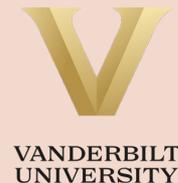
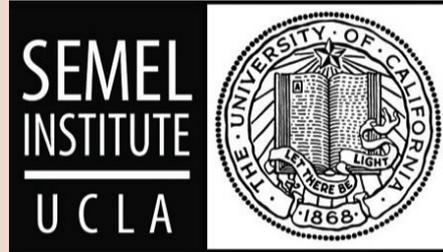
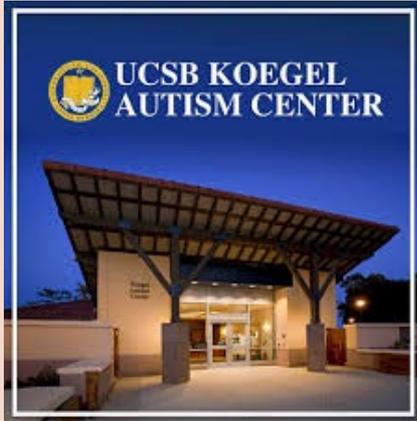


Supporting Families in Connecting Their Adult Family Members with IDD to Employment: A Mixed-Methods Intervention Development Project

Ben Schwartzman, PhD
Vanderbilt University



My Background

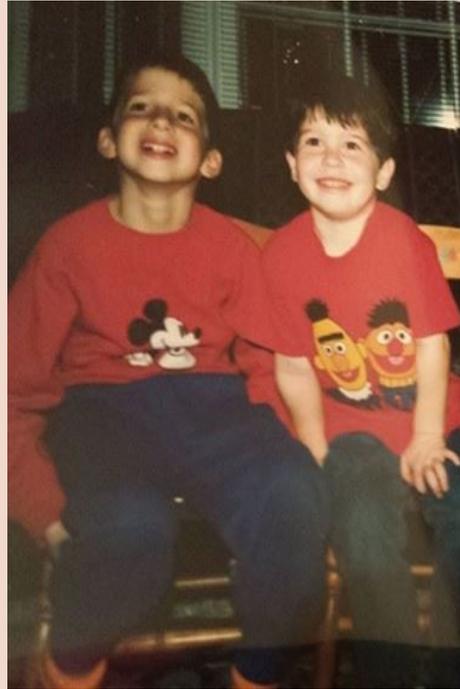


Tailored Day Service



My Sibling

- Joey is 37
- He lives in an apartment with a friend from UCLA Pathway Program
- He drives
- Has had an extensive work history



