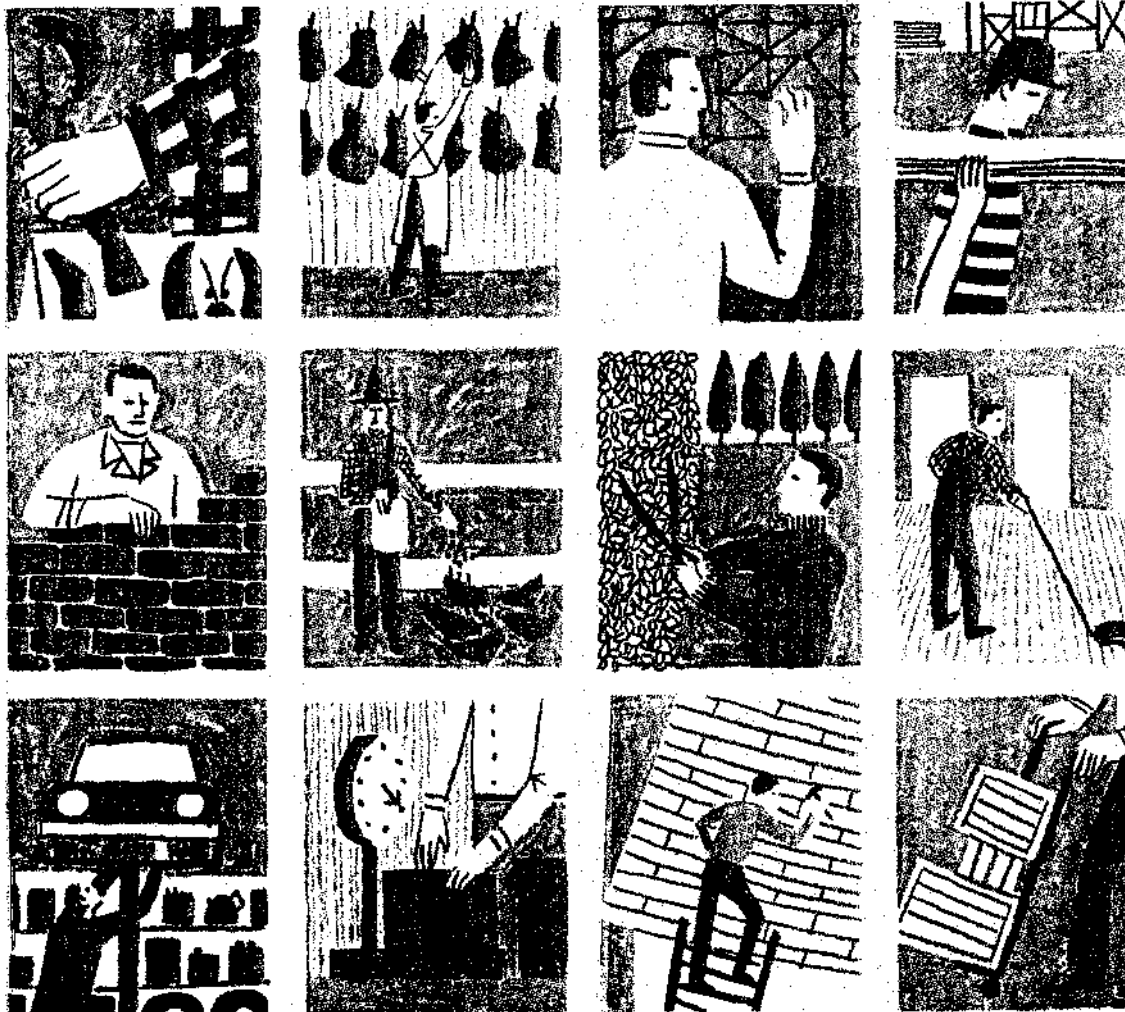


Guide to JOB PLACEMENT of the MENTALLY RETARDED



THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED

in cooperation with NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN *and the*

U.S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE, BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY,

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

READING TIME:

*Eighteen minutes**

**Eighteen minutes*—the time it takes to smoke a cigarette and drink a cup of coffee; also the time it can take to mark a new day with new hope in the life of a mentally retarded man or woman.



WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

"It is just as important to integrate the mentally retarded within our modern society and make full use of their abilities as it is to make a special effort to do this for the physically handicapped. The grim struggle for survival does not allow us the luxury of wasting our human resources."

JOHN F. KENNEDY

FIRST WORDS—I

There are many employers ready and willing to hire the qualified mentally retarded, and many retarded men and women ready and willing to work. I hope this Guide will serve as a bridge to bring employer and employee together and to open broad new vistas for the mentally retarded of our Nation.

I salute all in this country who are leading the way to independence for the retarded—the National Association for Retarded Children and the Bureau of Employment Security of the U.S. Department of Labor (both having made this Guide possible), the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, the American Association for Mental Deficiency, the President's Panel on Mental Retardation, and the others who richly deserve the gratitude of America.

Through all their efforts, the mentally retarded are gaining a rightful place in our national life.

