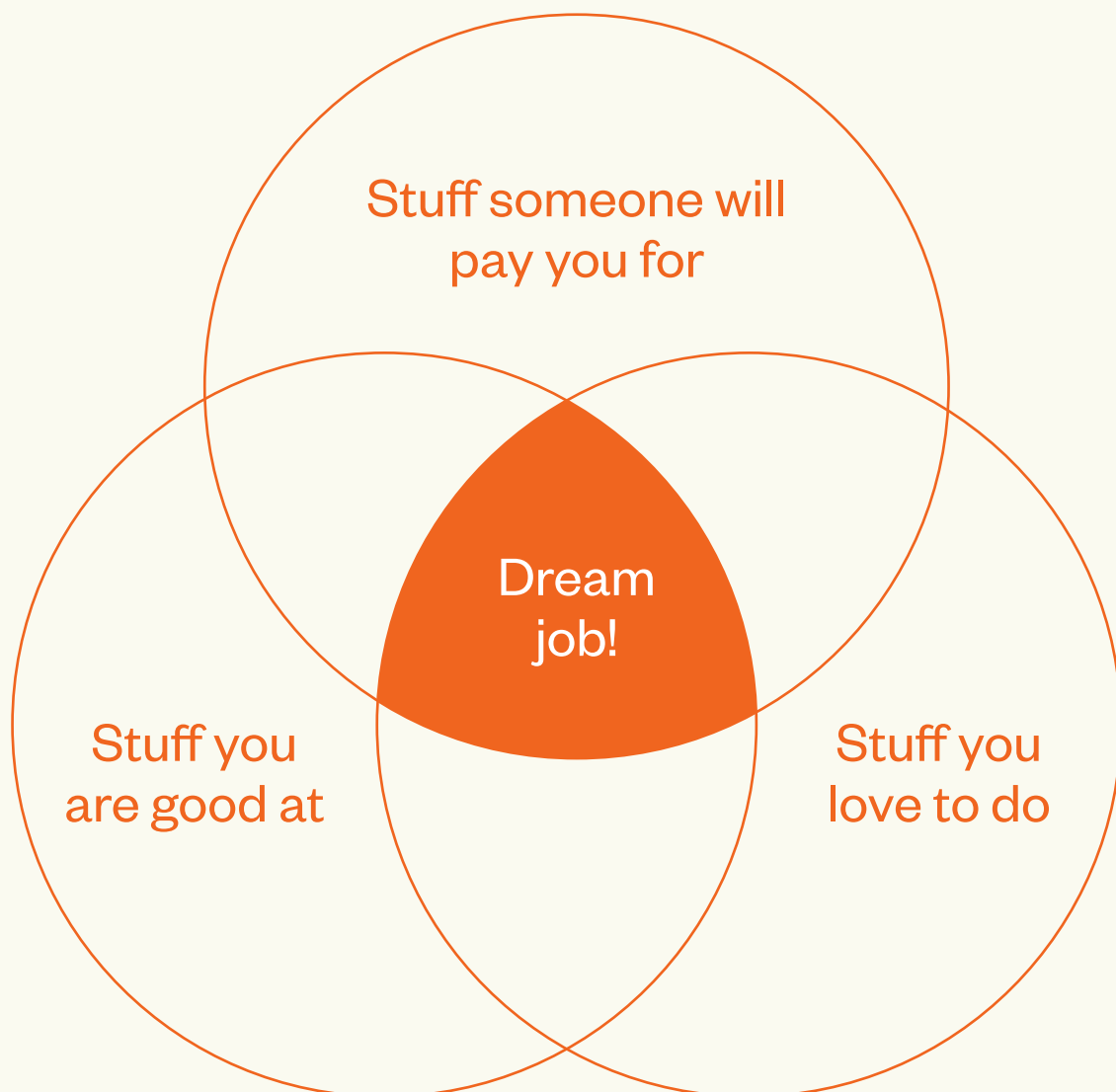
Tip!

Come back to this section when you write your CV/resume and cover letter because these things should be included!

What can you bring?

Think about the things you are good at and talk to your whānau and friends about what they think you're good at. Think about the things you wrote in the activity on the last page.