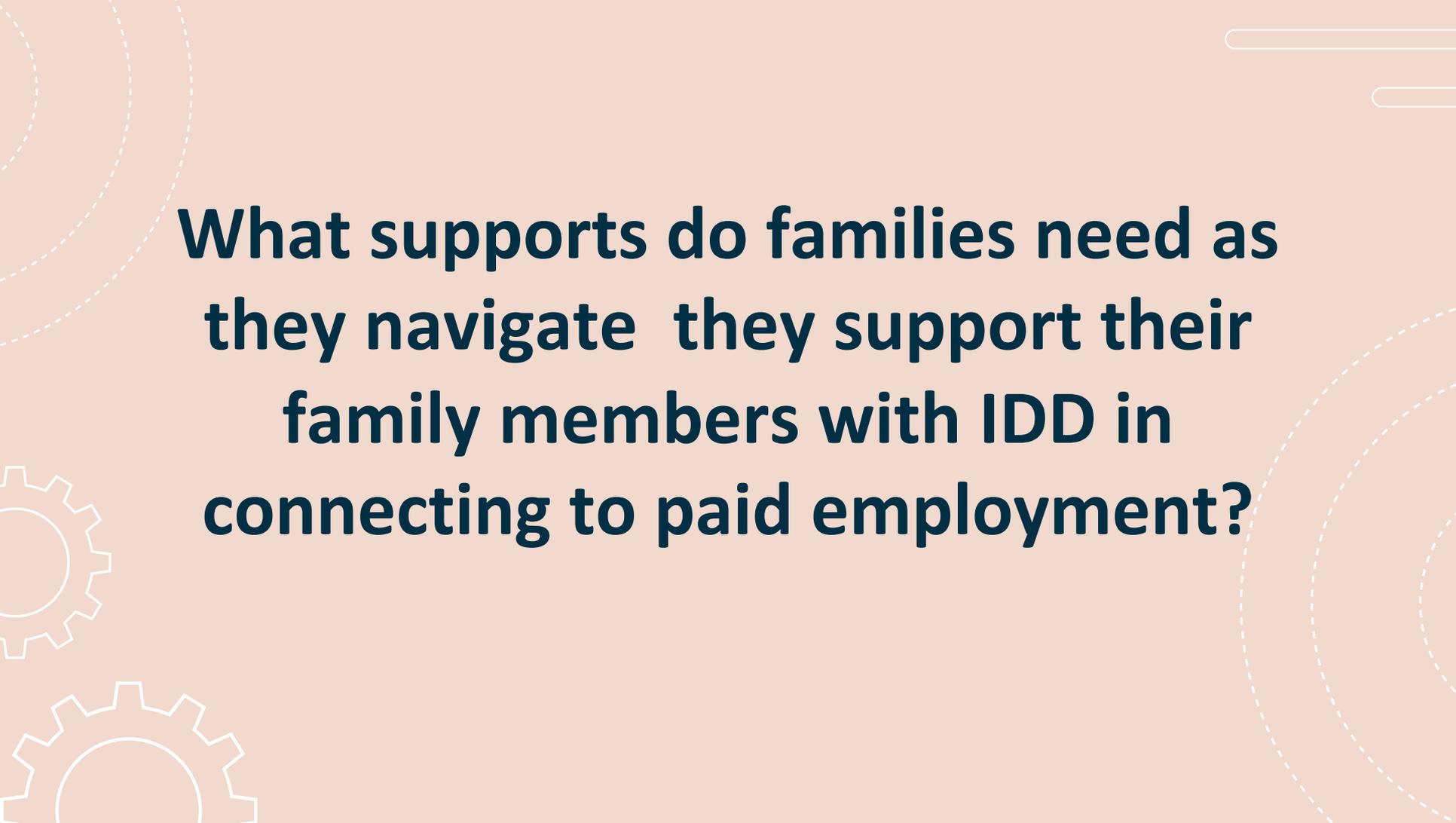
Joey's Trajectory After High School

Recycling Center



**Dishwasher at
Home for Elderly**

**Paid internship
ended in early 2023**

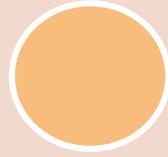
The background is a solid light beige color. It features several decorative elements: two white gears of different sizes in the bottom-left corner, a large dashed white circle in the top-left corner, and several dashed white circles of varying sizes on the right side. In the top-right corner, there are two horizontal white rounded rectangles of different lengths.

What supports do families need as they navigate they support their family members with IDD in connecting to paid employment?

AGENDA



Project Overview



**Phase III –
Randomized
Controlled Trial**



**Phase I –
Qualitative Study**

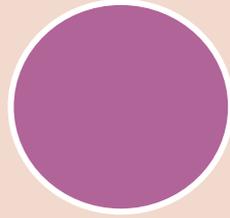


Next Steps



**Phase II – Pilot
Study**





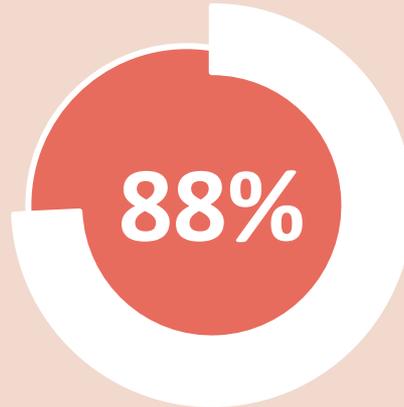
Project Overview

Tennessee's employment
landscape and background
on our project

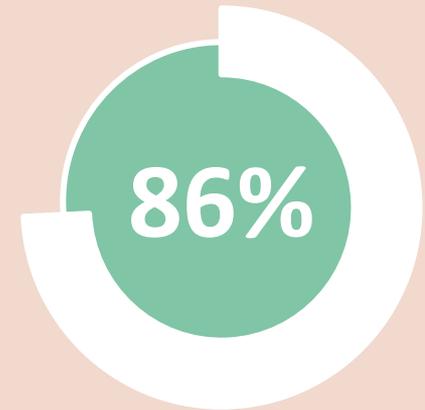
The Importance of Employment



Surveyed over 3,000
Tennesseans



Individuals with
Disabilities



Parents

Finding Employment Support

Do you know
who could
help you or
your family?