MELVIN J. MAAS

Chairman

*The President's Committee on
Employment of the Handicapped*

FIRST WORDS—II

The slogan of the National Association for Retarded Children—"Retarded Children Can Be Helped"—is in need of amendment. Because of increasing attention to mentally retarded adults and because of great strides in rehabilitation, the slogan now should read: "The Mentally Retarded Can Be Helped To Help Them-

In increasing numbers, the mentally retarded are demonstrating that they not only can help themselves, but they can work; and, in some jobs, they can work better than those who are not so retarded.

The National Association for Retarded Children is proud to have been asked to cooperate in the preparation of this Guide. Special commendation is due the author, Dr. William A. Fraenkel, formerly consultant on rehabilitation for the NARC and now executive director of the New York City Association for the Help of Retarded Children.



GUNNAR DYBWAIT
Executive Director
National Association for
Retarded Children

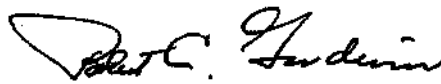
FIRST WORDS—III

The U.S. Employment Service of the Bureau of Employment Security, which over the years has been deeply concerned with jobs for the handicapped, has witnessed a change of attitude. The new attitude is expressed in the familiar slogan, "It Pays To Hire the Handicapped."

Progress in the rehabilitation of the mentally retarded is gaining recognition. Employers who in the past did not consider hiring the mentally retarded may now think in terms of employing them with profit. Profitable employment of the mentally retarded requires the same careful selection and placement involved in employing other workers.

This booklet presents some of the important considerations growing out of the experience of rehabilitation workers and employers in dealing with the mentally retarded.

The Bureau is glad to join with other organizations in the publication and distribution of this booklet with the hope that it will make jobs and self-support accessible to many more mentally retarded, but occupationally qualified, individuals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert C. Goodwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "G".

ROBERT C. GOODWIN
Administrator
Bureau of Employment Security

ONE-ACT PLAY

THE SCENE:

A local public employment office. Anywhere.

THE CAST:

Ralph Jones, selective placement officer.

Anne Stevens, his coworker.

George Randolph, a mentally retarded job applicant.

JONES (*Speaking on the telephone*): I think he could do that job very well.

VOICE (*Through the telephone*) : I appreciate all you've told me, and perhaps he *might* work out well on this job, but I don't think I could handle the mentally retarded in my plant. I just don't know. Let me think about it. I'd like to say "yes," but you know how it is . . . (*Hangs up*)

JONES (*Hangs up. Beckons to George Randolph, a nicely groomed young man seated in the waiting room, to come to his desk*): Sorry, George. I thought there might be an opening for you, but there wasn't. Let's see, you still have a number of employers to follow up. If you haven't found anything, or if you haven't heard from me, come back in a week. Meantime, keep at it, and so will we. And, George, good luck.

RANDOLPH: Thank you, Mr. Jones. (*Departs*)

JONES (*to Anne Stevens*): Anne, I don't understand it. That was Mr. Leroy of the Acme Button Card Co. He could use George Randolph. He has job openings for a button sorter, a button carder, and a kick press operator. George could do them all.

ANNE: He's well trained, isn't he?

JONES : Yes. He's been in the State training school for 9 years. That's because his family wanted him to get an education and there weren't any public school programs for the retarded at that time. He comes from a fine family.

ANNE: What did he learn?

JONES: Academic subjects. Also, there was a school-work program where "he learned to operate shoe repair equipment—kick press, shoe buffer, things like that. Then, when he came back home a couple of years ago, his folks sent him to a rehabilitation agency. He was evaluated vocationally and admitted to a local occupational training center.

ANNE: Wasn't it there that he learned how to sort and assemble subcontract jobs?

JONES: Yes. He also learned a lot about how to hold a job. Very important, this personal adjustment training . . . the real basics of working. Keeping up production schedules, working with others, taking orders from the boss, handling tools and equipment. And also, all the paperwork of a job—filling out application forms, company forms, all other forms that are necessary.

ANNE: What came after that?

JONES: Job training itself. Eight to twelve weeks of it. Here's where he learned specific skills leading to a job.

ANNE: After that, I take it, he's ready to work?

JONES: He's either ready for competitive employment, or he may be placed in another category, sheltered employment. He might stay in sheltered employment until a suitable job outside does open up, or until he develops enough skills for an outside job.

ANNE: What about followup services?

JONES : He can find sheltered employment either at an occupational training center or sheltered workshop. And most of them do provide some form of followup after job placement.

ANNE: So George has been through the entire cycle. He's been trained. He's qualified to work. No wonder you get upset when he can't find a job!

JONES: Look, George has had all the training. He learned how to punch a timeclock; how to take orders from the supervisor; how to keep up with others at the workshop. He had a perfect attendance record. He got along with everyone. He had a high production rate. And yet he can't get a job.

ANNE: There must be plenty of jobs he could fill. How can you ever get the word across to employers?

JONES : It takes time, Anne, but it can be done. It's a matter of commonsense; of recognizing there are some jobs that don't require a college education or even a high school education. Jobs that the retarded actually can perform better than others. What's involved is bringing these commonsense facts to the attention of employers. We'll do it . . . not overnight, but we'll do it . . .

