

Our Vision for the Future

Employment outcomes for people with disabilities remain dismal at 37%. Pathways focuses on changing the future generation by giving them the skills to improve these outcomes. In 2008, Pathways initiated an after school employment program called Project Win Win. High School students at Pathways train to become paid mentors and accompany children with special



needs in the workforce. Together they train for employment while the mentors learn to modify the workforce as needed for the children with special needs. Of the many mentors that have trained in Project Win Win, 100% report that they would hire a person with disabilities and feel comfortable modifying the work environment as needed. These mentors will become future employers, legislators, educators, and leaders. We have seen that training children from a young age to include people of all abilities gives future generations more knowledge and empathy. We believe this will instill greater vision that will translate to better outcomes for people with special needs.



PATHWAYS FOR
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PATHWAYS

for Exceptional Children



Maximizing success using a
Children TEACHING
Children Model



About Our Mentor Program

As Pathways began training children to be mentors that work with children with special needs, we experienced a magical transformation. Like any other child, it became clear that children with special needs were more motivated to learn from and imitate their peers than anybody else. We quickly realized our most valuable resource was the children in our community. Since 2003, Pathways has built a gold standard mentor program that has trained 45,000 children in grades three through twelve across New Jersey using the following steps:

1) The Need for Training and Empathy:

Pathways developed a formalized 1.5 to 2 hour interactive mentor training. During the training, the mentors receive knowledge about various disabilities that help them understand why a child may present with certain behaviors or conditions. The children are taught to focus on a child's strengths and how to use these to make simple modifications that can help children of all abilities be included and achieve success. The training also offers the mentors "disability stations" where they experience empathy and what it is like to have a disability.



2) The Importance of Action:

After the training, the mentors can volunteer in any of the 30+ after school programs Pathways runs annually. In addition, schools use these mentors during recess, lunch, specials, and social skills groups. Some schools have made a study hall where mentors can visit and assist children in specialized classrooms during the day. Opportunities given through mentoring can change the culture of a community into being more inclusive of children of all abilities. Many school districts are training entire grade levels. The children love the program!

The Outcomes of Mentoring

At Pathways, children lead while adults become facilitators. Children are encouraged to start programs and teach other children what they are passionate about. Age or ability level are not factors. Every child can learn to lead and add value to others. The following are just a few of the amazing outcomes of mentoring:

- * **Mentoring promotes leadership. Our mentors have won national and state awards for their service and contributions. Many have gone into people helping professions.**
- * **Mentors are encouraged to share and teach what they have a passion for. Many have started classes under the supervision of an adult. Our rock band, computer programming, and robotics programs are just a few of the many examples of programs initiated by mentors. All programs are inclusive**
- * **Mentors have tirelessly promoted inclusion. Registration in our programs for children ages 3-12 are now fully inclusive with 65-80% of children not having disabilities.**
- * **In 2016, children of all abilities raised \$30,000 in 7 months and traveled to Haiti to build a school in an impoverished village.**

