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# Fast Facts

PreETS.org — Virginia's Collaborative Model for Pre-Employment Transition Services

## Increasing Participation in Pre-ETS for Students Pursuing Standard and Advanced Studies Diplomas

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are delivered through a collaboration between schools and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). These services are designed to enhance transition services for students with disabilities aged 14-22. Pre-ETS assists students in exploring career interests and training options, developing self-advocacy and workplace readiness skills, and preparing for life after high school.

For students pursuing standard and advanced studies diplomas, the primary focus is often centered around graduation requirements. As a result, case managers, students, and families may not be aware of the benefits and availability of Pre-ETS outside of school hours. The lack of awareness can lead to missed opportunities for students to explore career options, engage in work-based learning experiences, and develop self-determination skills.

Participating in Pre-ETS offers many benefits. Below are some benefits, potential challenges, and strategies to address these barriers and increase access to Pre-ETS.

### Pre-ETS Benefits

- Engage in activities to explore career interests as early as age 14.
- Gain insight into the skills and education needed for careers related to interests.
- Build knowledge and skills necessary for success in a work environment.
- Learn about strengths and how to disclose disabilities and request accommodations.
- Develop social and independence skills.
- Perform a variety of work tasks and learning about different work environments through work-based learning experiences.
- Participate in paid work experience that helps build a resume and professional contacts.
- Create a solid plan for the future with well-defined next steps and reducing the stress of exiting high school.

# Barriers to Accessing Pre-ETS for Students on Standard Diploma Tracks

- Students, case managers, and families might perceive these services as primarily for students with more significant needs.
- Students and families with clear postsecondary goals may feel they don't need assistance.
- Students may feel they don't need assistance because they are learning vocational skills through CTE courses.
- Limited access to transportation can make it difficult for students to participate in activities after school.
- Extracurricular activities may prevent students from participating in Pre-ETS during the school year.

## Strategies to Enhance Pre-ETS Participation

- [Introduce Pre-ETS](#) and DARS at IEP and 504 meetings.
- Invite DARS staff to provide training for case managers, school counselors, and special education administrators on Pre-ETS.
- Collaborate with DARS to share information about Pre-ETS with students and families at back-to-school events and transition fairs.
- Work with DARS to offer Pre-ETS during summer, weekends, or online for students facing barriers during the school day.
- Discuss how Pre-ETS can enhance CTE courses by providing high-quality work-based learning experiences.
- Explain how Pre-ETS supports self-advocacy and teaches students about supports or accommodations in college, training, or work.
- Consider bringing services to students like virtual job shadowing or having local businesses come in to discuss job and training options.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with DARS, local transport agencies, and local nonprofits to establish transportation for worksite tours or work experiences.

## Conclusion

Participation in Pre-ETS is beneficial for all students with disabilities, even students pursuing a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. Pre-ETS helps students develop skills to reach their goals for life after high school. Reach out to your case manager and DARS counselor to learn about opportunities available to the students in your school.

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