{Fade Out}

INTENTIONS

We hope, in this Guidebook, to present commonsense facts about the mentally retarded and their ability to work. We hope that it will be of good use to employers, personnel directors, vocational rehabilitation people, placement specialists, and all others involved in helping the retarded find their rightful place in the world of work.

MATTER OF DEFINITION

Throughout this Guidebook we refer to "mentally retarded" men and women. Obviously, there are many degrees of mental retardation ranging from mild to severe. Some are so mild, in fact, that they go unnoticed by the employer and almost everyone else.

The "mentally retarded" to whom we refer here are those with the capacity to be trained for work and the capacity to hold productive jobs when properly placed.

"Mental retardation" does not mean that the person's total being is retarded. Only his intellectual capacities happen to be retarded. He may have other skills and aptitudes in which he conceivably could excel other workers.

Those skills and aptitudes can make him a valued employee.

PERSPECTIVE

There are an estimated 51/2 million retarded persons in the United States today. More than 2 million of them are of employable age. The numbers are likely to grow in the years ahead because of an increased birth rate, a decrease in infant deaths, and because the retarded as well as others are living longer.

Less than 5 percent of the retarded, or about 200,000, actually require institutional care. Even some of those can be rehabilitated and be made ready for some sort of employment.

Throughout the Nation, community programs for the mentally retarded are demonstrating the truth of the slogan of the National Association for Retarded Children that "the retarded can be helped." The retarded, in fact, are beginning to demonstrate not only that they can be helped, but that they can be helpful.

All of which is a far cry from the days (not so long ago) when the only advice that seemed appropriate to parents of a newly born retarded child was "put him in an institution." It's also a far cry from the view that most people used to have (and, unfortunately, some still have) that all retarded persons are helpless.

This is far from the truth.

Through the combined efforts of the National Association for Retarded Children, professional groups, and countless public and other voluntary agencies, considerable emphasis has been focused on the abilities of the retarded, rather than on their disabilities. Greater numbers of retarded children are being properly diagnosed earlier in life. More home training, family counseling, and preschool, school, recreation, and religious education programs are preparing retarded youngsters for employment.

Satisfied employers who have hired the retarded know that what a man cannot do is not as important as what he is capable of doing. As a result of this positive approach, a better informed public is coming to realize that among the retarded, as among all other handicapped persons, it is ability that counts—not disability.

Obviously, not all the needs of the mentally retarded are being met. Far from it. Yet advances have been made in the proper direction, and every day brings more progress.

A POSITIVE APPROACH

Increasingly, employers are coming to realize the advantages of hiring properly trained and qualified mentally retarded workers. With proper placement, the disability of retardation can cease to be a job disability.

The trained mentally retarded worker often can make a greater contribution to his employer than the individual who may not be retarded but who brings no particular skills and no particular abilities. The key, of course, is proper placement—the right man in the right job.

"Mental retardation" by no means implies a total absence of skills and aptitudes. Only a person's intellectual capacity is retarded—not necessarily the rest of him. Some studies have shown mentally retarded persons with high degrees of clerical aptitude, mechanical aptitude, dexterity, and other types of skills. Proper placement can play up the skills and play down the retardation.

There also is a dollars-and-cents advantage to hiring the qualified mentally retarded. Like the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded, when placed on the right job, will return \$10 in income taxes for every \$1 spent on their rehabilitation.

The mentally retarded come from all walks of life. Some are born to brilliant parents, some to average, some to less than average. Retardation knows no bounds.

In most cases, the retarded person referred or identified through a rehabilitation agency comes from a home where retardation is understood and every effort is made to encourage training. The prospective employer considering such a person for a job can be sure he won't be getting just another "unknown" walking in from off the streets.

This single fact can assume major proportions when employment specialists search for the stable worker, for the "right" man or woman for the

job, for the person who will stay and will not hop from job to job, for the person who already has had a great deal of training for employment. In short, qualified mentally retarded workers can be better employment risks than many other workers with unstable job histories and poor work habits or who lack training.

The mentally retarded worker has pride in his work. Mainly, the kinds of jobs the mentally retarded can perform are unskilled, service, or short-cycle repetitive tasks. Other workers would be bored by them, but not the mentally retarded. The retarded worker seeks these jobs. He actually is better qualified for them than most others. Therefore, the employer can expect from him enthusiasm and a high degree of job interest and satisfaction.

Job satisfaction, job fulfillment, job accomplishment—these are the reactions and intangible rewards that most employment interviewers look for to differentiate the stable worker from the drifter. These reactions reflect the characteristics that the mentally retarded bring to their jobs.

In occupations ordinarily showing a high degree of turnover, qualified mentally retarded workers tend to excel. They display great stability. They prove more reliable, more loyal, more dependable than workers who are not mentally retarded.

All of which boils down to the fact that on certain types of jobs, the qualified mentally retarded are excellent workers. But they must be given equal opportunity for employment. How else can they show their good traits?

