



euro | guidance

Practical Tools for Career Planning with Students with Special Educational Needs

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Why this topic matters

- Career planning is about more than a job
- It supports self-realisation, dignity, and participation
- Students with special educational needs need accessible and structured guidance



What this presentation offers

- A simple 4-step career planning model
- Practical tools for guidance and support
- Ideas for more accessible career conversations

Key principles

Structure
creates safety

Clear steps
support
participation

Predictability
reduces stress

Visual support
improves
understanding

The 7 guiding questions

- What am I going to do?
- Where am I going to be?
- Why am I going to do it?
- Who am I going to be with?
- How do I do it?
- How long will I do it?
- What am I going to do afterwards?



Visit to the school library

- **What?** Sort and place books on shelves
- **Where?** In the school library
- **Why?** To learn about a possible work task
- **With whom?** With a teacher or support person
- **How?** Using clear steps and visual instructions
- **How long?** 15 minutes
- **What next?** Short reflection: easy / okay / hard



Supportive communication

One instruction at a time

Short and clear language

Time to process
information

Checking for
understanding



Supportive communication

One
instruction
at a time

Too much information can
create stress

One step is easier to follow

Clear order supports
participation

Supportive communication

Short and
clear
language

Use simple words
Avoid abstract questions
Say exactly what the
student needs to do

Supportive communication

Time to
process
information

Do not expect an immediate answer

Pause after giving information

Give the student time to think and respond

Supportive communication

Checking for understanding

Do not ask only: “Do you understand?”

Ask the student to show, choose, or repeat

Understanding should be visible

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)

Low-tech AAC

- gestures
- manual signs
- picture cards
- communication boards

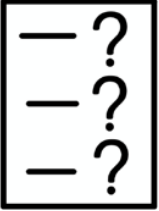
High-tech AAC

- speech-generating devices
- tablets or apps
- symbol-based systems

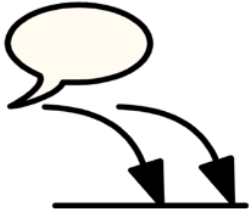
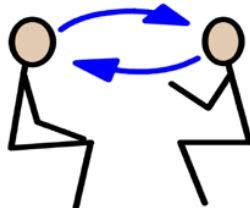
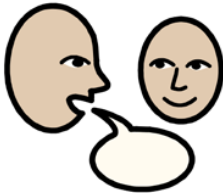
AAC can support speech or replace it when verbal communication is limited. The goal is participation, understanding, and expression



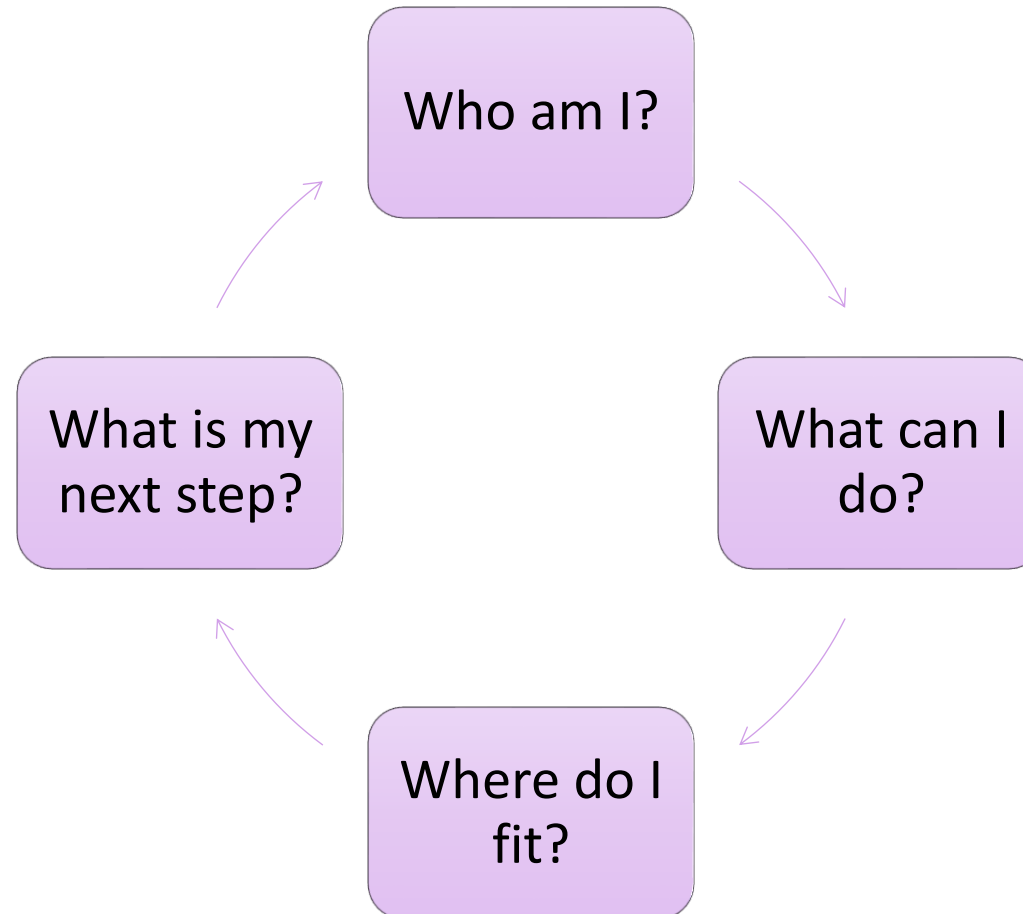
Recommendations for communication support (1)