Surveyed over 3,000
Tennesseans

50%

Individuals with
Disabilities

54%

Parents

Employment By the Numbers

74%

of Tennesseans are
employed

35%

of Tennesseans with
disabilities are
employed

39%

employment gap



Changing the Landscape

VCU RRTC IDD

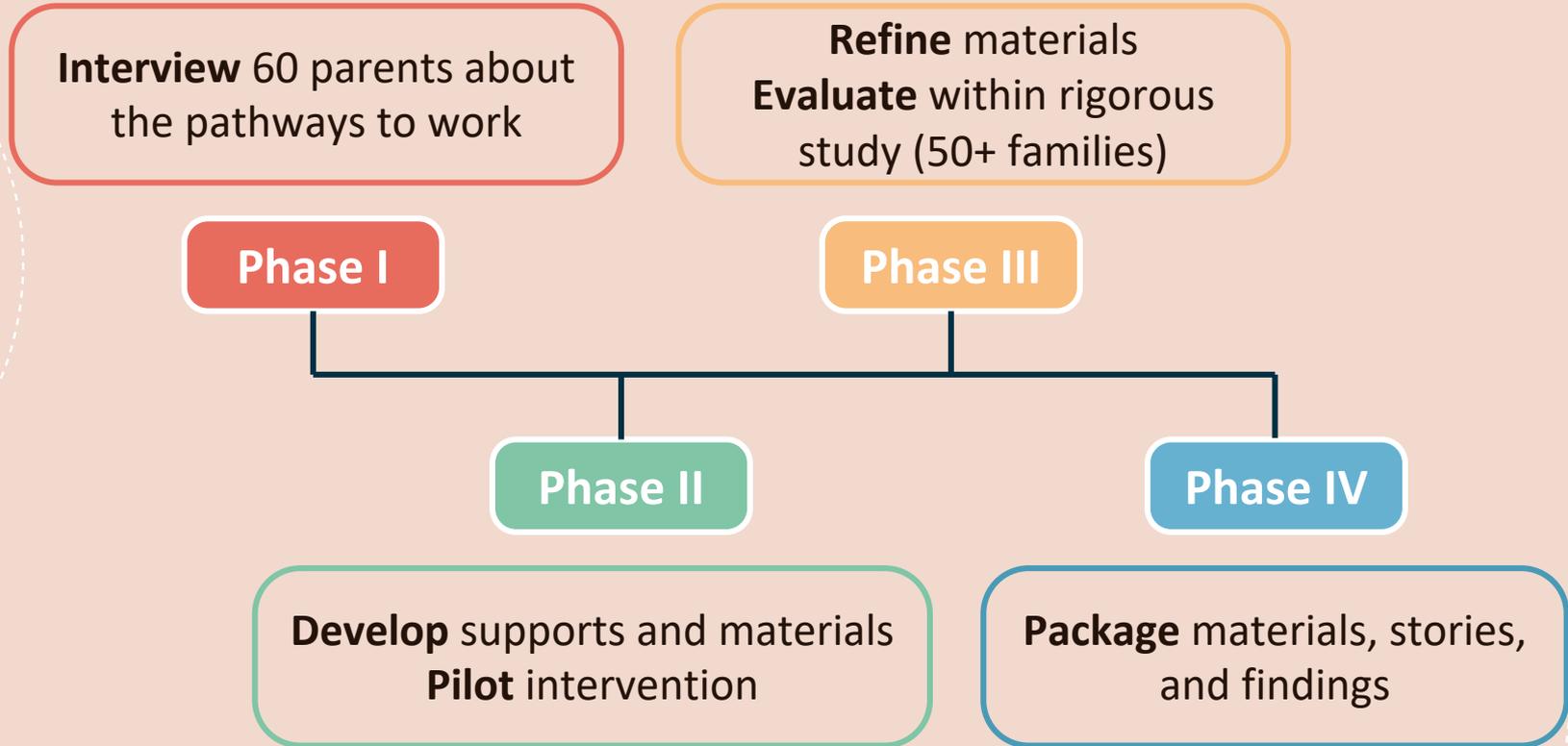
To **increase employment outcomes** for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

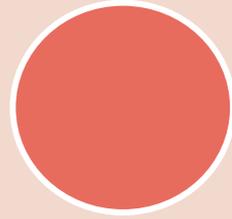
TN Employment Pathways Project

Supporting families in connecting their family members to paid employment through **access to needed information and mentorship**



Our Development Process





Phase I - Qualitative Study

**Focus groups and interviews
with 60 families**

The Value of Work

“The more I’ve thought about it and talked to other people, a lot of the **reasons we would want any family member to have employment apply to our son**. Sense of self, sense of identity, sense of accomplishment.”