A VARIETY OF JOBS

During the past decade there has been a noticeable increase in the number and types of occupations the qualified mentally retarded are able to perform. These jobs have tended to pattern themselves in the major occupational areas listed below. The years 1954-57 are used because they represent the most reliable statistics available. The years since have seen an even greater spread of jobs.

Major Occupational Groupings for Rehabilitated Mentally Retarded Persons

(Based on 2,942 retarded persons vocationally rehabilitated through Federal-State programs, 1954-57)

<i>Type of occupation</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Service workers_____30.	0
Unskilled workers_____	21.2
Semiskilled workers_____	19.3
Clerical, sales, kindred_____12.	0
Family workers, homemakers_____	6.2
Agricultural workers_____	5.9
Skilled employees_____	5.4

Within these occupational areas there has been a noticeable increase in the types of establishments and places of employment where the men-

tally retarded have found jobs. Among other places, the retarded are working in laundries, drycleaning establishments, restaurants, gas stations, barbershops, beauty parlors, hospitals, nursing homes, private homes, nurseries, publishing houses, retail stores, factories, and farms.

Over the years, the qualified mentally retarded have *been* successfully employed in the following jobs (as well as hundreds of others): general office clerks, messengers, officeboys, mail carriers, stock clerks, salesclerks, domestics, dayworkers, housekeepers, nursemaids, nurses' aides, attendants, ward helpers, busboys, kitchen helpers, dishwashers, bootblacks, manicurists, ushers, personal service workers, porters, janitors, sextons, attendants, recreation and amusement workers, farmhands, landscape laborers, groundsman, bakers, upholsterers, construction workers, unskilled laborers, textile machine tenders, welders, routemen, packers, assemblers, inspectors, laundry sorters, filling station attendants, carpenters' helpers, metalworkers, warehousemen.

And the list grows and grows.

A vital reason for successful placements has been preparation and training, provided by the more than 200 vocational rehabilitation agencies and sheltered workshops, which serve mentally retarded adults.

Many are sponsored by, or have some relationship with, the National Association for Retarded Children. In addition, many Goodwill Industries of America workshops and Jewish Vocational Service workshops take in the mentally retarded.

In a typical sheltered workshop, the retarded person is given a comprehensive vocational rehabilitation program of evaluation and training which takes about a year. He is exposed to a simulated work atmosphere. He is evaluated and trained by professional staff in a wide variety of work situations. Individual vocational analysis is made, and suitable preparation is given for competitive employment. The trainee is expected to learn the basic skills essential to work. He is given every opportunity to demonstrate his ability to use hand and machine tools. Eventually, he is able to develop tolerance for full-time employment.

Finally, the day comes. He is ready for work.

FINDING THE RIGHT WORKER

An employer relies on local employment resources which serve him well. When he receives good service, quick referrals, and qualified candidates, he continues to use the same tried-and-true recruitment sources for future job openings.

The local office of the State employment service or the local office of the State vocational rehabilitation agency fill many requests for qualified mentally retarded workers. But employers need not limit their search to these two agencies. There are other sources.

Below are the five major recruitment resources. Any employer who has a job opening in the "low skill" area which can be filled by a qualified mentally retarded worker need contact only one of these agencies.

Employment Service

- (1) Call the local employment service office and describe the job duties and requirements.
- (2) Indicate that you believe the job opening could be filled by a qualified mentally retarded worker.
- (3) Ask that such persons be sent to you for interview.
- (4) Interview those referred.
- (5) Obtain additional information on their background and experience; if needed.
- (6) Hire the man or woman best qualified to do the job.

Vocational Rehabilitation Service

Call the local office of the State vocational rehabilitation agency. Refer to your telephone directory under "State Government"; "Vocational Rehabilitation"; "Health, Education, and Welfare"; or "Education."

After you locate the office, proceed as indicated in steps 2 through 6 above.

Sheltered Workshop—Occupational Training Center

Call a sheltered workshop serving the mentally retarded. Refer to your telephone directory under the name of the sponsoring agency, such as the Association for Retarded Children. Or see "County Workshop for the Retarded," "Opportunity Center," "Opportunity Workshop," or "Occupational Training Center." Goodwill Industries and Jewish Vocational Service workshops are listed in major cities in the United States.

Then proceed as indicated in steps 2 through 6 above.

School—Work Program

In cities where there are school-work or work-study programs serving the mentally retarded, sponsored by the public school system, you can call your job openings into them.

Committee on Employment of the Handicapped

Discuss the matter of jobs for the retarded with your local mayor's committee or your State's Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. Governor's Committee headquarters usually are in the State capitol. These committees make no placements, since their functions mainly are educational and promotional. But they can give you sound advice and refer you to the right agency.

EMPLOYER MEETS WORKER

In some industries, where the worker attends machines, performs simple hand operations, does manual labor, or carries out menial tasks, intelligence is not an important job requirement. The mentally retarded can perform such jobs well.

There are other jobs requiring some judgment, independent thinking, or decisionmaking. These, too, the mentally retarded can perform well.

