

## History

In 1996, while working as the Director of the Emergency Department at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Erin Riehle was frustrated with finding employees for entry-level jobs that involved restocking supplies. While working to identify a solution to eliminating the high turnover rates, Cincinnati Children's had adopted a major diversity initiative. Erin wondered if people with disabilities could fill the entry level jobs she had. Not knowing anyone with a disability she turned to local disability organizations and asked if her idea was possible. Together with these organizations, the idea of filling a handful of jobs in Cincinnati Children's Emergency Department evolved into a comprehensive program model - Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH has grown from one original program site at Cincinnati Children's to over 435 programs across 45 states and eight countries.



***“Tell me  
and I forget;  
teach me  
and I may  
remember;  
involve me  
and I learn.”***

- Benjamin Franklin

## What is Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH is a unique, business led, one year school to work program that takes place entirely in the workplace. The selected students will work in three internships over the course of the year in combination with classroom instruction, goal setting, career exploration, and hands on training through worksite rotations. Each student works with a team that includes their family, an instructor, a department mentor, rehabilitation counselor and skills trainers to create their employment goal and to support the student during their transition from school to work.



## Worksite Rotations

Each student participates in three internships supported by an onsite skills trainer and supervised by a Embassy Suites manager. A special education teacher oversees the students programs and provides daily classroom instruction at the beginning and end of each day.

Project SEARCH internships at Embassy Suites are unpaid, similar to other internship programs, but are individually created to focus on each student's interests and work potential. Sites include:

- ◆ Food Services
- ◆ Maintenance
- ◆ Laundry
- ◆ House Keeping
- ◆ Guest Services

## Classroom Curriculum

Throughout the school year, students participate in a functional academic curriculum that stresses employability and independent living skills. Major classroom focus areas include:

- ◆ Working responsibly
- ◆ Communicating effectively
- ◆ Solving problems
- ◆ Critical thinking
- ◆ Career Planning
- ◆ Applying technology
- ◆ Developing self-advocacy skills



## Benefits to the Students

- ◆ Participate in a variety of internships within the host business
- ◆ Acquire competitive, transferable and marketable job skills
- ◆ Gain increased independence, confidence, and self esteem
- ◆ Obtain work based individualized coaching, instruction and feedback
- ◆ Develop linkages to Vocational Rehabilitation and other adult service agencies

## Admission Criteria

- ◆ Referred by a participating school district
- ◆ Intellectual or developmental disability
- ◆ Have an IEP or Individualized Education Plan
- ◆ Are in their last year of high school eligibility or,
- ◆ Ready to graduate upon completion of the Project SEARCH program year
- ◆ Strong desire to achieve a job in the community

## Next Steps

Attend the Project SEARCH Open House in January at Embassy Suites. Applications are provided upon request detailing the process for qualified students.

## For more information, contact:

Your child's case manager or  
**Autumn Gabriel, RAMP Project SEARCH Coordinator**  
AGabriel@rampcil.org | 779-774-1028



Project | SEARCH®



## OVERVIEW of Project SEARCH

A nine-month school-to-work transition program for students with disabilities housed entirely at Embassy Suites. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, on-the-job training and job placement support. The goal for each student is competitive employment in their home community, transferring the skills and workplace practices that they have acquired and demonstrated at Project SEARCH.