



ODEP

Office of Disability
Employment Policy

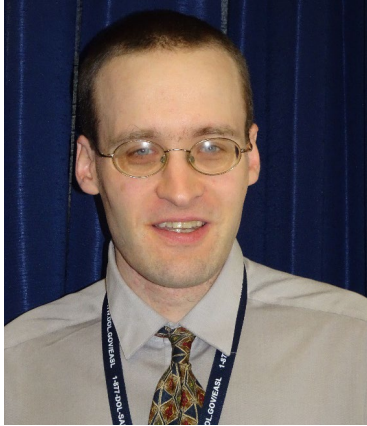
Expanding Employment and Career Pathways for Youth and Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum

Transition-Aged Youth Webinar Series
Office of Autism Research Coordination
National Institute of Mental Health

Scott Michael Robertson, PhD
U.S. Department of Labor,
Office of Disability Employment Policy



Describe the Presenter's Background



Scott Michael Robertson, PhD

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Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

Employment-Related Supports Policy Team

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Outline Webinar Objectives

- Share resources for COVID-19, including for displaced workers and job seekers
- Describe the mission of ODEP and its core initiatives
- Highlight commemoration of 30 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Discuss employment as a social determinant of health
- Share resources on employment access for youth and young adults on the autism spectrum



COVID-19 Impact on U.S.

- Solidarity with individuals and families affected by COVID-19 and displaced workers and job seekers' barriers
- U.S. Department of Labor's website on COVID-19 resources: <https://www.dol.gov/coronavirus>
- CDC's website on COVID-19 and health protection: <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>
- Administration for Community Living's website on COVID-19 and staying safe: <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>
- USA.gov website on the federal response to COVID-19 to protect Americans: <https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>
- Disaster Distress Helpline from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: 1-800-985-5990



DOL's National Online Dialogue on Family and Medical Leave

- National Online Dialogue on Providing Expanded Family and Medical Leave to Employees Affected by COVID-19
- Participation from March 25 through early April
- Website for the National Online Dialogue:
<https://ffcra.ideascale.com/>
- Registration to participate and share ideas and thoughts:
<https://ffcra.ideascale.com/a/register>



Discuss the Mission of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

ODEP is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities.

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/>



ODEP's Initiatives Include...

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

www.AskJAN.org



- Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT) and FutureWorks

www.PEATWorks.org



- EARN: technical assistance for employers

www.AskEARN.org



- Apprenticeship Inclusion Models (AIM) initiative

www.spra.com/aim





U.S. Dept. of Labor supports yearlong commemoration of 30 years of ADA

ADA 30

Americans with Disabilities Act | July 26, 2020

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ADA.htm>

Goals of the ADA Include Ensuring for People with Disabilities...

- Economic Self-sufficiency
- Equality of Opportunity
- Full Participation
- Independent Living

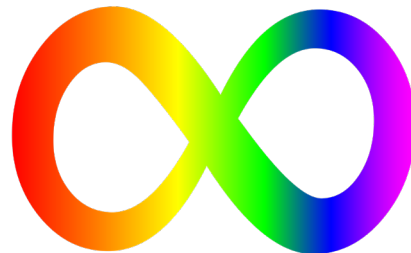


Signing of the ADA into law on July 26, 1990



Define Autism

- Neurological developmental disability with an estimated prevalence of 1-2% (U.S., worldwide)
- Atypical learning, thinking, and information processing
- Challenges and strengths in communication, interpersonal interaction, executive functioning, and sensory/motor activities
- Federal Autism CARES Act of 2019:
 - Research, programs, and resources to support people on the autism spectrum and families
 - Expanded emphasis on supporting people on the autism spectrum across the life course from childhood to adult life



Autism Means Atypical Processing of the World...



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Employment Represents a Social Determinant of Health and Wellbeing

- Association between attaining employment and:
 - Higher quality of physical health and wellbeing¹
 - Improved mental health and wellbeing²
- Connection between independent living and activities of daily living to employment opportunities
- Access to healthcare services through employment: health insurance, employee assistance programs



Employment Fosters Health and Wellbeing for People on the Autism Spectrum

- Employment as a facilitator for greater quality of life^{3,4,5}
- Training for vocational skills and employability skills (soft skills) as a facilitator of improved mental health^{6,7}



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Expand Employment and Careers for Youth and Adults on the Autism Spectrum

- Emphasize strengths and talents of people on the autism spectrum to drive employment and career development
- Align gainful employment opportunities with focused interests and vocational interests and preferences
- Mitigate challenges and barriers through:
 - Accessible technology and assistive technology
 - Enhanced work-centered supports and resources
 - Adaptations to the workplace environment (social, physical)
- Foster access to employment-related supports, such as transportation, housing, and healthcare



Supports for Workers on the Autism Spectrum Enhance Performance...

- Workplace and educator trainings on autism (managers, instructors, team members, etc.)
- Sensory adjustments for workplace and classroom settings
- Mentoring, coaching, and team buddies
- Peer supports, including peer mentoring
- Technological assistance, including for communication
- Customized supports, such as for executive functioning



ODEP's Pathways to Careers Grants Include Students on the Autism Spectrum

- Long-term demonstration grants at community colleges
 - Tennessee (Pellissippi State Community College)
 - New York State (Onondaga Community College)
- Significant representation of autism among current students' identified disabilities:
 - Pellissippi: ~70% of participating students who identify on the autism spectrum
 - Onondaga: ~19% of participating students who identify on the autism spectrum
- Additional supports needed for work-centered focuses, including job interviewing and career development



ETA Funded Autism-Focused Grants for Job Development

- Managing the Talent Pipeline in Health Information program
 - American Apprenticeship program (~\$5M/5 yrs.)
 - Autism-focused track for medical coding
- Next Step Job Training and Employment Partnership
 - Tech Hire program (\$4M/5 yrs.)
 - Goal of 450 participants on the autism spectrum in healthcare and IT fields (in the grant proposal)
 - Bootcamps for workforce communication, independent living skills, and employability skills



Resources

Highlight ODEP Resources on Autism

- ODEP's Topic Resources Webpage on Autism and Employment:

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Autism.htm>

- JAN's Informational Resources on Autism:

- Accommodation and Compliance Series on Autism:

<https://AskJAN.org/disabilities/Autism-Spectrum.cfm>

- Interviewing Tips for Job Seekers on the Autism Spectrum:

<https://AskJAN.org/publications/consultants-corner/vol10iss01.cfm>



Highlight ODEP Resources for Youth and Transition to Employment:

- ODEP's Topic Resources Webpage on Youth:

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Youth/>

- 411 on Disability Disclosure:

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/the-411-on-disability-disclosure-a-workbook-for-youth-with-disabilities/>

- Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success (curriculum developed in 2012):

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/softskills.pdf>



Highlight Other ODEP Resources (Cont.)

- Apprenticeship.gov: DOL's website on resources for apprenticeships and finding apprenticeships

<https://www.apprenticeship.gov>

- ODEP's Topic Resource Webpage on Apprenticeship:

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/Apprenticeship.htm>

Seek Additional Resources and Information on Employment and Autism

Contact ODEP:

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Contact Dr. Scott Michael Robertson:

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Outline References (1)

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