

RESPECTABILITY
Best Practices in Youth Employment for People with Disabilities
JUNE 5, 2015
1:15 P.M. ET

This is being provided in a rough-draft format. Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.

OPERATOR: The conference is now started. This conference is now being recorded. Welcome to the RespectAbility webinar: Best Practices in Youth Employment for People with Disabilities. Your speaker for today's program is Erin Riehle founder and Senior Director of Project SEARCH. Audio cast quality is subject to your equipment, available bandwidth and Internet traffic. If you experience unsatisfactory audio quality please use the telephone dial-in option provided in your confirmation and reminder email. If you have dialed in, operator assistance is available by pressing zero pound and you can submit questions at any time by using the chat window located to the left of the presentation screen a question and answer session will follow. The presentation handouts for today's program can be downloaded using the program material's link in your confirmation and reminder email. I will now turn the call over to Jennifer Mizrahi, President of RespectAbility USA. Please begin.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: Hello and welcome. I'm so delighted you joined us for this training on Project SEARCH on a really exciting best practice I'm having a little difficulty with my technology so hold on a second as I change the page here.

Operator maybe you can change the page for me. Thank you. I apologize. There's something covering my page so that I can't see it, operator. It says about Onmia webconference and it's frozen.

OPERATOR: Please log out and log back in again.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: Hillary, I'm going to need your help

ERIN RIEHLE: While you're doing that, I can -- okay.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: I just can't read what's on the screen. Okay. There we go. All fixed. Thank you so much for your patience, folks. So I want to just let you know about our speaker, Erin, who is really very experienced.

So before we even get to her I want to go through some of the key facts. First is 1 in 5 Americans have a disability. And it's 70% of working-age Americans are outside of the workforce. More than 9 million of them are surviving on Government benefits. This costs taxpayers billions. The employment gap between people with and without disabilities continues to expand. The Social Security Disability Trust Fund, meanwhile, is going to exhaust its funds in 2016. So we're expecting a 20% shortfall. So the Government is looking for solutions for how we can do a better job on this. Meanwhile, we have 1.2 million 16 to 20 year olds with disabilities in America that should be entering into their work and career years. Unfortunately, many of them are going from the school to their parents couch or to their siblings' couch where they are living on benefits their entire life. This is bad for taxpayers but it's terrible for people with disabilities since the majority of them want the benefits of working. The income, the friendships, the dignity and more. Most Americans really do want to work. And they deserve the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. Project SEARCH, which Erin leads and started, is a promising practice. And it's really exciting to see what it is that they can do.

It's very important to think about the metrics. I like to think about it as necessary versus sufficient. If you look at a steam engine, a steam engine only moves when the water gets to 212 degrees. You can warm it up and warm it up and warm it up to 210 degrees and it doesn't move at all. We need to be thinking as we think of youth employment about our theory of change. What is going to work-- and what is not going to work. Theory of change is an $A + B + C = D$. It's how you're going to really transform and get positive change. Unfortunately in the disability and the workforce movement, all too often what we see is we see the wrong theory of change. It's like somebody going up and down on a pogo stick. You exert a tremendous amount of energy but you're not getting anywhere. We really need to move to the bicycle to the series that work to the programs that work and that are going to be more successful. Indeed we think about some of the key ingredients, the things that are necessary, the Americans with Disabilities Act --ADA, then the question is what's the missing ingredient that will enable us to see great jobs for people with disabilities, all kinds of abilities. Project SEARCH is not for everyone. It's not a one-size-fits-all program as you will see. It serves a certain kind of youth and it does a superior job at doing it. But again, you have to know about the program and where it's appropriate. In 2013, you had 1 be 1 -- 1,156,000 individuals from ages 13 to 25 received a total of \$8.7 billion in benefits. These are young people with distinct challenges in transitioning from school to work and economic self-sufficiency. A big part of WIOA is focused on youth employment and I think that's a very smart part of public

policy. Additionally the Social Security Administration administered through Mathematica, a very important youth transition demonstration, the unfortunate thing is it had a lot of things they did as the quote-unquote treatment that people thought were going to achieve really outstanding results.

But the unfortunate thing is although it did have positive results that were statistically relevant in some of the locations, the amount of money for the amount of result was not exactly something that was enthusiastically successful. So it's very important to look for new best practices and this project is very promising and -- Project SEARCH is very promising and they will be there soon so Erin Riehle is the founder of Project SEARCH she's an extraordinary leader in this field I turn it over to her.

