

Wednesday, 12:30 – 2:00, E7

Aiming for Employment and Independence: One Family's Story

Lisa Kowalski

Aaron Kowalski

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Objectives:

1. Identify effective methods for the practical application of concepts related to improving the delivery of services for persons with developmental disabilities
2. Identify and emphasize attitudes that enhance the opportunities for persons with DD to achieve their optimal potential
3. Develop strategies to promote community inclusion in meeting the needs of persons with developmental disabilities.

Notes:

Aiming for Employment and Independence: One Family's Story

Lisa Kowalski, MSENM
Parent and Advocate
Aaron Kowalski, High School Senior
April 2012



**Thank you for your
generous support of this
presentation**

Agenda

- Introductions
- Expectations for Employment and Independence
- Educational Development Plans – great on-line resources available to you
- Crazy for Cockatoos – Aaron
- Building Universal Employability Skills
- Building a Resume' - Focused extracurricular activities

Introductions – Lisa Kowalski

- MSENM – Masters of Science in Engineering Management
- Avid Parent Volunteer
- Author: Disability Awareness Workshops
 - 160,000 participants throughout the state
- Presenter
 - Getting My Own Address for People with ASD
 - EDP and Career Focused Education
 - Stepping Stones to Communication
 - Informal Dispute Resolution
 - ASD Awareness
 - Adapted Storybook Kits

Aaron Kowalski

- Hard working, friendly and happy teenager
- Loves animals, libraries, baking and bargain hunting for videos
- 18 year old Senior at Stoney Creek High School
- Supported Level of Independence
- Diagnosis



Parents' Lifelong Expectations

- Aaron's quality of life is important, but so is the rest of the family's.
- Aaron will be
 - A **Contributor**, an assistant
 - A **Member** of his community
 - As **Independent** as possible



Member of the Community Prepare for Adulthood at Age 2



Innocent acts during the toddler years become completely socially inappropriate by age 16.

Member of the Community Try, Try Again



- Keep long term expectations high
- Plan **to teach** social norms
- Use pictures, social stories and modeling to assist with teaching social norms

Member of the Community Try, Try Again



Consider the vocational implication of every:

- School rule
- Lesson
- Project
- Social expectation

Accommodating/ Modifying General Education Assignments



2010 High School Print Making Penguin print was selected on merit



Transition Planning

- At Home, explore interests while developing independence skills and stamina
- Try to provide the same experiences as their peers



Transition Planning



- Increase physical stamina and sustained activity level
- Help gain confidence and resilience

Transition Planning

- Teach how to think and make decisions
- Build skills that every job needs
 - Listen to directions
 - Be willing to try something new
 - Learn to use two hands together



Mom and Dad's Goals

Aiming for our children to be employed and independent

- Develop a person that we enjoy and want to be with every day, **supporting their needs**
- Learn and use positive behavior support strategies
- Change the way we communicate to be more effective
- Hold high and realistic expectations which we must have the energy and patience to **TEACH, TEACH, TEACH**

Aaron's IEP Goals -Targeting Independence and Vocational Skills

- Typing with both hands – communication and data input
- Improve bilateral coordination - work with both hands together
- Follow written and oral directions – recipes, task lists, signs, job set-up and clean-up
- Learn to ask questions and seek help
- Speak clearly to the unfamiliar listener
- Use basic math, money, time skills

Educational Development Plans (EDP) - interests, abilities, preparation

- Career Cruising
www.careercruising.com
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
www.bls.gov/oco
 - Parent participation during EDP session facilitates accurate data entry
 - **Need parent buy-in, especially for supported and participation level students, to achieve long term results**

Transition Planning

- Look for jobs based on identified interests and abilities
- Have realistic high expectations
 - Educational requirements
 - Working conditions
 - Level of independence required for job duties. Can the job be carved?



EDP: Careers that interest Aaron

- Library Technician (Library Assistant)
- Animal Caretaker (Animal Care Worker)
- Zookeeper (Animal Care Worker)

Selected these High School Classes

- Computer Applications
- Vocational Period in Cafeteria
- Language Arts (reading, follow written directions)
- Physical Education (build stamina)
- Home Economics (follow recipes, food preparation)

Career Cruising: Aaron Kowalski EDP Career Preparation

Short Term Goals

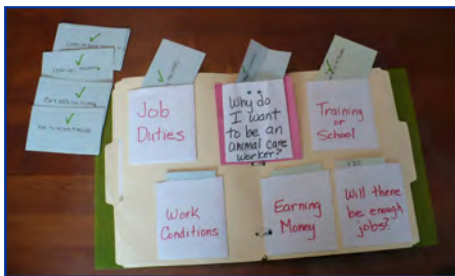
- Learning jobs at the library.
- Learning care the horse.
- Learning care the elephant.
- Learning care the birds and fish.