Let us assume that a qualified mentally retarded person is under consideration for the kind of job he is able to do. What then?

The following guidelines might be helpful:

Qualifications

Before the applicant even visits the employment office of the firm or business, the agency making the referral should provide a summary of his qualifications, background, training, education, and employment record.

School for the Retarded

Perhaps the applicant spent some time in a school for the mentally retarded. If so, the potential employer should find the answers to certain key questions:

What about the type of education and training received ?

What about his general adjustment?

How well did he take orders from supervisors ?

How extensive was his vocational training? What kinds of jobs did he perform? Was he on a work assignment?

Was he on a "daywork program," being employed during the day and spending nights in the institution?

Did he have freedom of the grounds so that he could go to town, to church, to the movies, to the Y or elsewhere?

Answers to these and other questions will give the employer a clear picture of the applicant's background, skills, and readiness for employment.

The IQ

Vocational counselors, employment interviewers, placement officers, special educators, and social workers, among others, often are asked:

"How much information should be given about the applicant's IQ?"

There is no hard-and-fast rule. Some employers have a psychologist on the staff who can interpret IQ scores properly. In these instances, proper release of IQ information may be desirable. But most employers have no staff psychologist. In these instances, it is not so important that the IQ score be given. What is important is the interpretation of what an IQ score means in terms of the duties required on the job.

An analogy can be made with postcardiac or posttuberculosis patients seeking employment. Agency people aren't likely to send a cardiogram or chest X-ray to the employer. Instead, they will send a Physical Capabilities Analysis Form, together with other background information about the applicant. Technical terms like "cardiogram" or "pneumothorax" generally have little meaning to personnel officials. Such terms tend to stereotype the applicant or confuse the employer.

So it is with generic terms in mental retardation. "Mongolism," "exogenous retardation" or "brain injured retarded" mean little to the employer without functional explanations. Such terms should be translated into their significance regarding actual job requirements.

Far more is involved in successful job placement than an IQ score. Although there is a relationship between intelligence and job performance, extremely few jobs today call for an IQ score as a basic requirement. Rather, job requirements are more descriptive—such as "the work requires considerable judgment" or "the individual needs a high degree of initiative and imagination."

But we are not considering such factors in jobs for the mentally retarded. Instead, we are concerned with jobs calling for simple skills, few decisions, and repetitive and established routines. For the mentally retarded, we generally seek out jobs which might bore others; jobs which are dull or routine; jobs which demand only limited mental ability. These are the kinds of jobs in which the mentally retarded can excel.

And so, factors other than the IQ need to be considered—education, training, job experience, motivation, attitude, appearance, personality, and general health. The IQ score need not be completely ignored, but it should not be the sole condition by which the mentally retarded are to be judged.

A safer, more reasonable approach is to consider each individual's potentials, his good points, and his "plus" factors. It is the best way to assess the retarded worker's abilities and to match them with the job demands.

Some persons with relatively high IQ's may be unable to do the work as well as those with lower IQ's. There are circumstances in which two persons with the same IQ may differ as to ability to perform a job.

It all boils down to matching the individual with the specific job.

THE INTERVIEW

Some companies have special forms to be completed by job applicants—withholding tax forms, job application forms, employee record forms, and the like.

If the placement interviewer accompanies the job applicant for the first interview, he can be helpful in filling out the forms. Or perhaps he might obtain them in advance and fill them out in his office.

Some employers prefer that both the job applicant and his placement interviewer be present during the interview. The employer may feel more comfortable about asking questions. Also, he can then call the placement interviewer about any job adjustment problems which might arise in the future. Further, the presence of the placement interviewer or job counselor may help the applicant to be more at ease during the initial interview.

There is need to begin the job interview on the proper level of understanding by the mentally retarded applicant. This does not mean talking down to the applicant as though he were a child. Nor does it mean talking up to him, as though he were a candidate for an engineering position. The proper way is to speak directly, person to person, using terms which clearly describe or illustrate what needs to be done on the job. Speak as you would to someone in the upper levels of elementary school.

An illustration:

A mentally retarded worker had a job as porter in a small hotel. His work was satisfactory, but he never put his mop and pail away in the proper place. The employer probed and probed, and finally discovered why. The porter had been instructed to "put the mop and pail down after you clean the floor, then empty the waste cans." That one word, "down," was an abstract word; too abstract for him.

The solution: With chalk, the employer drew a circle on the floor. He told the porter, "put the mop and pail down here, on this spot."

There were no further problems.

Should the company have any restrictions on hiring the mentally retarded, it is at the initial interview that they can be modified most effectively.

There may be need to adopt a clear policy regarding employment of the retarded. Such a policy should make it known that available job openings shall be filled by the most qualified applicants—including the mentally retarded.

Further, the policy should state that the only judgment made of an individual's ability to perform on a job should be based on his skills, knowledge, aptitudes, abilities, training, and interests.

Finally, the policy should call for a periodic canvass of jobs in the plant or office which can be performed by qualified mentally retarded workers. When these jobs are open, the mentally retarded should be considered for them.

HIRING THE WORKER

A qualified mentally retarded worker has been hired. What next? How should he be introduced to the job?