ERIN RIEHLE: Thanks Jennifer and thanks RespectAbility I do want to say thank you, Jennifer for what you just said-- we built Project SEARCH to be an evidence-based practice-- we have a passion for training and employment for people with disabilities. But we're not trying to take over the world, that's not our aim. We believe that people with disabilities deserve as many options as anyone else and we are proud to be a supporter on that continuum but we are not the only program out there, there are lots of good ones. To give you a bit of my history and the program philosophy I'm actually a nurse, I'm not a disability expert. Certainly didn't start out that way. And I used to work here at Children's Run -- I managed the emergency department it's the largest pediatric emergency department in the world in terms of number of visits. I was sitting in my office one day and happened to look out in our waiting area and I was struck by the fact that many of the people coming to us for medical care were children with disabilities and I had never thought about it before. So I went to the head of our education department and asked how many training programs we had. And they said well we have over 60 yet not a single one of them was built to work with people with disabilities. And then I went to our CFO and I asked how much revenue we made by providing medical care to people with disabilities. And it turned out that it was an incredibly significant portion of our revenue increasing every year and what I also found by talking to the CFO, was that in our hospital, two-thirds of our clinics are named after a disability and we hire doctors and nurses specifically to treat people with disabilities. It's what they make their career on so while the health of our business relies on people with disabilities as customers and patients, we had never done anything to say to them, we believe that you could work here. And I do have to say our hospital like most other businesses for years had groups coming in every day. Voc rehab came, Goodwill, Jewish Services, Easter Seals not to say anything negative about any of them but every week we had somebody from these groups coming in asking us if we would hire a person with a disability but there was a total disconnect because first of all they didn't even know what our jobs were, the people they were bringing to us did not have the skills necessary to fill our positions. And it really felt more charitable than business like.

So because I was a nurse, worked for the hospital, they gave me permission to see if we might build an educational program to allow us to train young people with disabilities who were still in school in the skills that we needed here at the hospital and in our surrounding community and that's how we were born. Right now our program is built on this quote by Stephen Simon said people with disabilities have the right to choose a path toward education and employment. However, while freedom of choice is given, the right to work is earned no matter who you are and earning the right to work is dependent upon the student's preparation.

So we take quite frankly a rather hard line approach. We don't believe that people with disabilities just get hired because they have a disability. We believe they need to be treated like everybody else as respectfully and they also have to put in the due diligence to learn the skills to do the job they want. I think the fact that we prepare our folks is one of the key reasons why we're very successful.

I think, again, you know, my masters is in administration and we're taught to follow the money, when we started looking at how to create a program that would work, the first thing that I did was take a look in the communities, see where funding was coming from. What were the entitlements that existed in the given communities, what are standard practice, what was the law. And learn as much as I could about that. What I found out and everybody listening will know this is that for most of the time, disability funding has been pretty serial. You know, education gets dollars. And -- under transition and IDEA there are four years during which a young person is supposed to work on transition to independence. And that includes living independently as well as working. And that's that 18 to 21 year period. And schools get quite a bit of money to work on transition and they are also graded on how well they meet those transition goals. And yet even though money is coming to schools to work on this, their success rate has been pretty low. And so a lot of kids, most of the kids with disabilities leave school without a job and then they go to voc rehab and voc rehab gets a lot of Federal money to work on placing young people -- or people with disabilities into employment. And yet there are still some folks who don't get employed. And then they often will go onto a health services or a developmental disabilities group that also gets funding to work on either maintaining employment or finding an ulterior alternative day program or sheltered workshop. So there's three -- these three groups that get lots of funding but they have tended to let one fail before the other gets started. And there's a lot of money going. And yet still really low outcomes.

So what we did, we worked with all three very closely. And we said, what would happen if while these young people are still in school -- are still in that 18 to 21 period, instead of

the three working serially, what would happen if we asked them to work together in one year to braid their funding so that perhaps none of them -- all of them are more efficient and maybe saved money but braid their funding, braid their practices, braid their knowledge, call that year Project SEARCH. And instead of leaving the young people in a school where they learn the same old same old for four more years, in their final year, let's move them into a business where we can teach them the skills that will allow them to be employed in the community. And while we're at it we will not only be teaching the young people but we will also be teaching employers how to work appropriately with people with disabilities. And also how to recognize that people with disabilities are incredibly capable with the right training. So that's how we created Project SEARCH.

I put this up just because I think it's really telling. And this is changing. It's just beginning to change. It's interesting to me that even in the most common thing that we talk about, employment, those three agencies that I mentioned, actually have three vastly different definitions. So in education, employment can be being a homemaker, joining the military, going onto further education or certification, going into a workshop, entering an enclave or getting a job. And if you look at developmental disability on the right, they are pretty similar to education, a much broader definition.

If you look at voc rehab in the middle, they are the one group that pretty much holds the course. And when you work with voc rehab, they have one definition, employment means competitive employment only. And in an integrated setting, 16 hours a week or more. Non-seasonal work. So when we were setting up Project SEARCH, we went with the voc rehab definition. Now, that creates some issues because we're asking all three groups to work together. And if you're not really working together, and each group is working to their own definition, then you don't get good outcomes. So we force our groups to work together. Our program is essentially, it's one school year. It starts in the fall. Ends in the spring. It's nine months. And the young people do not step foot in the school. We are using this year to teach these young people both appropriate social behaviors, help them mature in their social skills. And also teach them work skills. So they come from home to the business. They go to the business -- they go home from the business. They must follow the business dress code. And they must follow the business policies, including absenteeism. So if we have a young person who is late 30 or 40 times, we will actually exit them from the program. Because we believe if you can't show up for a training program, you're not likely to be -- to do well in employment.