	One question at a time		Notice non-verbal signals
	Let me explain my support needs		Be honest when something is unclear
	Listen to difficult messages		Respect silence and pauses

Recommendations for communication support (2)

	Ask for repetition if needed		Be patient
	Communication is two-way	 inkludering	Avoid stereotypes
 respektere	Respect every attempt to communicate		Speak to me directly

A simple 4-step model for career planning



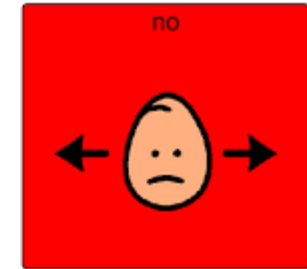
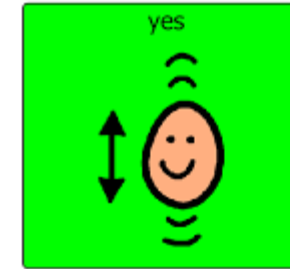
A simple 4-step model for career planning

Who am I?

- Interests. What does the student enjoy?
- Strengths. What are they good at?
- Preferences. What kind of activities do they prefer?
- Values. What is important for them in daily life and in future work?

Tool 1: Like / No / Maybe

- Use picture cards or word cards
- Sort activities into three groups
- Choose the top interests step by step



What to say during the activity

- "Do you like this?"
- "Yes / No / Not sure"
- "Choose three"
- "We can come back to this later"



Visual scales

- Support simple choices
- Make communication easier
- Make responses easier to express

Pain Scale for Kids!

The image displays several visual aids for a pain scale for kids:

- How much**: A scale with four smiley faces (happy, neutral, sad, very sad) corresponding to levels 0, 1, 2, and 3. Labels below are: 0 No pain, 1 Little Pain, 2 Little More, 3 Hurts More.
- How much I hurt**: A thermometer-like scale with levels 0 to 5. Labels to the right are: 0 No pain, 1 Little Pain, 2 Little More, 3 Hurts More, 4 Hurts A lot, 5 Hurts Worst.
- I want to...**: Three icons with labels: a person sleeping (sleep), a person eating (eat), and a person taking a break (take a break).
- It hurts on my...**: A grid of body parts with icons: eyes, ears, mouth, nose, head, neck, hands, feet, arms, legs, elbows, knees, stomach, back.

2 visuals +

Visuals to enhance

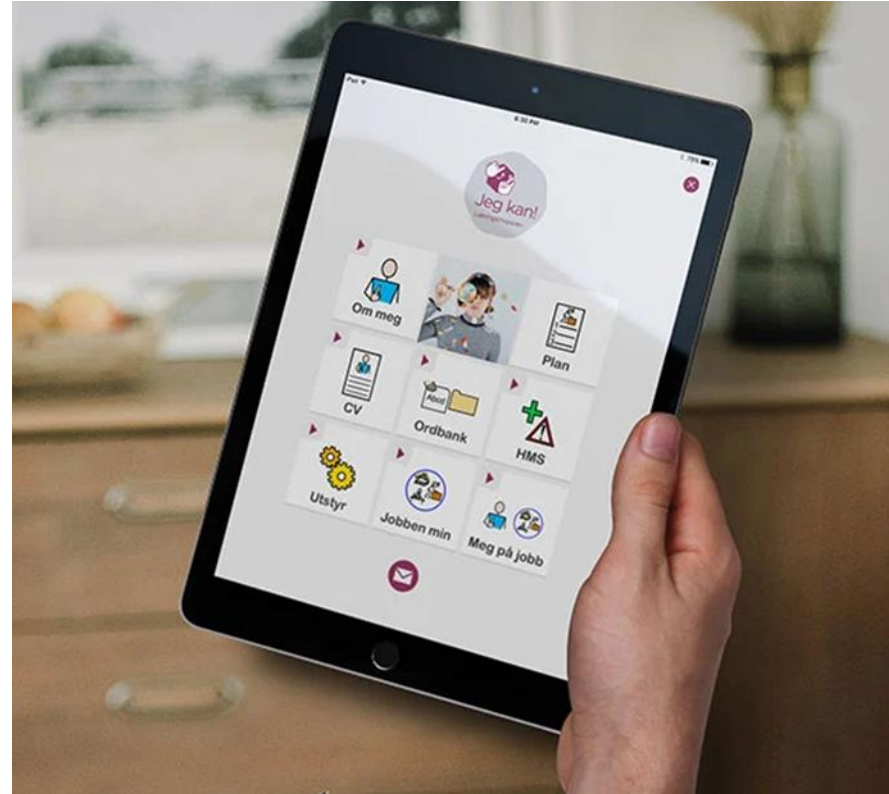
A simple 4-step model for career planning

