

## Employment Center Q&A—Randolph, Mass.



THE TODD FOURNIER CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR MAY CENTER SCHOOL FOR AUTISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, A DAY AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN RANDOLPH, MASS.

The Fournier Center serves our older students who are ready for a more intensive employment training experience. This “school within a school” addresses the two most critical aspects of adult independence—the ability to engage in meaningful employment and the ability to function as successfully as possible in day-to-day life in the community.

Here are answers to a few of the most commonly asked questions from parents about this program. Please contact us at any time to inquire about more information, ask additional questions, or schedule a tour.



**Q: WILL MY CHILD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK ON ACADEMICS AT THE FOURNIER CENTER?**

**A:** Absolutely! We combine academic instruction, life skills training, and on-campus and community-based job opportunities for every student. A portion of each student’s day is focused on academics and communication skills, and our teachers emphasize “functional academics”—classwork that focuses on teaching skills that have practical applications in everyday life. As a Chapter 766 school, we follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; each student at the Fournier Center participates in a structured curriculum with a high staff-to-student ratio.

**Q: ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MY CHILD TO ENGAGE IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND “MOCK” EMPLOYMENT BEFORE GOING OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY?**

**A:** At the Todd Fournier Center for Employment Training and Community Inclusion, we have three specialized suites, where students can work on employment training in a larger group called “crew” or “enclave” work (i.e., in groups of 2-3 students with a teacher). Structuring work opportunities like this allows the students to gain exposure to how vocational programming is run in many adult programs.

The suites consists of the “May School Store” where students work on tasks such as taking inventory, stocking shelves, and operating a cash register; the “Fournier Suite,” a mock hotel room/apartment, where students learn a variety of domestic skills; and “Todd’s Café,” a fully functional working restaurant-grade kitchen and café which provides an opportunity for students to work on food preparation skills as well as janitorial tasks. Within the three suites, there are a variety of opportunities to meet the strengths and interests of all students.

**Q: CAN ALL STUDENTS UTILIZE THE SPECIALIZED SUITES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADL’S)?**

**A:** Yes. All students utilize the suites for ADLs, domestic, and employment training. The Fournier Suite mimics a typical apartment or hotel room complete with an entertainment center, washer and dryer, bedroom set, and full bathroom. This suite offers opportunities for students to engage in laundry routines (washing, drying, folding, and storing) and other domestic tasks, functional leisure activities with their peers, and basic hygiene routines.



**Q: HOW OFTEN ARE THE STUDENTS ABLE TO ACCESS THE COMMUNITY FOR JOBS?**

**A:** Our program has a very strong focus on community integration. Students access the community on a regular basis through external job placements, and are accompanied by an employment specialist or teacher to work on functional community leisure and independent living activities. The amount of time spent in the community is dependent on a student's age, ability, endurance, and willingness to work. For some students, that might mean up to eight hours per week.

**Q: WHAT KIND OF VOLUNTEER AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?**

**A:** There are five major skill areas we focus on in our placements: clerical, janitorial, courier, restaurant, and retail skills. Through a variety of work and volunteer opportunities, we are able to respond to and meet the strengths, interests, and goals of all students. Students work under the direction of an employment specialist at community businesses and social services agencies, as well as on our school campus.

**Q: WHERE DO STUDENTS WORK AND VOLUNTEER?**

**A:** We have a variety of placement opportunities for our students. Current and past employment sites in the community include Thayer Public Library, Arbella Insurance, VERC convenience stores, Randolph Town Hall, Meals on Wheels, Joe's American Bar and Grill, Salem Food Market, YMCA, and St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry.

**Q: DO STUDENTS AT THE FOURNIER CENTER HAVE ACCESS TO THE OTHER BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS ON CAMPUS FOR SPECIALS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION?**

**A:** All students have the opportunity to participate in the school's enrichment activities such as art, music, and gym. The frequency with which they attend depends on the student and his or her needs, schedule, ability, and interests. Students regularly access outdoor activity spaces and equipment, as appropriate, including the extraordinary playground for children of all abilities. Those who regularly work do not go to specials as often because the vocational opportunity may be more meaningful to them.

**Q: WHEN MY CHILD TURNS 22, WILL HIS/HER JOB CARRY OVER INTO ADULT SERVICES?**

**A:** By the time students approach their 22nd birthday, they have received exposure to and training in many transferable skills in specific areas. During the transition process to Adult Services, we support them every step of the way. We share detailed information with the program(s) before and during the transition period to help them identify an appropriate and meaningful work environment, and help to better prepare our students for the future.

To learn more about our **Todd Fournier Center for Employment Training and Community Inclusion**, please contact us at **781.437.1300**.

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