We typically take 10 to 12 young adults with a wide variety of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our rule is every young person who comes to us must be associated with VR. They have to have an open case. And 60% of the young people who come to us must be DD eligible, if DD exists in their state. So we're serving people

who certainly in terms of VR are a Category 1. We ask the school to send the instructor and one paraprofessional who will act as a job coach. So basically we're saying to the school, listen. Instead of keeping 12 kids, 10 to 12 kids in a class, what would happen if you moved 10 to 12 into a business and you sent an instructor with them. Everything we do is based on math. We don't make anything up. So the 10 to 12 number is nothing more than a ratio of costs. So the cost of the instructor and one paraprofessional, divided by however much more a district gets per pupil tells us how much young people we have to have at a given location. Here in Cincinnati we have to have 12 young people in a class. We're working with a site in New Mexico that has to have 14. We have some other locations that only have to have 6. So again, it's an economic ratio. It's interesting to me because we don't allow any of our partners to assume more debt than they are already spending so even if a business says gosh we love Project SEARCH and we want to do this but we only want 4 kids, 4 young people, then it's our job to explain the cost efficiencies and say, well, 4 won't work because the school can't afford that long-term. And we have never once had a business not understand that because we're speaking business.

Our young people are immersed in the host business culture. They are going to rotate through unpaid internships with continual feedback. We do not pay our young people because they are high school students. The other reason we don't pay them is because we are in big businesses which have lots of training programs. Here at Children's we don't pay our nurses or our -- our nursing students, our medical students, our child life students, any of the other students, they come, it's seen as something they must do to gain preparation. So we do not pay our high school students for the privilege of learning. The outcome is employment but employment in the community we do not go into the business and say by the way you have to hire all 12 there's no business in America that would do that the other part of it is again, our hospital trains thousands of nurses a year. We don't guarantee a single one of them employment. But we have a willingness to hire good candidates. So that's what we ask from our business partners. And I'm just really happy to tell you that we -- site -- any program that we have and we have over 400 Project SEARCH programs in the United States right now. All of those sites are required to enter their data into an international database which we track. We shut down programs if they are not meeting minimum threshold and we just looked at our last year's numbers and our employment rate across the United States for our nearly 400 programs was 73%. So we're able to find jobs out in the community. Using the skills that our folks have learned. Again our folks are 18 to 21 years old, again that's that transition age they have to be in their last year of high school eligibility or a DD eligible adult. We do on occasion take adults who are DD eligible into the program. We also run Project SEARCH as an adult program. It's very similar. But I won't go into those details today. The funding looks different. They have to be eligible for services, which means they all have to

be Category 1, VR eligible, and have an open case. And like I said before, we want 60% of all of the young people we take to be DD eligible. And that is a belief of ours that we want to serve people with the most sick developmental disabilities. They have to have appropriate hygiene, social, and communication skills. It doesn't mean they talk. It means they have to be able to communicate in some way, whether it would be an interpreter, an alphabet board, on iPhone, we don't care. And they certainly do not need to be able to read and write. But they do have to be able to take direction and change behavior. And by that I mean if they are doing something that's unsafe in a business environment and I say, no, or stop, they must stop. And so that's a critical behavior skill that they must have. We require that any young person coming into our program access public transportation. We don't allow them to come on the school bus. We believe if this is their last year of transition and we don't teach them how to use what's available in the community we have done them a serious disservice. So all young people must find an alternative way to get to the business. They have to pass a drug screen and background check. And most of all, they have to want to work. I think that last one sounds really easy. It's probably one of our biggest barriers. Lots of folks apply. But then we'll have parents or young people tell us, well, I don't want to work. Or she doesn't need to work or we only want to work two hours a week. We're looking for people who want to work.

The definition of a successful outcome very much like what VR says, it must be competitive employment in an integrated setting. It must be year-round work, 16 hours a week or more, minimum wage or higher. If any of our programs doesn't meet all four, they are not counted. So we don't count any job that may be gained through Project SEARCH which is less than 16 hours as a successful outcome. This says 273, we are actually at nearly 400 programs. And we are right now in 45 states. And multiple countries. We serve about 2500 young people a year. 60% of our programs are in health care, hospitals. 40% are in a really broad mix of businesses. We help finance and we work with huge insurance companies like United Healthcare, Fifth Third Western-Southern insurance. We have programs in museums and resorts and a program at the Smithsonian Institute. Lots of programs in Government such as National Institute of Health, Department of the Interior. State Government offices, county Government offices. We have a lot of programs in distribution centers. Walmart, Nexus, and Syngage. We have programs in manufacturing. We do a lot with Medtronic. So we are pretty open. We can make it work in pretty much any business that has at least 200 employees or more. 68% was our outcome rate last year. This year we found out it's 73% so we have gone up significantly. 88% of all of the people we place are benefit eligible, which is key. Now, the tricky part of that is that we don't force any family or any young person to take benefits, even though they are offered. We know that 35% of people employed through Project SEARCH do take benefits. Usually at about the five-year mark when they trust they are going to keep that job. Here in Ohio, our DD would tell you that benefits alone saves roughly \$1 million

per person over a lifetime. And what we have done, we're constantly adding things to what we do. And we added a family involvement curriculum to our program. So the parents of young people who are taken into our program are required to attend three classes so that we can really talk about benefits and employment. We're working on driving familial change in attitude. This is our school year again we start in August. We end in June. The internships are approximately ten weeks each. We make our young people apply for each interview -- or for each internship. They interview with a manager. So we also teach the managers how to interview people with disabilities. Most managers have never done an assisted interview. So we do a lot of training with managers. We teach them about yes and no questions. And then we ask them to call our intern back a day later so we build some -- a delayed reaction. Two weeks before the internship is over, the young person has to resign formally. They get an evaluation from the manager in that department. And then as soon as they leave the internship, they write a thank you note back to the department.