A lot of the time, we do the things that we like to do a lot, and so we get better and better at these things. Once you know what these are, you can share your skills and talents.



Here are some examples, but fill in the answers with what you are good at (and hopefully what you love doing).

What are you good at?

Some ideas of where you can work:

Do you know people who work there?

Helping in the garden

Garden centre, landscaping, floral shop

Playing video games

Gaming store

Building things

Tool shop, wood shop, hardware store

Working with people

Café, office administration, front desk at a shop

Different people have different skills.

Thinking about the table you did above, fill out the 'employability skills tracker' to think about your skills and what you might want to improve on.

[View the employability skills tracker](#)

Tip!

Need to practice or improve some of your skills?

Search the internet for key words to find training courses or other tips. And don't forget to ask for support! Let's think about who can help you to find any help you might need!

What kind of work do you like?

Let's do an activity to think about the kinds of places you might want to work! Go through the questions and circle the one you like best! If you like both, you can circle both.

Working outdoors

Being indoors

Sitting

Walking around

Busy places (like restaurants, shopping malls)

Quiet places where you can focus and take your time (like an office)

Working with others (customers or colleagues)

Working by yourself

Routines and plans

Lots of change

Career Quest

Don't know what jobs are out there? CareerQuest is a tool you can use to get job ideas based on your interests

[View CareerQuest](#)

Looking for a job

Where to look?

You can talk to an employment agency to support you with your search. Here are some websites to get you started:

Careers NZ

Seek

Student Job Search

You can also talk to an employment agency to support you with your search.

There is a list of service providers who support people with Down Syndrome available here:

[View list](#)

Tip!

You might know someone who works at a place you're interested in. Have a chat, you might be able to set up a shadowing or work experience opportunity!

Getting some work experience

It might be a good idea to get some experience so that you can put this on your CV/resume and start your career. There are lots of different kinds of work experience:

Volunteering

Volunteering in your community can make a difference to those in need. It's also a great opportunity to meet new people, improve your social skills and learn new skills that can be helpful when you are looking for paid work.

Do you have any friends, whānau or support that could help you with finding volunteer work?

Job Shadowing

This is spending time with a person at work. While on the job, you can take part in some activities and get a good idea of what's involved in that job.

You might know someone who works in your job of interest that could help with this. Or you can reach out to the company and see if you can set up a job shadow opportunity?

Work Experience Programs

Taking a short term work experience opportunity can give you the opportunity to learn more about certain jobs or career paths, build your skills and get on the job experience.

Self-employment

If you have a dream for a business there are programmes and supports available for people who have disabilities and who want to start or grow their own business.

Check In

After you've had a look at the different types of work, write down what ones you would be interested in.

Who can help?

You can use this workbook as a tool to show a friend, whānau, or support person to help you. You can share your ideas and goals with them about the types of jobs you like and they can help you plan!

Think about who is in your network and fill in the following pages with their names and how they might be able to help.

Person 1

Name:

How do I know this person:

Where do they work:

How can they help?

Contact (email or phone number)

Person 2

Name:

How do I know this person:

Where do they work:

How can they help?

Contact (email or phone number)

Person 3

Name:

How do I know this person:

Where do they work:

How can they help?

Contact (email or phone number)

Person 4

Name:

How do I know this person:

Where do they work:

How can they help?

Contact (email or phone number)

Person 5

Name:

How do I know this person:

Where do they work:

How can they help?

Contact (email or phone number)

Person 6

Name:

How do I know this person:

Where to they work:

How can they help?

Contact (email or phone number)

Person 7

Name:

How do I know this person:

Where to they work:

How can they help?

Contact (email or phone number)

Applying for jobs

Applying for jobs:

Now that you've got some ideas about the types of work you might like, the different skills you have and what kind of workplace you might like, you can start thinking about what you need to get a job.

When you come across a job that interests you, you will be asked to fill out a job application, CV or resume. Employers ask that job seekers apply so that they can find the best person for the job.

When you fill out the application, make sure you read the form carefully and get help if you need it to make sure you understand what you need to put in the form.

Tip!

Need to practice or improve some of your skills?

Search the internet for key words to find training courses or other tips; And don't forget to ask for support! Think about who can help you to find any help you might need!