What are needed, actually, are good personnel practices which would apply to all new workers—the retarded as well as those who are not. The suggestions that follow, therefore, should call for very little special effort

on the part of employers. Rather, they are more or less an extension of the same efforts that should be made in behalf of any new employee.

Obviously, whatever special effort might be necessary is well worth while considering the faithful, satisfactory service on the job which can be anticipated from the properly placed mentally retarded worker.

Two things should be done:

First, the new employee should have an early opportunity to meet his coworkers as well as his foreman or supervisor. In some instances, introductions can be made during the initial job interview. In fact, before the decision is made to hire the retarded worker, it may be desirable to have his immediate supervisor present.

Second, the new worker should have sufficient opportunity during the first few days on the job to orient himself to his new surroundings.

His immediate supervisor should be briefed on any special matters that might relate to his job performance. For example, it might be wise to explain to the supervisor that his new worker will respond best to orders if they are given one at a time. Also, the supervisor should be reasonably sure the retarded worker understands the orders. If in doubt, he need merely ask the new worker, "Now tell me what it is that you're supposed to do."

All new employees are anxious those first days on a new job. The retarded are no exception. The new employee (retarded included, of course) has a lot to learn, and all at once. He needs to know the location of his work station, of his locker, of the timeclock. He has to be shown the restrooms, the cafeteria or lunch area, other facilities. He will meet many people the first days on the job—boss, foreman or immediate supervisor, coworkers, others. He may not recall all their names. He may not be able to find everything without asking. All this is to be expected; all this is normal—for the retarded as well as for those who are not retarded. It happens to many of us our first days on the job.

At a recent annual meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, an official of the E. I. du Pont de Nemours Co. described what happened when he hired a mentally retarded worker:

Joanne, mentally retarded, age 22, came to us from the Opportunity Center Workshop in Wilmington, Del. She was properly evaluated and trained for work, and sent to us for a job open at the time in our bindery. The job called for the stuffing of envelopes, collating, and mailwork. The first day on the job wasn't easy for her. So many people to meet, so many offices, so many things to remember. At lunchtime she came into my office and sat down and cried. She said, "I would like to go back to the Workshop." Believe me, I never expected to see her back on the job the next day. It must have been difficult for her. But we were pleased to see her show up bright and early, ready for work."

The point is: The new worker needs sufficient opportunity to orient himself to people and places and things. Employers who recognize this at the time of original placement save unnecessary followup later on.

He may be shy the first few days on the job. His shyness will taper off as he begins to feel more comfortable at work, and as he gains acceptance of

his coworkers. He may not always initiate conversation. Perhaps he may seem just a bit awkward in talking, But he should become more sociable as time passes and he gains confidence. He usually responds well if he knows the limits of Smalltalk, normal conversation, or just plain chitchat. Otherwise, he may think such social talk is far more than what it actually is.

It will be easier for everyone if fellow-employees are cordial, neighborly, but not necessarily overfriendly or oversolicitous. In short, there can be a world of difference between a pat on the back and an embrace. The retarded are looking for pats on the back.

THE WORKER AND HIS JOB

The first day on the job has ended. The mentally retarded worker is on the payroll. He is important to the enterprise, just as all the other employees are important. He has been hired to do a job, and what he wants most is fully to earn his pay.

There are a few rules that might help the mentally retarded worker fit better into his job, thus making him a more valued employee. These are commonsense rules that call for little if any extra effort on the part of the employer.

Two Basics:

First, it may be necessary, at least in the beginning, to be sure that he knows what to do next after he completes an assigned task. He needs to know to whom to go for new work or a new task.

Second, he should know who to see should a problem arise on the job where he is working.

Job Instructions:

How do you give instructions to the mentally retarded worker? Here are some suggestions. If followed, they should help him fit more easily into the job and the company:

1. *Explain* what needs to be done. Tell him clearly what he is expected to do. Use simple, specific language.
2. *Show* him how to do the things you want done. Let him see the exact steps he has to take.
3. *Ask* him to do the task, while you observe. Let him tell you why he does it the way he does.
4. *Review* what he has done. Correct any mistakes. Let him be more and more on his own.
5. *Taper off.* Spotcheck his performance. When he does a good job, tell him so.

Hazards!

Instruct the worker on where he is permitted to be and where he is not. Presumably, for the safety of all, all moving machinery parts and all hazardous areas in the plant are clearly marked.

The mentally retarded worker should be able to understand signs such as EXIT, ENTRANCE, IN, OUT, FIREBOX, WET PAINT, DANGER, KEEP OUT, STAY BACK, DON'T TOUCH., and THINK.

He needs to know where to go if he should be injured on the job. He must be informed about company procedures in reporting an accident—what to do, whom to see, and the like.

Work Rules and Benefits:

The mentally retarded worker should be told what to do if he feels unable to come to work one day—whom to call, what time to call, and so on.

He should be informed of any company hospitalization or insurance plans or other benefits. His vacation schedule, paid holidays, and other job features should be explained to him.