Now when I say write, I use that term loosely. It's whatever adaptation we need per person. It's really critical, twice -- two times during each ten-week internship we have that's called an employment planning meeting. And that's to keep us on track. Project SEARCH comes at a cost. The school is providing a teacher and VR is providing a job coach so we bring all of the team members together twice every ten weeks to talk about how we're doing. Are we moving in the right direction. Are we doing what the young person and the family want. Are our internships robust enough? Are they learning marketable skills? It keeps us very, very honest. And then we start looking for employment in about January.

This is -- in terms of a schematic this is what we look like. We're kind of a wagon wheel. Every morning the young people come in to a centralized classroom within the business and they spend an hour in the classroom where they get curriculum. And the curriculum is on how to be a good employee. It's employability skills. Why do you wait for people to get off an elevator before you get on, why is hand washing important, why is confidentiality important so we teach employability skills and then each young person goes out to their own individualized internship. We do not send more than one at a time.

And then the business liaison, the instructor and the job coaches are rotating around doing the heavy lifting. We initially learn the job. We teach it. And we work with our young people. Our internships are built around marketable skills and it equals out to 4 to 5 hours a day, 910 hours per year. We also work on work and social skills. And we must teach cascading skills. So I just want to talk about that quickly. You know, I remember once when the head of our volunteer department called me and said, Erin, we've got this huge mailing. Could we have an intern because the volunteers don't want to just sit here and do mailings all day. And I think in the past, I have been in a lot of disability programs and

seen a lot of kids stuffing envelopes and folding mail. And yet not very many kids who go on to be employed doing that. And we would say that's not a marketable skill so in Project SEARCH the answer when someone asks us for an intern is, no, we will not put an intern -- we're not there to do the scud work that no one else wants to do. We're not there to do anything that's left over. We are there in our own right to learn skills that will allow our folks to be employed in careers, not just jobs. So in the same vein once they learn and master a skill at the beginning of the internship then we add another so we're constantly cascading growth.

This is a great example. This is a young woman who had polio as a child she uses a large wheelchair her name is Sarah. I have permission to talk about her. Sarah knew what she wanted to be which is unusual and Sarah wanted to be a receptionist but had absolutely no training in being a receptionist in high school she came to us as a 19-year-old if she wants to be a receptionist, use common sense, the first thing you should do is get a job description for a receptionist, find out what the basic skills that are needed and find a way to teach them. That's what we do her first rotation she was actually at a university and she was in the Vice President's office because there was a phone there. She can't use one of her arms. And her speech is difficult to understand So we had to teach her how to put a headset on with one arm and how to use voice dictation and how to take a message. And the first probably 20 phone calls she got were from us. Because we're not going to put her in a department and say hey we're here time to answer the phones. That's craziness. And by the end of ten weeks, quite frankly, she had not mastered that. Her second rotation was in consumer lending. And she focused on some very basic computer skills. How do you put an appointment in between two people? How do you set up a meeting? And at the same time, she still practiced how to answer the phone. And then her third rotation she was with a receptionist in the lobby and she went on to be hired as a receptionist at Fifth Third's corporate office and she's now been there eight years full-time she has full-time benefits, lives independently she has assistants she makes a great salary and she has a great life.

Now, most of our folks do not know what they want to be. And so when that's the case, what we do with every one of our programs is we go into the community and we do a community assessment. We look at the businesses. We look at where the high turnover entry level positions are, what skills are most needed in the community. And then we set about teaching those skills during our internships. There's no point in teaching a lot of skills if there's absolutely no need for them in your community. And then at the end of the year, we go back to those same businesses with qualified staff. We have a real focus on quality and productivity. And again, it sets us apart I think. This is a slide of some tables in a cafeteria. I want to say just to be clear we stay away from what we consider traditional stereotypical work so we don't teach people to wipe down tables or to bag groceries or to

bring carts in. And in fact in our programs at grocery stores, we do not -- an internship cannot be bagging groceries or bringing in carts. It can be working in produce or the bakery or back of the store. It can be running a cash register. But we're trying to really ramp up expectations. But I use this just for the illustration. I think sometimes we get really confused. If I had two people with disabilities, two young men, and this was a room that needed to be cleaned and straightened every day and let's just say on two different days, one day I ask a man with a disability to go in, clean it, straighten it, make sure the chairs are all in place and he went in and 15 minutes later he came out, said he was done, and then I went in and he was fast but he had done a terrible job and then the next day I had another man with a disability who went in to do the same thing. And after an hour, he still hadn't come out and so then I go in to check and he's done a really good job but only on two of the tables, the truth is, neither one of those is good enough in business. And I think we have erred with this patronizing attitude well what if the poor person with a disability can't do the whole thing or sometimes we tend to reward in our society we reward effort for people with disabilities because we don't think they can really do it. And Project SEARCH we know they can do it. So we focus on quality and productivity. And we would work on getting all of the tables and all of the chairs done correctly in the right amount of time. The other thing we talk about a lot is quality. We work really hard to take abstract concepts and make them as concrete as possible at the beginning of the year we ask our instructor to bake a batch of chocolate chip cookies and we ask them to burn some of them, to make some of them look a little bit funny and to make some of them look like Chips Ahoy! And we give these cookies a number score, 1, 2, 3. We don't use A, B and C, because we're trying to move into an adult situation, away from education. And then we grade -- we talk about everything that they do. And we ask them to evaluate their performance, their attitude and their appearance on this scale. So it's a way in which we have really worked hard to make concrete a very abstract concept.

