



# Work-Based Learning Guide for Educators & Paraeducators

## Assessing Student Readiness for Work-Based Learning Experiences

Educators and paraeducators are often the first to recognize when a student is ready—or almost ready—for a paid WBLE. Readiness is not just about skills. It includes **motivation, confidence, family support, consistency, and the student’s ability to use help when needed**. A structured readiness check helps identify strengths, support needs, and areas for growth.

### Quick Readiness Checklist for Staff

Use your observations from:

- Class routines
- Community-Based Instruction (CBI)
- Past work or volunteer experiences
- Behavior or transition plans

This checklist gives a snapshot of work readiness.

| Area   | Ready                    | Needs Support            |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Follows a schedule                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Arrives on time or responds to prompts       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Follows directions with one or two reminders | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stays on task for short periods              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Uses appropriate language and behavior       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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|  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Asks for help when needed              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Manages emotions with known strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can travel with support or training    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Shows interest in trying new tasks     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Motivation & Interest Indicators

A student's motivation often determines how successful and engaged they will be in a WBLE. Motivation may look different across students, so educators and paraeducators should observe:

| Motivation Indicator                                      | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Student shows excitement or curiosity about working       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student talks about wanting a job or earning money        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student enjoys helping, completing tasks, or being active | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student is willing to try new tasks with support          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Student responds positively to praise or success          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Low motivation does **not** mean the student cannot participate; it signals a need to:

- Match work tasks to interests
- Use clear, immediate rewards
- Build confidence through short, achievable tasks
- Provide supportive coaching

## Family Support & Readiness Indicators

Family support plays a critical role in helping students attend work, maintain routines, and feel confident. A strong school-family partnership can significantly improve WBLE outcomes.

| <b>Family Support Indicator</b>                                | <b>Yes</b>               | <b>No</b>                |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Family understands the purpose of WBLE                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family helps the student prepare (clothing, hygiene, routines) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family supports transportation plans or communicates barriers  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family encourages independence and practicing skills at home   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family communicates effectively with school or VR staff        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

When family support is limited, educators can help by:

- Providing simple info about what WBLE is and what to expect
- Offering visuals, reminders, and easy routines
- Encouraging VR involvement to support the family
- Helping families see the benefits of early work experiences

## Reflection Questions to Guide Readiness Decisions

### Student Understanding

- Does the student understand what “work” means?
- Can the student name a task they might like to try?

### Skill Application

- Can the student begin, continue, and finish tasks with support?
- Does the student follow safety rules with reminders?

### Communication

- Can the student express needs, confusion, or emotions in their own way?

### Consistency

- Does the student respond well to routines?
- Can the student transition between activities with support?

### Motivation & Interest

- What motivates the student?
- What kinds of tasks or settings make them feel successful?

### **Family Support**

- Will the family reinforce the habits needed for work (sleep, hygiene, transportation)?

### Using Readiness Results

Share readiness information with:

- The IEP team
- VR counselors
- Job coaches or provider agencies
- Families

This helps ensure:

- The job site matches the student's abilities and interests
- Supports are planned before the first day of work
- Expectations are consistent across school, family, and provider staff
- Strengths and motivators are used intentionally

### F. Important Reminder

**Readiness does NOT mean perfection.**

Students often become *more* ready **through supported work**, not before it.

Early WBLEs build:

- Motivation
- Confidence
- Self-advocacy
- Work habits
- Independence

Your observation, encouragement, and structured support can help a student grow into successful employment.