What can I
do?

- Skills
- Abilities
- Support needs
- Learning potential

Tool 2: I can / I can with help / I am learning

- Shows current abilities
- Highlights support needs
- Helps to see progress



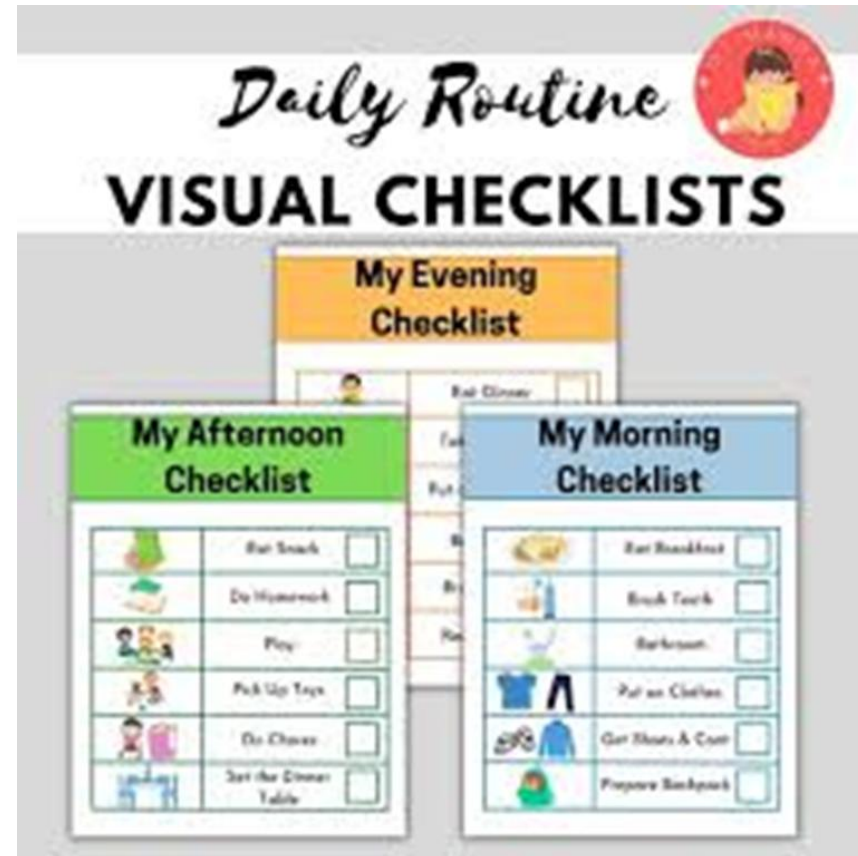
Support can make success possible

- Support is not failure
- The right support increases participation
- Support can build independence over time



Examples of support

- A visual checklist
- Modelling
- Extra time
- A quieter environment
- Step-by-step guidance



Tool 3: Task analysis

- break one task into small steps
- make the task clear and predictable
- support learning and confidence



Example of task analysis

Task: Packing 5 apples into one box

1. Take one empty box
2. Check that the box is clean
3. Take 5 apples
4. Put the apples into the box
5. Count again: 5 apples
6. Close the box
7. Put the box in the right place
8. Check: finished



A simple 4-step model for career planning

Where do I
fit?

- participation
- choice and decision-making
- belonging in the community
- meaningful role

What supports a good fit?

