

EVERYBODY WINS!

Tips for
Supervising
the Employee with
Mental
Retardation



Funding for this handbook and a video-tape (no longer available) was originally provided by:

Crown Development Trust Fund, Inc.

Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity

with additional support from

Cottonwood, Inc., Lawrence, KS

Johnson & Johnson
New Brunswick, NJ

The Quaker Oats Company
Lawrence, KS

The Worthington Hotel
Fort Worth, TX

The Arc's National Employment and
Training Program
Arlington, TX



First printed 1989, Reprinted 1993

Images from New Vision Technologies, Inc.

Like You and Me . . .

People with mental retardation enjoy being part of the community. They like sporting events, movies and making friends. They eagerly accept the responsibility of being part of things. People with mental retardation can be productive, independent working citizens... like you and me.

Public misunderstandings about mental retardation are too often a barrier to people who want to succeed on the job. However, with a little information and time, any supervisor can develop the know-how and skills to help ensure an employee with mental retardation develops into the kind of worker all businesses want and need.

Orientation: A Good Start



Getting your new employee started out right is important.

Make sure your employee understands the company's rules. Go over the employee handbook with your new worker and ask

questions to make sure he or she understands the company's "dos and

don'ts." Have your employee repeat instructions back to you if necessary.

Fitting in socially with the other employees is important to the worker's success on the job.

Introduce your new employee to the other employees.



Get one of your "old hands" to introduce the new person around and to get him or her involved in the lunch and break-time social life.

Some people with mental retardation start new employment with the assistance of a job coach, a specialist who gives the worker initial support at the job site. Even though the job coach is there throughout the training period, make sure you stay involved with the new employee to establish your role as the supervisor.

Many people with mental retardation can be supervised just like the next person. Others need a little extra attention paid to their orientation and training. Knowing a few "tips" for supervising people with mental retardation will help guarantee you a good productive employee.

Effective Supervising

A little extra time spent training and supervising your new employee will help produce a worker who can perform the quantity and quality of work necessary for any successful business.

Follow The Arc's six tips on supervising:

1. Demonstration

Don't just explain the job, demonstrate it! Walk through and perform the task as you carefully explain it. Then, have the worker demonstrate and explain the task back to you. Many people with mental retardation understand better by seeing and hearing how the job is done.

2. Task Breakdown

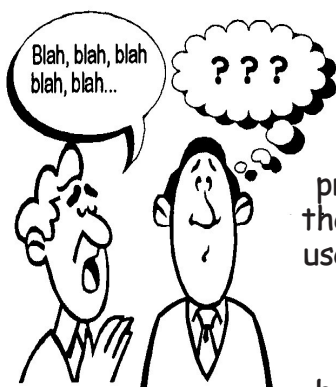
Many jobs or tasks consist of a series of individual steps. Teaching a complicated or multi-step task too quickly may confuse your employee.



Instead, think of the task in its individual steps. Then, demonstrate and explain each step in the whole process. Last, have your employee repeat and demonstrate all the steps to the task.

3. Use Clear, Brief Language

Avoid technical or complicated words when training or supervising.



Don't "over-explain" the job. Make your instructions precise and to the point. Don't use abstract explanations. Clear and brief language works best.

4. Set Routines

Try to have your employee always do jobs in the same order. Many people with mental retardation perform their jobs better when they have established routines. Your employee may also have some good reading skills. In this case, making out a list of tasks or steps may be helpful. Sometimes using diagrams or even pictures in sequence will assist your employee in learning new jobs.

5. Communication

Relay to your employee what you and the company expect in terms of quantity and quality of work. Make sure your employee knows what to do and whom to report to when finished with a job. If the task requires additional materials, show your employee where to find them. Also, encourage the worker to ask if instructions are not understood or if he or she is unsure of something.

6. Give Feedback

Let your employee know how he or she is doing on the job. After training the employee on a new task, check back to make sure it's being done right. Give honest feedback to the worker on the quality of his or her work and work-related behaviors. Reinforce good work by giving verbal praise and encouragement, just as you would give to any employee.



People with mental retardation have a proven record of high productivity, low turnover and loyalty to the company. Hiring the person with mental retardation and using The Arc's supervisory tips will produce the kind of employee you want for your business.

The Arc is the nation's largest volunteer organization solely devoted to improving the lives of the estimated 7.2 million children and adults with mental retardation and their families. The association serves its consumers, other concerned individuals, organizations and communities through its efforts in legislative and personal advocacy, training, prevention, research and other services.

T h e
Arc[®]