10 tips for your Resume and CV

A resume is a one or two-page summary of your skills, education, training, past job and volunteer experiences. Employers will usually ask for a resume/CV when you are interested in a job.

1

You should have a resume when you're looking for work. Sometimes people call this a CV.

2

It is information about you to help you get a job. It is usually typed but some people do video resumes, where they tell people about themselves. You can also ask if you can send in some samples of past work if you like!

[Learn more](#)

3

A resume includes your name, address and contact details. It also has information about your education and training. This means your school and the things you did there.

4

It also means any training or courses you have done at Polytech or other places where you learn. You should include any certificates you have, even if it's for a short course.

5

You should include any work experience or volunteer work you have done.

6

It is a good idea to include things you are interested in, such as hobbies, things you like to do in your spare time, or any sports you might do.

7

Don't forget to write about your best qualities. This is things like being friendly, helpful, tidy, or always working hard.

8

Write down some references. This is people who will say good things about you. Make sure you ask them if they are happy to be a reference. All of this information helps to show that you would be good at this job!

Do you need to include a cover letter?

A cover letter is a short letter to go with your resume/CV and application. It is a good way for the employer to get to know you.

9

You can tell them about your best qualities, such as being a hard worker, reliable and friendly. You should tell them why you want the job and why you think you will do it well.

10

Don't forget to say that you will be happy to meet with them for an interview. This is where you meet the person who is deciding who will get the job, and they ask you some questions. Always include your contact details so they can get in touch for an interview.

Interviews

Interviews

Great work! You've got to the interview stage!

What is an interview

An interview is when the employer wants to meet you and ask questions. This helps them to think about if you are a good fit for the job. It should also help you to think about if the job is right for you! An interview can happen in person, over the phone or on a video call. Sometimes there can be more than one person interviewing you.

It takes a lot of work to get to the interview stage, so you should be really proud of yourself! But there is still work to do, there are lots of things you can do to get ready for the interview and hopefully get the job!

Tip!

An employer resource has been developed that you can share with the interviewer so that they have the same expectations.

[LINK \(TBC\)](#)

Preparing for the interview:

1. You might want to take whānau or a support person with you. That's great! You just need to let the interviewer know in advance. You should also make sure you know where you are going, how long it takes you to get there so you arrive on time.
2. If you think you might need some more time to answer the questions, or to have the information in plain language, let the interviewer know. They should make adjustments to help you do your best, for example they could give you the questions before the interview so you can practice, or asking if they can give you a bit more time to answer.
3. Find out more about the workplace and job. The company website is a really good place to find this information (for example the company values, the team and what kind of work they do). If you know someone who works there you could also talk to them about it.
4. Think about some questions you might want to ask them about the job and the workplace. You can write these down and take them with you.

Interview Practice

There are many questions that an interviewer can ask you, so make sure you practice! Practice by pretending you are in the interview. Find a friend, parent, or support person and try this out!

It's good to practice by pretending — this helps you get ready for the real thing. There are some practice interview questions on the next page you can practice answering. When you are answering, have some examples and stories you are proud of ready to share.

When you're ready, shake hands, say a friendly hello, have a seat across from your whānau, parent, or support person, and have them ask you some questions on the following page.

[Learn how to shake hands here](#)

Tip!

Sometimes it helps to think of some examples of work or achievements that you are proud of. You can write these down and practice telling someone about your biggest achievements.

Five Practice Questions

1

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

They want to know about you – give them a bit of information about you, things you like to do, and why you are a good fit for the job.

2

What are your biggest strengths?

Think about the skills you wrote in this workbook and tell the interviewer about those, try to give an example so they can hear a bit more.

3

What is an achievement that you are proud of?

Think about a story you would like to tell them about you and something you have achieved.

4

What do you find difficult?

Think about some of the things you thought about in this workbook. Talk about one-two things you might find hard and how you make changes to improve on this.

For example: I am not good at being on time, but I just got a watch and I use my phone to help alert me when I have to keep track of my time.

5

Why should we hire you?

This is where you can talk about your skills and the things you are good at that will help you in this job.

For example: I am a friendly, smart person and I like to learn new things. I have always helped in my garden at home and think I would do a good job at your garden centre.

On Interview Day...