Long Term Goals

- Work at the library.
- Work at the zoo.
- Work at the pet store.

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Career Exploration Assignment



Use visual organization, write one sentence for each key point on an index card, manipulate the cards, check off the cards while typing an outline

Crazy for Cockatoos



By Aaron Kowalski

About Me: Explore Values, Needs and Wants



Learn to talk about yourself because it helps you with job interviews

About Me: Develop Goals



Member of the Detroit Zoo

Visit multiple zoos, aquariums and animal theme parks

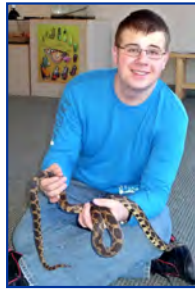


Aaron browses zoo websites constantly.

He reads books produced by zoos.

Nature Enthusiast

- Visit local nature centers frequently
- Go fishing
- Avid bird watcher
- Feed the birds, build bird feeders
- Walk and ride bikes on nature trails
- Read books and watch videos daily



Whether you think you can, or can't,

you're right.

Henry Ford



Accommodating or Carving Work Experiences

- Explain work using lower language level and relevant circumstances
- Break down work tasks, use visual strategies
- Use object level and hands-on participation for learning concepts
- Color code, number, separate into containers to create natural prompts
- Phonetically spell words on scripted notes to help him speak more clearly to customers

**When you change the
way you look at things,**



**the things you look at
change.** **Wayne Dyer**

How did you do that?



**Look for opportunities that align with
developing life and job skills.**

**Prioritize time off from school and work.
Most weekends were about the kids.**

Time Killers become Awesome Opportunities

- Acquire vocational skills through service learning (volunteering) and home projects
 - Cultivate the human spirit
- Feel needed, appreciated, empowered**
- Relate to relevant work

Assembly Worker for ASD Kits

In fourth grade, sorted Velcro pictures into cups, followed model pages to attach Velcro pictures for 20 PECS books



Assembly Worker

Snowman Soup kits are holiday gifts



Paid Assembly Worker

Assembled 100 First Aid Kits for Autism Society golf outing using batch work from a list (3-4 items, 25 at a time)



Stable Hand at OATS

Muck stalls and dump, sweep floors, groom, de-tack, and feed horses



Animal Caretaker

Prepares seed mixture, then feeds the birds



Learn to manipulate tools, read and follow recipes in Foods Classes and at home. This builds skills for preparing animal food and independent living.

Animal Caretaker Exploration

Went behind the scene at Amphibiville. He is feeding a Giant Salamander in the picture



Grounds Keeper

Get paid at home to snow blow, mow the lawn, trim trees and bushes, and more



Library Book Distributor

Reading orders, packing books, pushing carts to benefit families with ASD



Books and ASD Awareness Materials funded by Autism Society Oakland County

Media Center Assistant

Checking books in and out using a computer and scanner, shelving books



Office Assistant

North Hill Elementary Worker



Accurately count up to \$200 in coins and small bills from the Bagel Sale and school store sales each week

Office Assistant PTA Volunteer



Gross alphabetize membership drive and student directory forms



Collate all checks by dollar amount

Workshop Apprentice Preassemble, glue, drill, screw



Made 23 doll beds
for charity project

Greeter for Brunch with Santa, PTA Council, Autism Society



Greet **everyone** with
a smile and common
phrase.

Hold the door open
for guests using
proper timing and
positioning.

Volunteer for Disability Awareness Workshops – Assist with set-up, take- down and maintenance



Chef Aaron

Learn to get supplies and follow written directions without help



Food Service Worker

Assemble and stock weekly snack bags at home, like a vending system. Delicious!



Food Service Worker

Food preparation, stock beverages and snacks



Cafe and Counter Worker

Plate and stock desserts



Loves to keep the treats full

Cafe and Counter Worker

Customer Service with contagious enthusiasm



"Nachos Please!"
Carefully pumps hot nacho cheese and serves



"Hot Pretzel!"
Use foil to get hot pretzel from warmer

Dishwasher

Volunteer to wash and sanitize the pans



Food Vender at Golf Course

Distribute free food and beverages while learning about customer service



Aaron and Grandpa are a team. Grandpa drives. Both ask questions and listen for the order. Aaron gets out of the cart to find the golfers' requests and hand them out.