(Phone ringing.)

ERIN RIEHLE: Real quickly I want to talk about a few things. I'm really sorry my phone is ringing and my extension -- there it goes. I want to talk about a few people we have working here at Children's to give an example and I'll wrap this up then I do have permission to mention all of their names and comments on them and so they know I do it but this is a young woman by the name of Annie. She has Down syndrome. She does not read or write. Annie came through our program the very first year that we had it. And she loved things she loved puzzle pieces it was pretty clear to us where she had some skills and what her interests were and I actually hired her to work with me in the emergency department. She worked with me for six months, she was one of our standard supply technicians. She worked full-time. Worked a standard schedule. And she put equipment in all 58 rooms in the emergency department. She was a fabulous employee.

She did her job and she did it well. And she made a great salary. And we loved having Annie in that role in the emergency department and then at six months the head of our dental clinic came to see me and said you know what Erin we have a position it's really difficult. It's a high turnover position. We know you have a young person with a disability working with you do you think she would be interested in a promotion.

Now, I tell this story only because it's full disclosure only and just to be transparent. It was our first year of running the program. And quite frankly, I did not think Annie could do this job that they were proposing and I think the sad part about it is I didn't even ask Annie, I just thought as a person working in a disability program that it was okay for me to guess what she could do. Now, every day we learn. And every day we are brought up short by the stupid things we do and the mistakes we make. I went home and thought about it. I thought you know what, no one has ever failed for me. I have certainly on my own behalf. But no one has ever failed for me. And we are never going to do it for a person with a disability. They may fail. But it's not because we didn't try or let them have a choice. So anyway, I do want to say on my own behalf, the reason I thought Annie couldn't do this new job is that she couldn't even find her locker in our locker room and she couldn't open her combination lock and I had a hard time, I couldn't imagine that if you couldn't do these easiest of skills, that you would be able to do something really complex. You know, what I know now is that there's not a correlation between what you can't do and what you can do. And I had made the mistake so many people make, I judged Annie on the things she couldn't do instead everything she could do. I'm really proud to say, though, that Annie wanted the job. And she became the clinical sterilization technician for our dental department. We have a 15-bed dental department. The cases turn over every 30 minutes. Annie's sublet is the only person in this job she's not part-time she's not temp. She works eight hours a day, five days a week. She sterilizes and processes every dental instrument that goes into a kid's mouth at Children's Hospital. She makes a fabulous salary. She has full-time benefits in her own tax sheltered annuity. The really funny part is she still can't open her locker. But by working with a team that includes education and VR and DD, and being the business, they can teach us all the way to -- all the ways to make things possible so this is a laser lock you point the laser and it pops.

Just a few more stories this is another young woman her name is Gretchen. She is very difficult to understand. She does not read and she does not count. And when I got started in this, I used to think that, my, gosh, my job is important. You would probably have to count and read as well as I can but the facts are that those are myths. And we continue believing them because we have lack of experience working alongside people with disabilities. So what I have learned through Project SEARCH is that there's lots of ways to count. And almost everything we count in society can be broken down into 5s and 10s. And disability experts can teach business people how to get to 5 and 10. On the right you

see a picture and it's a bunch of baby nipples it's 20 baby nipples in a sheet taped together she has to put 20 in a bag and put them in 28 rooms she's responsible for. She stocks two floors in our hospital. So she puts a nipple on top of every picture. Then she folds it up and puts it in a bag and she gets 20 absolutely every time. She's actually faster at it and more accurate than people that can count.

We also have folks that use counting boards. I don't know how you set it up as a businessperson, I don't know how you use it. All I know is that it works. And there's dozens of these tools that are possible when business partners with education and voc rehab.

Another great example, this is a young woman with autism and an environment she's not a strong reader but she does really well with numbers. She works in our storeroom And you can see the tool that was created for her is mostly pictures and numbers There's not a word on here. Because the fact of the matter is to put something where it belongs, you don't need to be able to read. You need to be able to match.

I want to talk real quickly about these oximetry probes every hospital uses them they cost us \$18 the first time we buy them but they can be recycled twice and the times that they are recycled we buy them back for \$6 each so it's a huge cost savings but when we first started this it was an incredibly tedious process. You had to check the label every time we used it. You had to make sure the wires weren't broken. You had to wipe it down with a sterilizing agent before you sent it back and you could only put 40 in a box. And at Children's we weren't doing it. Because it was very tedious, very time consuming. And we just were throwing them away. And then we had a young man, a student we hired. And he's worked for us for probably 14 years. The problem is, his name is Nick, Nick has spina bifida. He has limited use of one of his arms, he can't hold it up in the air and wipe it down and he can't count to 40. But here is the really cool thing, because we worked dotting for \$9, the team and Project SEARCH built this standing Lazy Susan and at the top, \$9 in plywood it's a circle we cut 40 slots into that so when he fills every slot there's no need to count he has automatically 40. Because they are hanging he can pull his wheelchair up and use the stronger arm to wipe them down in the very first year our hospital saved \$1.1 million by having him do this job.

