Matching early school leavers to available positions

Employers advertising positions can approach the NSW DET’s Links to Learning Community Grants Program. This program assists over 2000 early school leavers each year to make the transition from school to work and further education and training.

Employers who have identified positions can:

> approach Links to Learning organisations directly by visiting http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth/index.htm for a list of contact details for organisations funded to assist early school leavers

> contact one of DET’s Industry Training Centres from anywhere in NSW on 13 28 11 for information about local Links to Learning programs and their contact details.

Successful case studies

**Tanya** left school at Year 10 and commenced a retail traineeship. She has received excellent work performance reports from the Registered Training Organisation, the employer and work colleagues. She completed the Certificate II in Retail Operations at 16 years of age and is currently undertaking the Certificate III in Retail Operations. She also assists new trainees in the workplace with their studies.

**James** left school before completing Year 9. He was unhappy at school and found it difficult to interact with his peers. James was offered a traineeship undertaking the Certificate II in Hospitality (Operations). He attends TAFE, where he is achieving good results, and he has a solid working relationship with his work colleagues. James demonstrates and maintains a high standard of work and his employers intend to offer him an apprenticeship when he completes his traineeship.

**Janine** left school part way through Year 10 in 2001. She wanted to become a nurse, so she enrolled in a New Apprenticeship Access Program course. At the completion of her course she was offered a position undertaking a Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care Work). Janine was placed at a nursing home and will complete her traineeship in July 2003. She plans to become a registered nurse.

**Amanda** completed her School Certificate and commenced Year 11 in 2001. Mid-way through the year she decided she did not wish to continue at school. She applied for a New Apprenticeship, was placed at a medical facility and is doing a Certificate III in Business Administration. Amanda successfully completed her apprenticeship and her work supervisor offered her a full-time position.

**Lesley** completed Year 10 in 2002 and decided not to continue with her schooling. She found part-time jobs but decided she wanted to work full time and also gain some skills and qualifications. After applying for a New Apprenticeship she was placed in a Certificate II in Hospitality (Operations) course while working at a cafe. Lesley is due to complete her New Apprenticeship early in 2004 and then plans to continue with a hospitality career.

For further information on apprenticeships and traineeships contact the New Apprenticeships Referral Line by phoning 1800 639 629 to find out contact details for your local New Apprenticeships Centre (NAC).
How you can gain by employing an early school leaver

Young people who leave school early often prove to be valuable employees, especially if they take on jobs which interest them and they get the right support.

Young people leave school early for a variety of reasons, and usually a number of issues come into play.

Employing these young people is particularly worthwhile for industries that are experiencing entry-level skill shortages. Early school leavers can also be considered for traineeship or apprenticeship positions.

How to ensure that you find the best candidates for your workplace

Recruitment strategies

> Send out recruitment information to the whole community, especially the local community services attended by young people.

> Make sure your recruitment information clearly targets early school leavers.

> Highlight interesting and rewarding aspects of the job.

> Promote your organisation as one that treats young people in a friendly manner.

Selection strategies

> Consider whether your selection process is fair to all candidates and takes into account life experience, cultural differences and any special needs (such as disabilities and language and literacy needs).

> Make sure candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and attributes in different ways through a variety of tasks on more than one occasion.

> Outline to the young person why they need to be aware of their presentation and communication skills and what is expected in the particular industry they want to enter.

Interview strategies

Use strategies that will help an early school leaver demonstrate the skills and knowledge they possess.

> Ask questions that require more information than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer.

> Ask questions that will highlight their preferences, such as: why they want this job, why they chose this industry, what their long term career goals are and how they think this job will help them achieve their goals.

> Ask questions that enable you to assess their capacity to solve problems.

> Use tests that enable them to demonstrate their skills such as drawing and writing short stories.

> Take the time to talk to them in a friendly manner and ask questions about their interests and activities.

> Discuss possible training options and their benefits, especially for apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

If at the end of the interview you are uncertain ask the young person back for a second interview.

Follow-up strategies

Providing feedback from interviews is important. If not selected, the young person needs to understand why. You can help them by identifying areas for improvement which could influence their further education and training choices. You could recommend they contact you again.

Strategies to assist early school leavers in the workforce

There are a number of strategies that can assist the early school leaver and your organisation once they are part of the workforce:

> Treat the early school leaver as a valued employee.

> Place them with other young people in the workplace, introduce them to employees who communicate well with young people and nominate a young worker from a similar background to be a mentor.

> Be responsive to their needs and try to accommodate their particular circumstances. For example, some young people will have little family support.

> Be aware of any personal support needs that they might have.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

It is important to emphasise the following benefits of completing an apprenticeship or traineeship:

> gaining experience in the workplace and an employment history that will benefit their future careers

> having a range of employment options once they complete their apprenticeship or traineeship, and

> entry into education and training pathways.