- Father of a 22-year-old son with autism



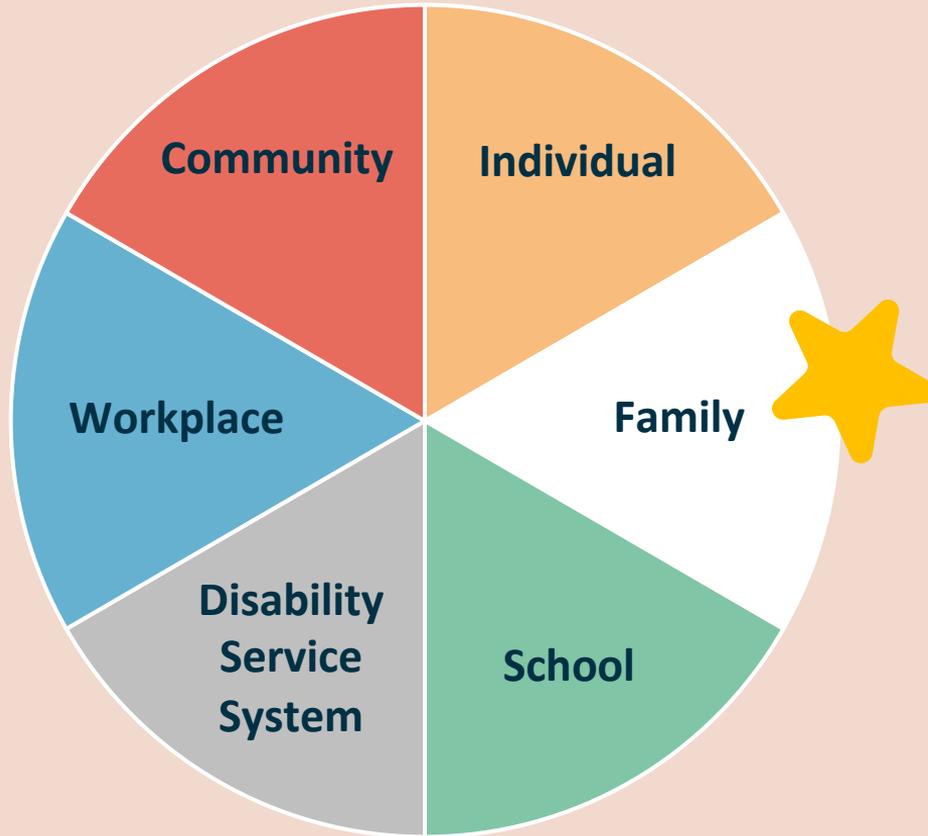
Barriers to Employment

“I’m a mama bear. And so a lot of what I’ve learned is **trial and error**, and **hunting and pecking**, and emailing. And I have spent **unbelievable amount of hours**, and I still don’t have all the answers.”

- Mother of 21-year-old son with autism



Common Barriers to Employment



Facilitators to Employment

Family Involvement

Benefits Counseling

Assistance to
Families

Access to Services

Resources for
Families

Connecting with
Other Families

Schwartzman et al., (in press)
Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin

Parent Perspectives on Meaningful Work



INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
2023, Vol. 61, No. 2, 145–157

©AAIDD
DOI: 10.1352/1934-9556-61.2.145

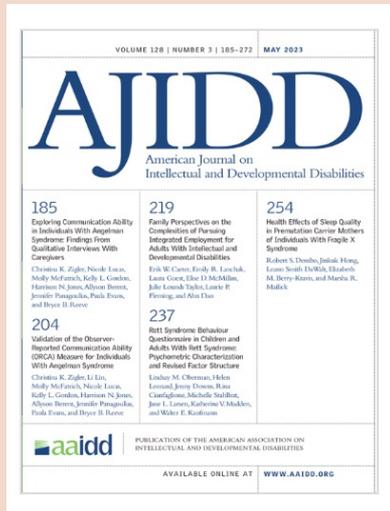
“More Than a Paycheck”: Parent Perspectives on Meaningful Work for Individuals With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Erik W. Carter, Emily R. Lanchak, Laura Guest, Elise D. McMillan, Julie Lounds Taylor, and Hannah Rowley



Carter et al., 2023 “More Than a Paycheck” in *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

Barriers to Employment



AMERICAN JOURNAL ON INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
2023, Vol. 128, No. 3, 219–236

©AAIDD
DOI: 10.1352/1944-7558-128.3.219

Family Perspectives on the Complexities of Pursuing Integrated Employment for Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Erik W. Carter, Emily R. Lanchak, Laura Guest, Elise D. McMillan, Julie Lounds Taylor, Laurie P. Fleming, and Anh Dao



Carter et al., 2023 in *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

Webinar: The Voices of Families



VCU-RRTC-IDD
VCU-RRTC on Employment of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

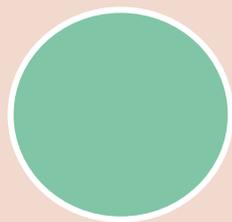
**The Voice of Families:
Pathways to Integrated Employment for
Individuals with IDD**

Vanderbilt University & Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in
Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)


VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

0:00 / 41:41 • Introduction >





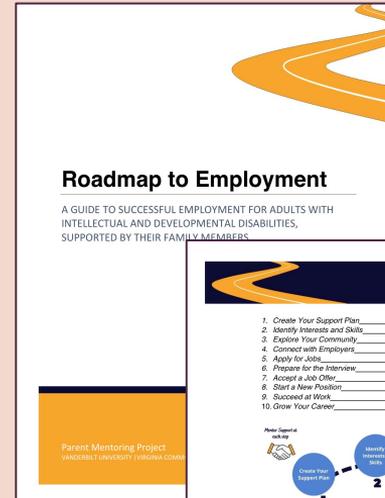
Phase II – Pilot Study

Four-family pilot of
intervention

Pilot Study Support Package

Information Access

Family Support



Roadmap to Employment

Table of Contents	
1. Identify Interests and Skills	3
2. Create Your Support Plan	7
3. Explore Your Community	14
4. Connect with Employers	19
5. Apply for Jobs	25
6. Prepare for the Interview	31
7. Accept a Job Offer	35
8. Start a New Position	37
9. Succeed at Work	41
10. Grow Your Career	44

1 LEARN ABOUT
SUPPORTS & SERVICES
2 APPLY TO
3 NAVIGATE

1 Identify Interests & Skills
2 Create Your Support Plan
3 Explore Your Community
4 Connect with Employers
5 Apply for Jobs
6 Prepare for the Interview
7 Accept a Job Offer
8 Start a New Position
9 Succeed at Work
10 Grow Your Career

Who can help me?

Vocational Rehabilitation – Once you have an open case with Vocational Rehabilitation, they have local organizations and career centers ready to help with skills discovery and growth. To learn more about what they offer, contact your local office. Click the link for a list of all state offices.

Teachers – Ask your job seeker’s teachers about skills they developed during school and/or work-based learning activities. Their teachers are a wealth of knowledge in this area. They may also know volunteer supervisors to contact and include as references.