If the company has a written statement or booklet on employees' benefits, he should be given a copy. The job counselor should be ready to come in and explain any features he doesn't understand.

TAPERING OFF

Several weeks pass. The "new" worker now is an "old hand." He is fitting in with daily routines. He reports to work on time. He knows his way around the plant. He punches the timeclock, same as any other employee. He does his job. He takes orders cheerfully. He gets along with his fellow workers. He takes pride in his work. He observes company rules. At the end of the day he leaves his work station in good order. Everything is going along fine.

This is the way things usually are. But occasionally there might be a rough spot or two in need of smoothing out. What do you do?

Following are some hypothetical situations that could occur. Test yourself. How would you handle them? Then read how the experts would suggest that they be handled.

Situation 1

(Starting time)

The new worker reports for work far too early. He arrives at 8 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. What to do?

Simply tell him exactly what time he is expected to report for work. Explain to him that though he reports early (which may be an admirable thing

to do), it is not expected of him. Allay his fear that he may not have his job long if he does not come to work very early.

If the employee still doesn't change his arrival habits, ask the placement interviewer for assistance and followup.

Situation 2

(Warming up to others)

The mentally retarded worker does not eat lunch where the other workers congregate. He takes his breaks in solitude. Others notice and begin talking about him. They single him out as "different." What to do?

Usually, this situation resolves itself in a short time, mostly within the first few months. What generally happens is that another worker befriends the mentally retarded worker; or the retarded person may befriend a coworker. This initial act of friendship helps to break down the barriers and leads to acceptance.

But do not be surprised if the retarded person does not become friendly with more than one person, or a few. Generally, he may tend to limit his friendships this way, at least at first.

But the retarded are by no means antisocial. On the surface, they may appear to be withdrawn—and this tends to forestall others from initiating friendly overtures—but the fact is, they merely need longer to warm up socially to others.

Situation 3

(Change of work station)

A mentally retarded worker has been assigned a specific work station, or his own locker. Assume there is reason to change his work station or his locker. Since most retarded persons feel comfortable with an unchanging, routine pattern of work activities, the retardate facing a change might be a bit apprehensive about adjusting to a new situation. What to do?

All that usually needs to be done is explain why the change is being made. Then give the mentally retarded worker time to learn the new job procedure or the new locker location. Unless you explain the reason for the change, some retardates may get the notion that you are making the change because you are dissatisfied with their performance. So always explain the reason.

Situation 4

(Promoting the mentally retarded worker)

The mentally retarded person has been doing excellent work. The matter comes up of promoting him to a better job. Should he be promoted? What to do?

Promotion should be considered carefully. If it is determined that the retarded worker will be able to function properly in the new job, then promote him. The same principles of selective placement should apply in the new position as were considered in making the original job placement. The new job must be one the retarded person is qualified to handle.

Before placing the retarded worker in a more responsible position, it may be advisable to confer with the placement interviewer who originally referred him to you. Get the opinion of the placement interviewer.

After considering all the factors, promote the mentally retarded worker if he is the most qualified person for the new position and if he can handle it satisfactorily. If not, keep him where he is.

Generally, this need not pose any problem regarding company agreements with organized labor. This is a matter simply of selecting the best worker for consideration for promotion. However, organized labor would be rightfully concerned should a qualified mentally retarded worker be bypassed for a better job he would be able to handle, merely because of the fact of his mental retardation.

A final caution: It's not wise to take a mentally retarded worker off a job he performs well and place him in a new job far over his head. It all amounts to knowing your employees, knowing the jobs they can perform, and matching the right man with the right job.

FOLLOWUP ASSISTANCE

The agency which referred the mentally retarded worker to an employer should be able to furnish followup service or guidance, should it be needed.

Most rehabilitation agencies have a staff person who specializes in followup. In the sheltered workshop, it may be the director or his job placement staff member. In the public vocational rehabilitation agency, it usually is the vocational rehabilitation counselor. In the State Employment Service, it is likely to be the selective placement interviewer or employment counselor. In most residential centers, it is the social worker in the social service department. In private trade schools, it is the director, social worker, or placement counselor.

Should problems arise, it is to the agency's advantage to be called in early to solve them before they grow too severe. In many cases, it is possible to clear up a problem with a telephone call or letter or short visit with the agency counselor.

If the company wishes to transfer the mentally retarded worker to another department for a different type of job, it would be wise to learn whether the referring agency can provide further evaluation and training for this purpose. Further, there may be need to reorient the worker to his new job. This would call for additional job counseling.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The annual office party; a birthday get-together; a retirement party; a secretary is getting married; a celebration of some sort is to take place. Should the mentally retarded worker be included? What should be done?

It is best to involve the mentally retarded worker in the social event. Give him a task to perform. Let him set the table, put up decorations, help wrap the gift. This could be the appropriate time to break down any existing standoffishness on the part of his coworkers.

Oftimes a social contact of this kind can do much to remove any negative feelings on the part of others toward the mentally retarded. The less the company focuses on the mentally retarded person as someone who's "different," the less the chances of his being singled out by his fellow workers. His chances of gaining acceptance increase.

