Many jobs are designed in ways that are challenging for people with an FASD. Because of these barriers, around 1 in 3 (37%) people with an FASD struggle with employment.

However, there are different strategies and supports that can help people with an FASD obtain, maintain and succeed in employment. “Supported employment” can be a particularly useful model for people with a confirmed or suspected FASD. This model helps people find and keep jobs that build on their personal strengths and interests, while also providing ongoing individualized support.

Additionally, there are different strategies that have helped many people with an FASD succeed in their jobs:

- Identify the individual's strengths and look for jobs that fit (i.e., likes to work with children/outdoors/with animals, likes to be people-facing or not, morning or evening person, etc.).
- Make the process person-centered. Use a tool like Essential Lifestyle Planning to support them in creating their own plans based on their interests, needs, etc.
- Maintain consistency in job schedule and check-ins from support (example: support check-in every Tuesday at 2:00, whether you need it or not it's always available).
- Request a job shadow/trial run opportunity to determine if a job is a good fit.
- Use technology to help with schedules and reminders (i.e., Galarm).
- Consider sensory issues and the work setting.
- Assess for soft skills/social skills/customer service skills and build on them before employment starts (example: explaining why coworkers say "shut-up" to each other in a joking way but it's not okay to say it to a customer).
- Plan or role-play for situations that will help with the job search or might come up in the job. For example, help them set up a voicemail, show them how to check and use their e-mail, practice interview questions and etiquette, etc.
- Create a “personal toolbox” for self-regulation during times of stress. Cater the toolbox to the individual and what skills/tools work best to navigate stressful situations.
- Identify barriers/challenges outside of the job that will impact employment (transportation, stable housing).
- Explain why things are done in a certain way; it's easier to follow certain rules or expectations when there is a concrete understanding of why we do them.
- Consider what is communicated to the supervisor about the needs of the individual and how accommodating they will be (breaks, sensory issues).
- Identify a mentor among the coworkers that can model appropriate social skills and work behaviors.
Support during the on-boarding/orientation and discuss accommodations from the start.
With FASD, the largest challenge is sometimes maintenance of employment; don't take away supports when the individual is doing well.
That said, indicators of success aren't always long-term employment; sometimes success is a smooth transition to another job.
Everyone in the individual's circle of support should understand FASD and the individual's unique challenges and strengths.

Sources:


*Last updated March 2021*