- opportunities to participate
- real choices
- supportive relationships
- a meaningful place in the community

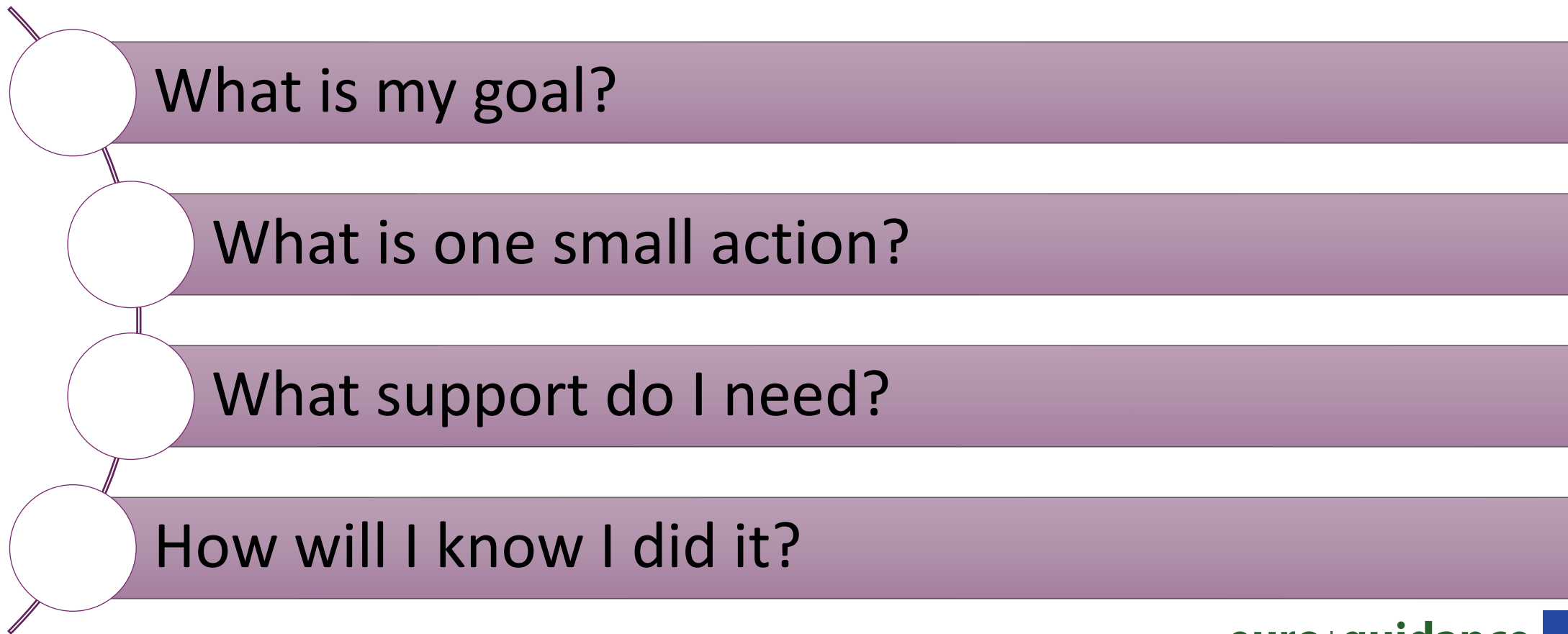


A simple 4-step model for career planning

What is my
next step?

- a small and realistic goal
- one clear action
- needed support
- a simple way to check progress

A simple next-step plan



Practical application: a social story

A social story can help a student:

- express a need clearly
- use a simple social phrase
- reduce stress in shared spaces
- take part in a respectful way



Example of a Social Story: I Need a Quiet Moment

Sometimes I work with other people.
Sometimes the room feels busy or noisy.
Sometimes I feel tired, stressed, or overwhelmed.
When this happens, I may need a quiet moment.
This is okay.
A quiet moment can help my body and mind feel calmer.
I can tell other people in a calm and respectful way.
I can say: **"I need a quiet moment."**
I can also say: **"I want to sit alone for a few minutes."**
Then I can take a short break in a quiet place.
When I am ready, I can come back.



I Need a Quiet Moment



I work with others.



Sometimes I feel overwhelmed.



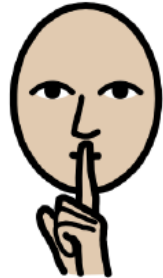
I need a quiet moment.



This is okay.



I can tell others.



"I need a quiet moment."



I take a short break.



I come back.

Key takeaways

- Career planning should be structured and accessible
- Supportive communication matters
- Small steps can lead to meaningful participation
- The goal is self-realisation, choice, and belonging
- Small practical changes can improve participation
- Career planning is strongest when teachers, families, and support staff work together



Thank you for your attention

If you have any further questions,
please feel free to contact me by email 😊

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