You know, we use pictures instead of words. And I know probably most people listening know how to do this. You know how to do it. Businesses don't know how to do it. And what we have learned at Children's and all of the businesses that host Project SEARCH sites, they learn the culture, they learn it's not scary. This is a really -- this is a great example here, this is our storeroom. And in our storeroom we have hundreds of these bins. And we had a young woman who had an environment and a developmental

disability. She wanted to train in the storeroom. And so -- but she couldn't read the small labels so the instructor and the job coaches went in and as professor Project SEARCH enlarged the print on every single bin as part of her learning experience so she could learn how to stock, how to figure out where things went, that was a skill she was practicing and we noticed within a couple of weeks that the staff in the department were taking our bigger label and covering up the small label and what I learned from this is this is not rocket science. The bigger label is easier to read. What is rocket science? Is it -- had I come off the street with a young woman with a developmental disability who is legally blind and gone to materials management and asked them to hire her, it would have essentially freaked him out and he would have been running through the scenario of everything he didn't know or misunderstood about people with disabilities. You know, what is the staff going to say? What if she can't do the job? What is this going to mean for everybody else? Are we going to have to work twice as hard? And in the end in that situation she's not going to get a job.

But by coming in with Project SEARCH not only did we teach her these skills but we taught this entire department that it's actually pretty easy to work with a person with a disability if you have support and accommodations and adaptations. And this young woman went on to be hired there. And has worked there for many years. We error proof what we do, I'm going to stop with this one Jennifer.

This was a woman with very severe autism. She's in a training program in North Carolina. She was very interested in taking care of all the mirrors and windows on the ground floor, which is a paid job. But we were trying to teach her how to do one part of the skill. The problem was, she couldn't identify what was dirty. So one of the ways you error proof that is we teach our folks to set up their own structure in a real setting. So for her, we asked her what she liked to write. She said 1, 2, 3, squiggly line now we taught her to right 1, 2, 3, squiggly line on every surface and then proceed to write that off she no longer does that but went on to be hired at a similar job in the community but it's a structure. I can tell many stories we have lots of examples of people doing critical work, patient care Rosalie, we have gone onto hire 58 people at Children's Hospital. All with a wide variety of developmental disabilities working in many areas. And our common goal is employment. We have great partners. We love working with VR, education, and DD. We have lots of states that we work with around the country. And I'm privileged to have this job. I have the best job in the world. I also just need to say before I end that people with disabilities are incredibly capable. And they can do really, really complex work when there's an element to it that's routine. And we need to have higher expectations across the world. Thank you.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: That was really terrific. And let me say that there is a textbook

that Erin co-wrote with her colleagues MaryEllen Daston and Susie Rutkowski it's fabulous it has job descriptions and checklists and you can get it on the Amazon Web site and I really do recommend the book. I want to point out a couple of things. One we touched on earlier Project SEARCH is one of many tools that can help us be successful as they look to create more employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Not the only tool. Bridges to Work is a wonderful tool. There's lots of tools. So this is a link to a list of best practices that we as RespectAbility recommend along with the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Best Buddies, Paralyzed Veterans of America, NCIL and NOD. So I do encourage you to go on to that link, that PDF, and pull it down for best practices and we did do a webinar on it which is on our YouTube. So I hope you'll join us.

I think it's very important not only to think about the welcome programs that Erin just illustrated to us, it's to think about how you deploy that program successfully in a state, particularly as you're going through your implementation process. Let me take the state of Wisconsin. The state of Wisconsin, you have 80% of people without disabilities are in the workforce. And 40% of people with disabilities are in the workforce. So it's actually already going up. It's better than most states which only have 30% in the workforce. But you see this gap between the 40% employment for people with disabilities and the 80% of people without. And you see that there are fully 685,000 people in Wisconsin with a disability. What we look at when we're talking with governors or workforce boards or agencies is how do you take the limited money you have and have the biggest bang for your buck? So what I like to do is look at these 16 to 20-year-olds. How many 16 to 20-year-olds do you have in your state with a disability? And in Wisconsin the number is 24,800. And I'm going to show you a link so you can see it for every single state what those numbers are. Then with what you can do, -- what you can do, there's going to be a link where you can do this for your state, for your state how many 16 to 20-year-olds do you have who are blind, hearing differences or ambulatory difference or cognitive difference? Look, the folks with a cognitive difference have a very good chance of being a wonderful match for a Project SEARCH program. But in Wisconsin, when we first met with the Governor there, they only had two of these programs. But seeing the incredible success in terms of the employment outcomes from Project SEARCH, with Governor -- what Governor Walker did in partnership with this vocational rehabilitation and they have a real good team there in Wisconsin is they went from having two Project SEARCH sites to I believe it's 2 dozen Project SEARCH sites and it's centralized from the state and that meant that a lot more of their young people who are transitioning from school to work, what happens is they don't have what Erin talked about, a situation where they go to school until they are 21 years old. Then the school bus stops coming. They select benefits, they sit on their parents' couch and then at some period of time they show up at a one-stop shop/American job center and say I want to have a job well at that point their

get up and go skills have really degraded you really want them to go immediately from school into work so they are still able to really take direction, learn new skills, get up on time, get dressed. Work ready, et cetera, et cetera. So this was really important because it's a break-through because the state has a centralized contract. And it really helps them with their performance metrics.