FAQ

What if my job seeker’s interests don’t match their skill sets?

It is common for interests to not match skills... at least at first glance. The key is to take time and brainstorm with an open and creative mind. Use your support team (from section 1) to discuss ideas (friends, teachers, job coaches, etc.). Example: Sally was interested in drawing and mentioned it during her interview at a health care company. They hired her in Human Resources for her skill set of organization, but put her on side art projects for their magazine.

What if my job seeker would like to grow in a skill, that they have not yet mastered?

Motivation to grow in a skill is key! There are a lot of community resources and free online tools for growing in skills. Contact your local Vocational Rehabilitation office and share specific skills your job seeker is interested in learning to learn about local options. You can also learn Microsoft office skills for free online. We recommend looking for a company that has several positions your job seeker would be interested in pursuing long-term. Career growth is key and you want their supervisor to know their long-term goals early on, so that either their co-workers or a job coach can support their learning efforts.

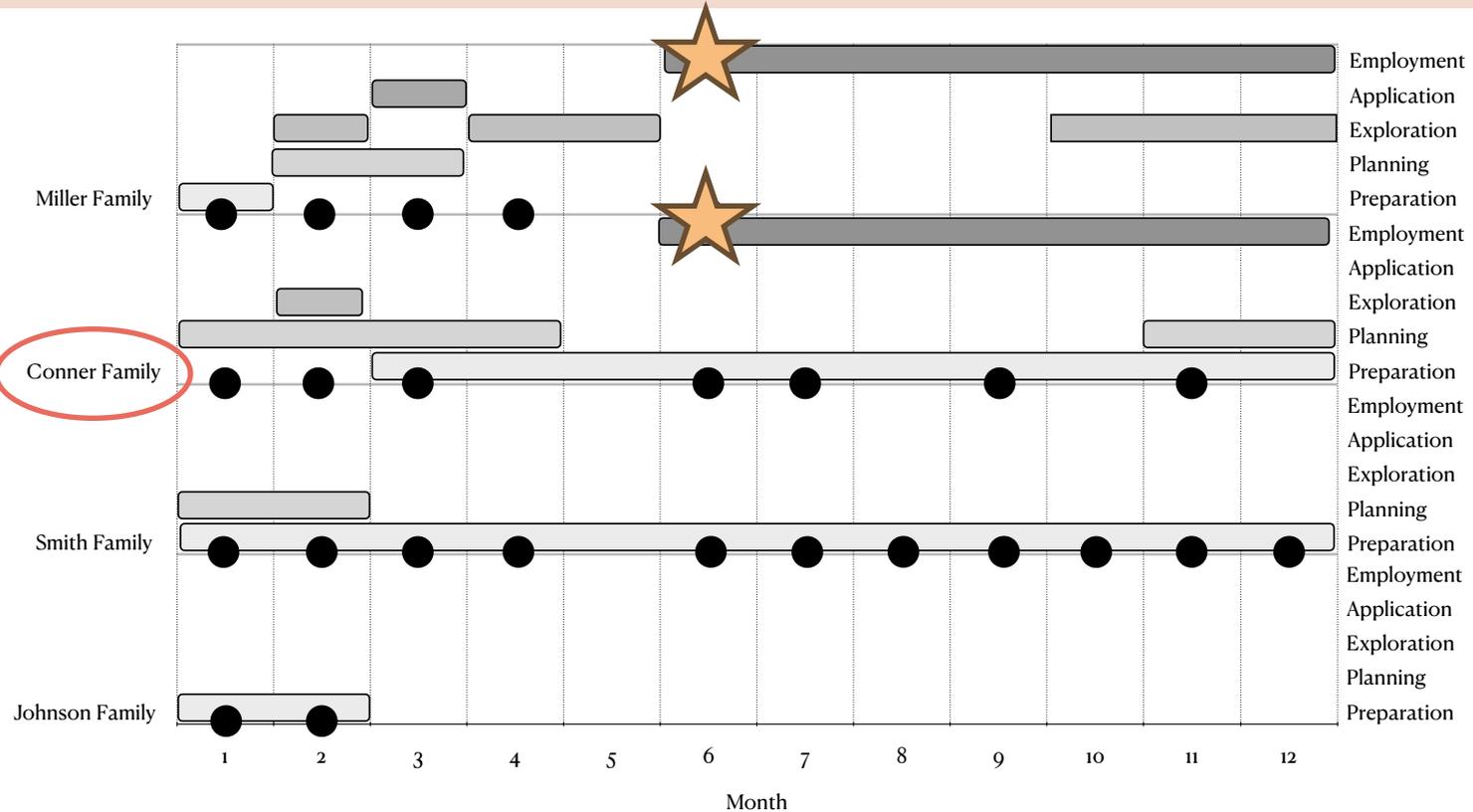
Is it okay to ask a company to help train and grow a skill set?

Employers are only required to train employees in a reasonable timeframe. If your job seeker needs additional training or skill set development, we recommend asking the supervisor first. If they don’t have time to adequately train/ grow a skill set, you can request job coaching from several agencies.