Also, the retarded worker himself is apt to think of himself more like the others when he is treated like the others.

IN REVIEW

One of the greatest sources of employment for qualified mentally retarded workers is the employer who already has hired at least one and has been satisfied. More than likely, he will begin to look over the possibilities for hiring more.

Also, he will talk to other employers. What employer isn't pleased when a worker is properly placed, does his job well, and remains faithfully on the job over the years?

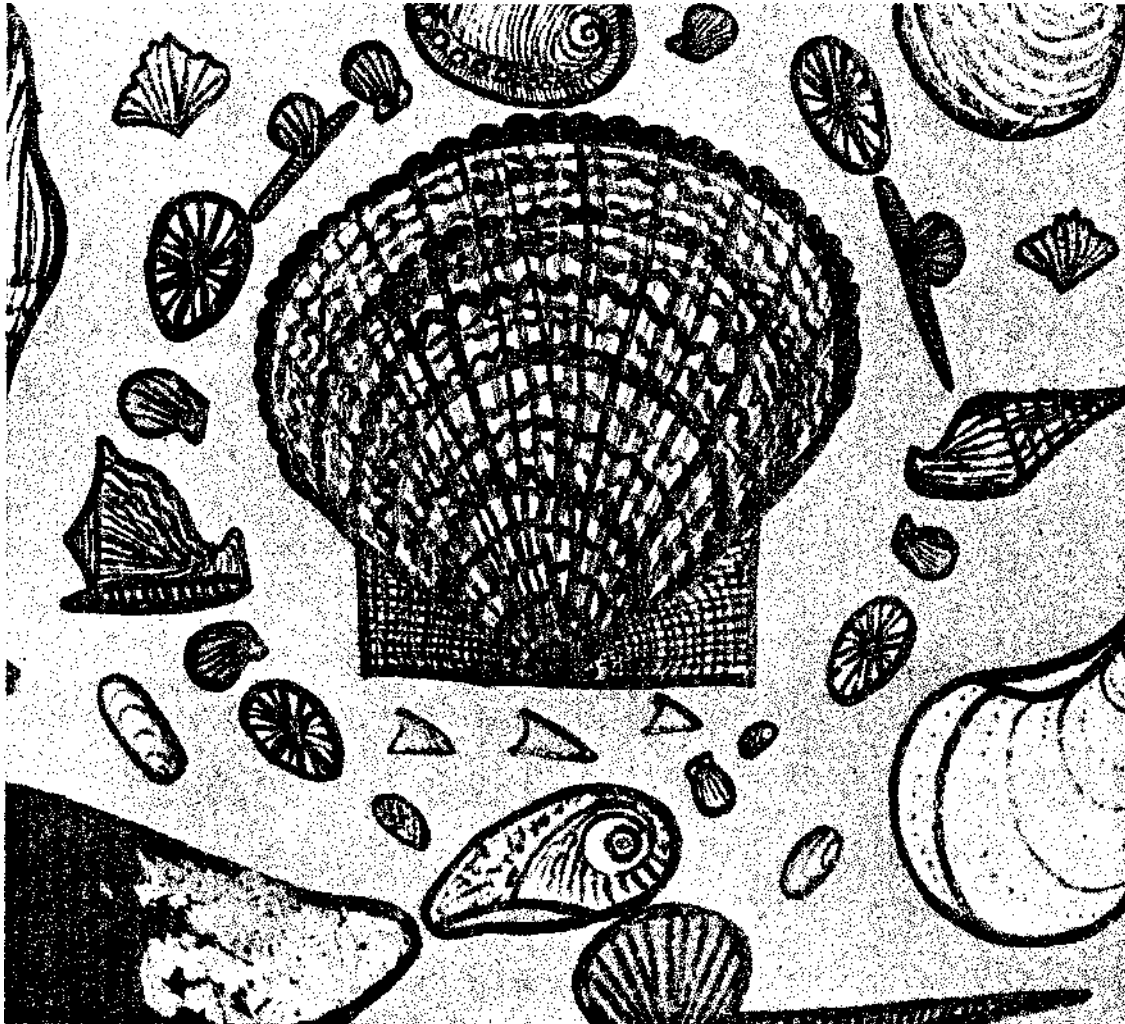
In more and more instances, this is becoming the story of the mentally retarded.

When properly evaluated and trained and when properly placed on the right job, the qualified mentally retarded are showing employers, as well as the rest of the Nation, that they have far more ability than we might think. The problem has been that we have focused so strongly on their disability that we haven't been able to see their ability.

Rehabilitation specialists and forward-looking employers, working in partnership, are carving out broader and broader job opportunities for the mentally retarded. This team is making progress in America.

This team is helping to bring about the goal of all successful vocational rehabilitation—a job; independence; a chance to enjoy the happiness and life's fulfillment which are the birthrights of all men.

"Sea Shells," the work of a 20-year-old artist with an I.Q. of 43, exemplifies the strong points of retarded workers—their love of repetition, their careful attention to details. These same qualifications make retardates superior in many kinds of jobs.



From the collection of Dr. Jonel Rapaport