I was delighted to speak with the leader of voc rehab in Wisconsin recently to discover because of Project SEARCH and other innovations that they are doing in Wisconsin, they are getting so many more people jobs that previously were on benefits that they are getting a \$4 million bonus from the Federal Government which they are then able to redeploy in terms of helping with workforce strategies for people with barriers to work. As I promised here is a link to PowerPoints for every single state so you can identify exactly how many 16 to 20-year-olds you have and take a look again at how many have a cognitive disability. And then ask yourself, do you have the right number of programs for people with a cognitive disability or can Project SEARCH be your answer? Take a look at how many people you have with a vision disability or with a hearing disability and see, are you doing the right things in assistive technology to ensure that these folks who may be for all you know PhDs have the supports they need to go right into the workforce. Here are some of the links to some of the data that you got, including a link to the Project SEARCH site, which is important. Because don't take our word for it that this is an exciting program. Go visit a Project SEARCH site in your community and take a look at what you're doing -- they are doing there. And go look at your state VR agency and speak with them about it. Speak with JAN if you have questions on some best practices. And don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions now we're really going to turn entity over to questions and I see Rhonda said how do we meet performance measures of obtaining a recognized credit for this population? Just thinking out loud. Erin?

ERIN RIEHLE: Yeah, that's a great question, Jennifer, we have talked about it and I think at this point we're in so many different industries that probably an industry recognized credential at this point is beyond what we can do we are looking at higher ed credits or a general certification in Project SEARCH. To be honest this is something we need to work on with WIOA for sure.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: Operator, can you let people know how to submit questions.

OPERATOR: Yes, if you're on the web and want to submit it by chat please type in the questions of the lower left corner of the presentation window and hit enter on your keyboard or if you're dialed in you can press zero pound now to key up verbal questions.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: Let us know, operator, if anyone has any verbal questions at this point.

OPERATOR: Will do.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: While we're waiting for questions, Erin, let us know, if you would, what works best for a state? How many states are looking at a centralized plan for how they are going to do things? In terms of Project SEARCH in your state.

ERIN RIEHLE: Yeah I think right now we have about eight states working on a centralized plan. It's much better. It allows us to combine training and come in at a less expensive -- it's better to use multiple resources at the same time but all of our state initiatives are led by different groups so in Texas, for example, we have working on getting 15 programs up and running at the request of the state. That money came through the DD departments. In North Carolina, it is voc rehab. In Virginia, it's voc rehab. Voc rehab has asked us to start two programs a year for three years. And so it's centralized, it allows us to work with states on consistency of practice, making sure that people are entering their data, that they are doing the same things. And so many states have centralized formats. They are typically either funded through voc rehab, DD, or education in general. We're not yet -- we haven't yet had any states reach out to us through -- I know they don't want to say WIOA anymore through I can't say it otherwise WIOA. But we have had many contacts to discuss it.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: So we have a question about whether you have programs in Georgia, which I know you do. And how would they have a program in Canada or in an area where they don't have one yet? How would they go about that.

ERIN RIEHLE: Sure we have lots of programs in Georgia, I think we probably have 20 or so Georgia is one of our I would say best states. They don't get the praise they deserve. They've got a VR and a DD and an education system that works beautifully together. I think Georgia is kind of got it going on.

And we have programs in many, many different types of businesses there. If you're interested and you're in Georgia, I would tell you to call Dotty Adams who is with the state DD Council. All of our sites in Georgia go through DD -- through the DD Council and are under Dotty's leadership. Again that's centralized way of doing it that allows for real efficiencies. We do actually have a couple of programs in Canada. But they are both in Winnipeg and they are with a water company in Winnipeg. And a hospital. But essentially we are rigorous and we have rules. So anybody who wants to be a site has to sign a license saying that they agree to abide by our core fidelity model. They will be -- they must enter their data into a database. They must pay for technical assistance the cost to get a

program up and running is \$15,000. Oftentimes we'll get partners who will come together to pay that. That means we come out six to eight times to provide the training necessary to do this and do it well. Along with that, you get over 500 documents. Our curriculum, our lesson plans, for every day of the year, application forms. We have many, many things that we have created. And then we audit all of our programs to make sure that they are in compliance. So for example, if we have a program in Georgia, I'll just pick Georgia, if we would have a program in Georgia, that for two years in a row would have less than 60% of a class employed, we would probably do an audit and shut that program down. They would either need to respond to recommendations or we would close them because again we're very fiscally responsible.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: We're seeing a lot of questions about businesses. Why do you do better with companies with 200 employees or more? Does it matter whether they are unionized or not?

ERIN RIEHLE: Yeah those are great questions. I think what we have learned over time and there's been some research is that Project SEARCH is not a small business model. There are lots of good ones for that. But typically because we're bringing in 10 to 12 young people because that's what the school needs to afford the staff that they are sending, we need to have enough departments that our young people can do individualized skill training. If you have less than 200 people, you're probably too small. I mean that's right on the edge. We also are looking for businesses in which our young people can learn a wide variety of skills. You know, not everybody wants to work at a desk. And so we don't want a business that's just clerical. We want some physical skills. Maybe some painting and patching. We want to be able to teach skills that appeal to many young people. So our program here at the hospital isn't about working at a hospital. It's about the fact that you can learn many -- a wide variety of skills here.