You've made it to interview day! Here's a couple things to keep in mind on the day

Make a good impression.

Choose a great outfit and make sure it's clean, ironed and appropriate for an interview. Make sure you are clean and tidy!

Be early.

Arrive about 5-10 minutes before the interview. Make sure you turn off your phone!

Be prepared.

Greet the interviewer, smile and shake their hand, just like you practiced.

Relax.

You have done lots of practice so you know what to do! Listen to the questions and take your time. You can always ask questions if you're not sure.

Give examples.

Do your best and be yourself!

At the end of the interview, thank them for their time and tell them that you look forward to hearing from them soon.

Tip!

If you do not understand what the interviewer is asking, you can ask them to ask the question again.

Tip!

If you're nervous about sharing examples, you could take notes, pictures or other things you'd like to share along with you to help with the conversation.

Starting a New Job

Your first day at work is coming up! Hopefully your employer has emailed you some information about getting started. But if not, you can email them and ask if there is anything you should know about or prepare before you come in.

Here is some information about starting a new job. This should help you to know what to expect when you start at work.

What is “onboarding” or “induction”?

Onboarding or induction is a company’s way to welcome new employees and make sure they know what to do in the company and in their jobs. You might have a support person, whānau, or job coach you want to bring along. That’s great, just make sure to let your employer know who is coming in advance. Before your first day, they should tell you:

1 When to be there

2 Where to go

3 Who to ask for

Different companies have different steps when it comes to onboarding, but the goal is always to help you get a good start and do well at work.

Here's some tips to ace your first day:

-
- 1 Remember, everyone gets nervous on their first day of work
 - 2 If you feel nervous, take a deep breath and slow down.
 - 3 You got this job because you have the skills to do the job and will be good at it
 - 4 It's ok to ask questions and ask for help
 - 5 Make sure you try your best
-

Training

Onboarding/induction normally includes training. Your employer will train you for job tasks, they will also tell you about the rules they have in their workplace.

When they take you through the training it's ok to ask lots of questions, and it's ok if you need them to show you things more than once.

Job sheets or daily task lists can help to provide some clear instructions about what tasks you need to do. A great example with visual aids can be found here:

[View task sheet example](#)

Here are some things that might help you learn and remember when you're getting training:

1. Take notes (or record the instructions on your phone)
2. Make a list (or take pictures on your phone)
3. Ask someone to show you how to do something, rather than telling you
4. Do lots of practice
5. Tell your supervisor or manager how you learn.anager how you learn

Helpful Links

Bellow are some links to helpful resources, and templates for your CV and cover letter.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

An overview of the four Māori cornerstones of physical and pyschological wellbeing.

[View](#)

CV Builder

This online tool helps you build a new CV step-by-step for free.

[View](#)

Waka Poster

He waka kore hoe, He tangata kore huarahi. A waka without a paddle is like a person without direction. This waka poster presents a model of career development for students and whānau.

[View](#)

Cover Letter Template

Here is a cover letter template to create your cover letter.

[View](#)

My Career Dream

The Dream and Discover resources help students in years 7-8 to gain awareness of themselves and their futures, and prepare for the move to secondary school.

[View](#)

Video CV

If there is an option to submit a video CV rather than a traditional written CV this can be a great option. Here is a link to some tips on how to create a video CV.

[View](#)

Nga mihi, and the best of luck!



About Kindred

Kindred is a boutique Talent and Organisational Development Consultancy run by Organisational Psychologists and Industry experts, with two locations in Auckland and Wellington. They offer a wealth of experience partnering with public and private sector organisations in the design and implementation of organisational development systems. Kindred are very excited to donate their time to develop these resources to benefit our communities – they are passionate about creating more inclusive workplaces and know the life changing impact that being included in work can bring to an individual.

You can find out more at www.kindredwork.co.nz



About The New Zealand Down Syndrome Association

The New Zealand Down Syndrome Association (NZSDA) has set itself the mission to Support, inform and advocate alongside people with Down syndrome, families, whānau and professionals.

The NZDSA works towards the vision that people with Down syndrome are respected, valued and equal members of their community fulfilling their potential and aspirations.

For more information visit nzdsa.org.nz or call us on 0800 693 724.