Section Features:

- Key employment-related information
- Person-centered planning activities
- Community and national resources
- Online resource links
- Support team members
- Frequently asked questions

Journeys of Families



Lanchak et al. (2023) *Complex Employment Journeys: Case Studies of Four Families of Adults with Intellectual Disability*

Dyad 2 Participants

	Demographics	Family Information	Community Type	Employment Experience
Parent of Job Seeker	Mother 53 years old White	Married 3 children	Living in urban area	Areas of need: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing support team• Finding local businesses• Identifying supports and accommodations
Mentor	Mother 56 years old Black	Married 2 children	Living in urban area	Mentor strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of supports and service system• Thinking creatively about employers and job types• Problem solving

Dyad 2 Participants

	Demographics	Disability Category	Daily support needs	Employment Experience
Job Seeker	Male 21 years old White	Intellectual disability and Autism spectrum disorder	Some support	Interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talking with others• Cars
Employed Adult	Male 25 years old Black	Autism spectrum disorder	A little support	Works at Advanced Auto Parts warehouse

Getting Started

“The steps for employment for [my son] began when I first started **speaking with my mentor**. She shared her story and the **steps she has taken including pitfalls**. We utilized information supplied with our *Roadmap to Employment* guide and it helped **start us on the correct path.**”

- Mother of 21-year-old seeking employment



Finding Employment



Job Title

Porter Assistant at car dealership

Responsibilities

Stock refreshment bar, wipe down tables, maintain showroom floor and stations

Favorite Part

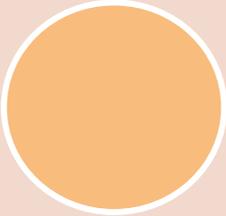
Talking with customers and coworkers; personalized name tag

Role of the Mentor

“My mentor has been wonderful, and I know if I have a question, she will find the answer. She helps encourage me on next steps and keep organized. She is great to work with and I feel I've gained a friend.”

- Mother of 21-year-old seeking employment





Phase III – Randomized Controlled Trial

Expanded intervention
through RCT with 58 families



RCT Support Package Updates

Roadmap to Employment

A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT FOR ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, SUPPORTED BY THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

Employment Planning Tool

Tennessee Employment Pathways Project - Vanderbilt University

1. STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS

- What do you enjoy doing (at home or in the community) in your spare time?
- What are some of your favorite places that you like to visit?
- What special interests, passions, or hobbies do you have?
- What are you really good at? What do people compliment you on?
- What personality traits or personal qualities would a potential employer love to know about you?
- Who knows you best (Can you name 1-5 people)?

Tennessee Employment Pathways Project

First Session

Project Overview and Introduction to Exploring Paid Employment

Information Access

- Added "Short Course" of 4 weekly Zoom classes at beginning of year
- Created "Employment Planning Tool"
- Updated *Roadmap to Employment*

Family Support

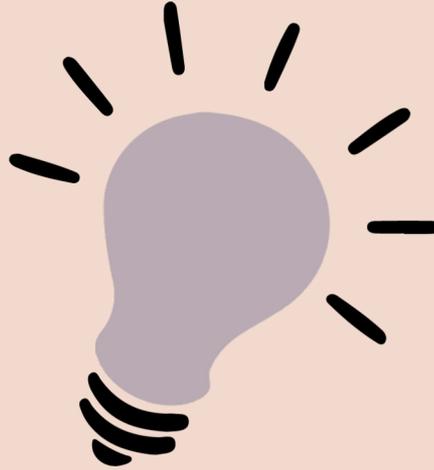
- Developed mentor matching criteria
- Check-ins with Vanderbilt every other month for one year

Short Course Topics

**Employment
Options**

**Person-Centered
Approach**

Job Ideas



Types of Supports

Programs in TN

**Connecting with
Employers**

Employment Planning Tool

Employment Planning Tool

Tennessee Employment Pathways Project - Vanderbilt University

1. STRENGTHS AND INTERESTS

- What do you **enjoy** doing (at home or in the community) in your spare time?
- What are some of your **favorite places** that you like to visit?
- What special **interests, passions, or hobbies** do you have?
- What are you **really good at**? What do people compliment you on?
- What **personality traits** or **personal qualities** would a potential employer love to know about you?
- Who knows you best (Can you name 1-5 people)?

2. PREVIOUS WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCES

- Where have you **worked** or **volunteered** in the past? Did you have any **work experiences** during school?
- What job did you enjoy doing the most? What did you enjoy doing the least? Why?