Advocate for vocational experiences at school

Create opportunities for career exploration and interaction with other students

Sales Associate at School Store



Service Project Volunteer

Learn vocational skills in Middle and High School

- Create large variety of craft kits and activity kits for hospital pediatric unit. Read signs while delivering
- Purchase, create and then sell products to benefit the disaster victims and the needy. Buy food at the store and deliver
- Sell adorable treat bags to benefit the peer mentoring program

Vocational Class in High School

Filling a sales order, packaging, shipping



Vocational Class in High School

Gathering recycling, walking passes to classes, cleaning the teacher's lounge



Attendance Office
Student Pass
Name _____
Class ____ Time ____

Chartwells, A School Job Site

Fill breakfast rack, chip racks, snack trays, beverage coolers



First job site!! Aaron is filling trays and racks at "a competitive rate" after 1st hour coaching for 5 weeks

Chartwells, A School Job Site

Fill beverage coolers, work as a team



Works as a team with the other student too!!!
Next Step – Improve filling beverage coolers to a competitive rate

You've got to work with what you've got!

Dolly Parton

Writing a Resume'

- Compose using a positive outlook
- Use professional workforce language
- List work (paid and unpaid) experiences and then education, interests and relevant expertise
- **The reader does not need to know the history of the challenges, just the results.**
- Pictures or videos doing tasks may help you tell your story

**The only way to
predict the future is**

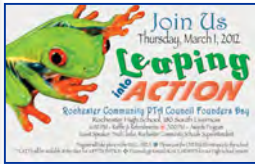
to create it.

Abraham Lincoln

2008 Yes I Can! Award Winner For Technology - Michigan CEC Conference



**2012 PTA Founder's Day Honoree
Honored by High School for Exceptional
Volunteerism**

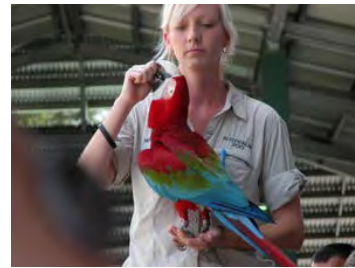


Contact Lisa or Aaron at:

lisakowalski@wowway.com



Crazy for Cockatoos



By: Aaron Kowalski

Why I Want To Be An Animal Care Worker.



- I like marine animals and birds.
- I like animals from far away places.
- I am an animal lover.

Job Duties



- Make the food for the animals.
- Give the animals water.
- Feed the animals.

Job Duties



- Clean and fix the cages.
- Clean or give a bath to the animals.
- Give the animals medicine.

Job Duties



- Groom or brush the animals.

Job Duties



- Exercise the animals.
- Play with the animals.
- Teach the animals.

Work Conditions



- Animals might hurt me.

Work Conditions



- Lift heavy supplies like hay.

Work Conditions



- Work on Saturday, Sunday, or a Holiday.
- Work at night or during the day.

Work Conditions



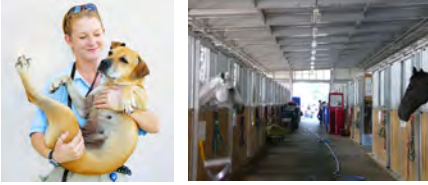
- Need to move a lot like holding the reins.
- Sometimes outside when it is really cold or hot.
- Sometimes outside when it is really nice weather.

Work Conditions



- Smelly sometimes because of poops.

Training Requirements



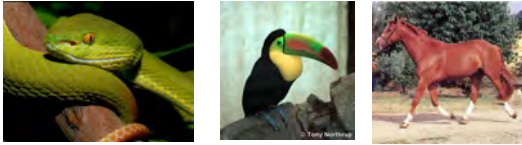
- Sometimes need High School diploma.
- On the job training many places.
- Can learn at animal shelters.
- On the job training at a stable or kennel.

Earning Money



- Most people earn \$7.50 an hour to \$10.95 an hour.
- The lowest earn \$6.56 an hour and the highest \$14.64 an hour.

Will There Be Enough Jobs?



- There will be many jobs for animal care workers at kennels.
- In 2016, there will be 39,000 more jobs for animal care workers.
- In 2016, there will be 29,000 more jobs for not-on-a-farm animal care workers.

Conclusion



- I am an animal lover.
- Animal Care Workers help animals every day in many ways. They enjoy playing, exercising and teaching animals.
- Animal Care Workers can learn their skills on the job.
- Animal Care Workers earn enough money to live good.
- There will be enough of these jobs in the future.