The other thing that we look for in our businesses, Jennifer, we only select businesses that are on a transportation line, if a line exists in a given community. So for example, here in Cincinnati, we were approached by Avon, their corporate office wanted a program. And sadly, the Avon is outside of our 275 loop. And our bus -- our transportation system does not go there. And so we chose another option, which was on our transportation system. Because we're always going to choose someone to take advantage of a service if it exists. We typically are hoping that this employer will hire some of our young people. And so we want to choose a business that has a cafeteria. We know that young people with disabilities, if they are employed, and their goal is to live independently, they don't necessarily eat well at home. So we want to have an option be at least one good meal a day. Same thing goes with a gym. We know people with disabilities die much earlier than the general population from postsecondary conditions so

we're going to choose a business that has a gym facility, if at all possible.

Probably the two biggest things, though, that we look at in addition to the wide variety of skills, we want a business that has a turnover rate between 7 and 15%. If it's lower than 7%, then that business is probably never going to hire any of our graduates. If it's higher than 15%, they probably are a little bit chaotic and may not be the most supportive environment. So our sweet spot is that 7 to 15% turnover rate.

And lastly, certainly the business has to be accessible. I just was in Virginia last week. And there's a business that desperately wants to host a Project SEARCH site. And they were not at all accessible. So we had to say no. And what we'll do then is we'll find another way to include them in working with our young people down the road.

Oh, and then the last one is about unions, yeah, we work with unions all the time. In fact SCIU which is the largest health care union gave us an award last year in December as being a champion for youth. And they also have a three-page policy that outlines their belief that working with people -- young people with disabilities as a promising business practice, I think the secret in working with unions and the reason it works for us is because if we go into a business that has a union, then we require that the union be at the table, the union rep be at the table from the beginning and actually take part in internship development.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: That's very helpful. Let me note a couple of things here. One is that I do agree that this transportation route issue is incredibly important. But with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act because they are now doing new plans, there's an opportunity to choose a business that's not on the route if the transportation team is at the table to get that business onto a transportation route.

ERIN RIEHLE: Yeah.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: So there's now with the new WIOA process if you go to a company and the company says we're a company that has 400 employees we would love to have a Project SEARCH site we're not on public transportation, you would find that perhaps they can move their bus route or they can move some sort of transportation office opportunity to move it in. So that's one thing.

The second thing is that as you are looking for companies, the first kind of company I would look for is a Federal contractor. And the reason for a Federal contractor is because of the new 503 requirements. The 503 requirement is that a Federal contractor is supposed to have at least 7% of their employees in all job categories be people with

disabilities. So if they are Federal contractors there's more of a likelihood that they are looking to hire people with disabilities.

We did a different webinar also on doing Project SEARCH in hotels. I think these are very promising place for growth. I think a lot of people when they think Project SEARCH, they think hospital because, Erin, you started it at a hospital. But when I see growth for Project SEARCH I see it in three locations, I see it in hotels, I see it in retirement and nursing homes. Because as the baby boomers age, you're going to see a lot of need for Granny nannies and for people who are working in elder care. So that's the second site. And the third place is place where there are Federal employees -- they are Federal contractors. Actually a fourth site would be the Government itself. The Government can be a really good model employer when you're looking at this.

ERIN RIEHLE: About that, Jennifer, what I would say to you is I don't disagree. But I think in reality what we believe is there needs to be the same depth and breadth of options for people with disabilities in different industry axis as anybody else. So we actually -- you know, one of our goals is really to expand by industry sector so that folks are in a setting that appeals to them. The other thing I would say about that is I think using the word Federal contractor is confusing sometimes. Because all hospitals receive Federal money. It's actually anybody who gets any Federal money which includes Medicaid, Medicare, and those types of things. And certainly NIH grants. So it's a really, really -- you can throw a really broad net.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: Right; right. There's time for a little more questioning, if people want to type them in or if there's somebody on the phone. But I do want to mention that our next webinar is with Marty Linski of the Harvard Business School. He is an expert in change management. And in leadership. He wrote the book: Getting Past No. He's written a number of other key publications. And he really is a terrific expert at this moment because with WIOA as there are so many changes whether you work for a workforce Board or a workforce agency or you work for vocational rehabilitation or a nonprofit or service provider, there are so many changes that the whole process of just dealing with all of these changes takes some really constructive thought. So our next webinar is going to be with Marty Linski on the 16th of June. Erin, you have done a terrific job with this program. We're just delighted and honored that you've been with us today. Operator, do we have phone questions at this time? I don't see anything more in the chat box.

OPERATOR: We have no questions on the phone.

JENNIFER MIZRAHI: Thank you, Erin, for being with us. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions for those on the line. Thank you, everyone, for

joining us. Erin Riehle thank you and congratulations to the entire Project SEARCH team.

ERIN RIEHLE: Thanks I totally appreciate you.

OPERATOR: This concludes today's RespectAbility. Thank you for joining.