- Strengths and interests
- Previous work experiences
- Employment goals
- Transportation
- Needs and supports
- Connections
- Next Steps

Participants – Eligibility

Job Seekers

Family of **unemployed** adult with IDD
-Autism or Intellectual Disability
-18 or older

Live in Tennessee

**Willing to connect with Mentor family
monthly for one year**

Mentors

Family of **employed** adult with IDD

Live in Tennessee

**Willing to connect with Job Seeker
family monthly for one year**

Participants – Recruitment

Job Seekers

159 completed interest forms



66 eligible families completed
Short Course



58 were randomized:



29 intervention **29** comparison

Mentors

43 completed interest forms



25 eligible Mentors participated
3 were rematched
1 mentored two Job Seekers

Participants	Job Seekers	Mentors
Sex	91% Female	92% Female
Average Age	54.25	57.72
Race/Ethnicity	74% White; 18% Black; 5% Hispanic/Latino; 2% Native American	84% White; 16% Black
Family Member's Disability	35% ASD; 31% ASD+ID; 21% ID; 13% DS	40% ASD; 8% ASD+ID; 40% ID; 12% DS
Family Member's Sex	35% Female	32% Female
Family Member's Average Age	23.58	25.80
Employment History	43% Never Employed; 57% Previously Employed	100% Currently Employed

Mentor Matching Priorities

Job Seeker Characteristics

Disability, age, level of support needs, gender

Location

East, Middle, West TN
Rural or Urban

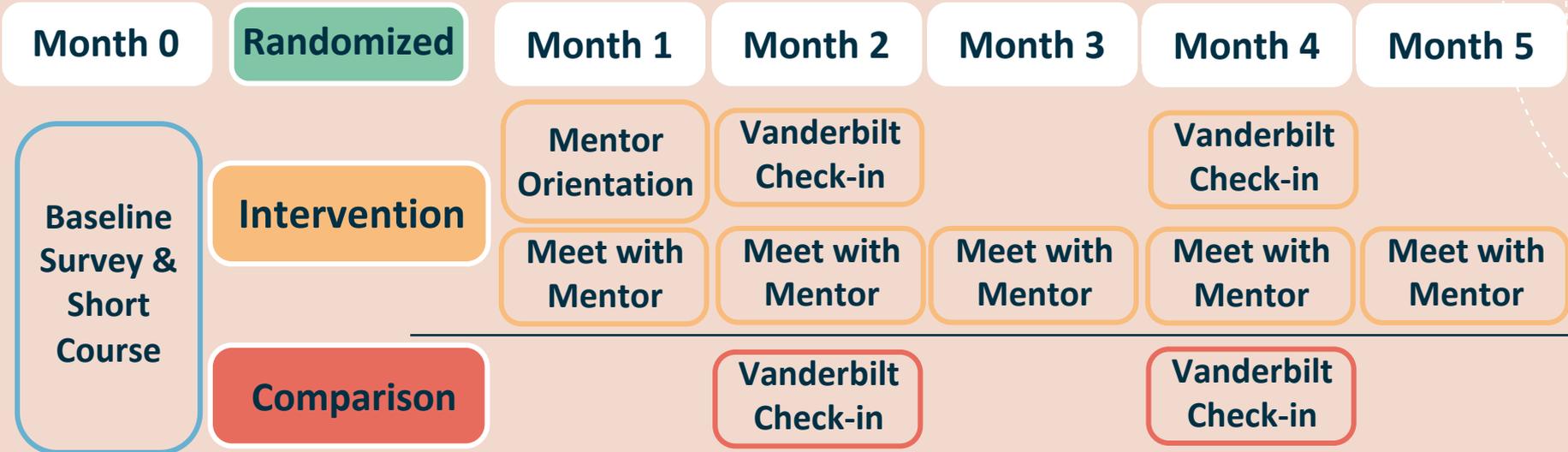
Employment Knowledge

Starting point on Roadmap,
previous employment,
familiarity with employment
supports

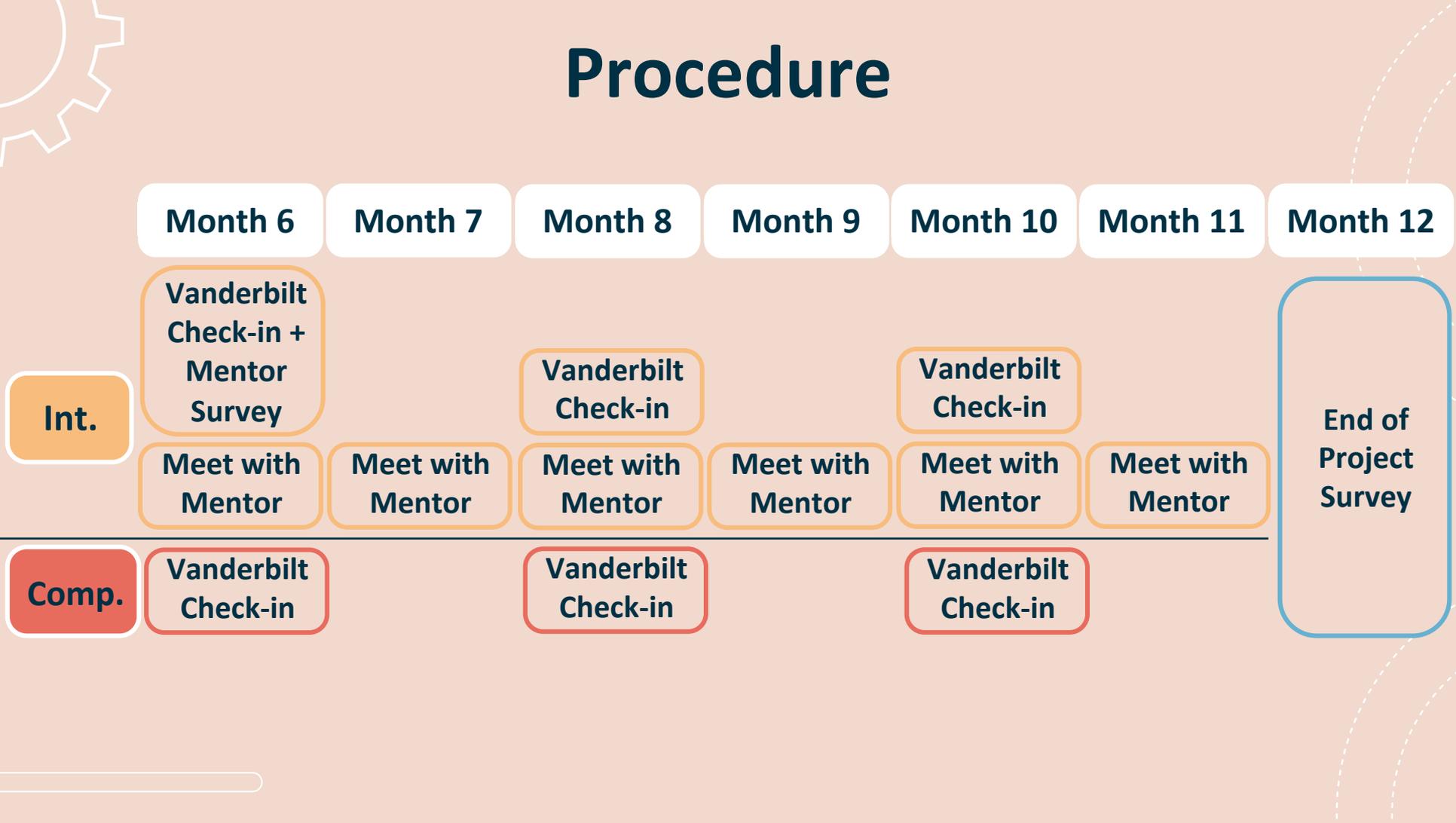
Service Status

Enrollment in similar
employment support
services

Procedure



Procedure



Tracking Journeys – Preliminary Findings

Intervention

Comparison

**Completed
Study**

**5 out of 8
Employed**

**2 out of 6
Employed**

In Progress

**11 out of 21
Employed**

**7 out of 23
Employed**

Total

55% (16/29)

31% (9/29)

Short Course Feedback

73%

strongly agree

Provided strategies that were easily useful

“It empowered the parents to come alongside their adult child in seeking employment.”

77%

strongly agree

Information was relevant to their current needs

“There were way more resources than I knew about. It was very helpful to get feedback and ideas from others.”

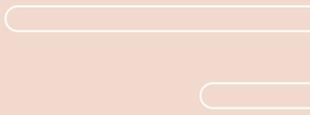
82%

strongly agree

Would recommend the course to others



Hear From Participants



Benefits of Mentorship

“The mentorship component was extremely helpful. The **connections have helped** a great deal. My mentor was great at helping my son find **social outlets**. We will **continue to work together** post study!”

- Mother of 24-year-old seeking employment



Benefits of Mentorship

“It was a really wonderful experience. [My son] is so **much happier and more settled/confident** today than where he was a year ago. The project was a huge help and resource. I **learned so much and applied so much.**”

- Mother of 24-year-old seeking employment



Benefits of Mentorship

“Every stage of life with your child with special needs is a **challenge**. Always knowing that **someone is organized and prepared** to walk this path is important and makes the **journey less daunting.**”

- Parent mentor

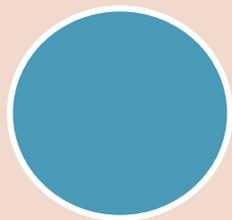


Benefits of Mentorship

“I like to think I brought not only employment help but **led a new person to my son’s community** of friends. I am thrilled that my mentee’s family was warmly welcomed to my city and state, as well as **lifted up and brought into lifelong friendship** with my family.”

- Parent mentor





Next Steps

Future directions of
this work

Publications

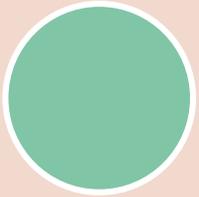


Phase I

Carter et al., 2023 – “More than a paycheck”... ***Published in IDD***s

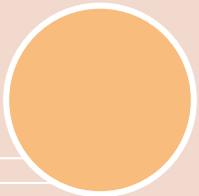
Carter et al., 2023 – Family perspectives on the complexities of pursuing paid employment... ***Published in AJIDD***

Schwartzman et al., 2023 – Family perspectives on promoting paid employment... ***Published in Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin***



Phase II

Lanchak et al., – Complex employment journeys: Case studies of four families... ***Accepted in JVR***



Phase III

Coming Soon!

RCT Baseline Data – *In Preparation*

RCT Findings – *Collecting Data*

Future Directions – Scale-up!

**Expand to other
states: CA & VA**

**Refine mentorship
structure**

**Partner with
community providers**

**Explore peer
mentorship**

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank:



**National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research
(NIDILRR) Grant #90RTEM0003**



VCU and our collaborators in the RRTC-IDD



Our devoted families and mentors!



Questions + Answers