

Appendix J: When (*and If!*) to Disclose

| WHEN TO DISCLOSE | | |
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| On-the-Job Application/Cover Letter | | |
| Pros | Cons | Other Considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Allows applicant to relax about employer possibly finding out. ◆ Enables the employer to decide if autism is a concern. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ May exclude your child before having a chance to present himself and demonstrate his strengths and capabilities. ◆ No way of knowing if the reason he was not hired had to do with his diagnosis. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Immediate disclosure may make finding a job more difficult; however, when your child does find employment, he is less likely to have autism-related problems on the job. |
| At the Interview | | |
| Pros | Cons | Other Considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Offers the opportunity to answer any questions about autism and its impact on the job. ◆ Discrimination is less likely in person. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Too much emphasis on diagnosis may distract from discussion of your child's strengths and abilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Your child will need to be comfortable answering questions and leading a discussion about autism and how it affects him specifically. |
| After Hired but Before Beginning Work | | |
| Pros | Cons | Other Considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If the hiring decision is changed and you are sure your child's ASD will not interfere with his ability to perform the job, legal action is warranted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Employer and personnel department may distrust your child and feel as though they should have been told beforehand. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Will need to evaluate your child's ASD to determine its impact on the specific job duties and then be able to explain specifically that it will not interfere with his performance. |
| After Beginning Work | | |
| Pros | Cons | Other Considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Your child will have the chance to prove himself before disclosing. ◆ He will be able to discuss autism with his peers at work. ◆ Your child may be protected by law if disclosure affects employment status but ASD does not keep him from performing his job safely. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Your child may be anxious at work. ◆ Employer may be upset that you did not tell them sooner. ◆ Could impact his interaction with peers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ It may be harder for your child to disclose the longer he waits. ◆ It may be unclear who he should tell. |

| WHEN TO DISCLOSE | | |
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| After a Problem | | |
| Pros | Cons | Other Considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Your child will have the chance to prove himself before disclosing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Employer may be upset that you did not tell them sooner. ◆ Could perpetuate myths and misunderstandings about autism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ May be difficult to re-establish trust with coworkers. |
| Never | | |
| Pros | Cons | Other Considerations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Your child's employer cannot provide accommodations or respond to difficulties due to autism unless they are aware of your child's diagnosis. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Risk of being fired for reasons that his employer may have been more understanding about if they were aware. ◆ Could lead to myths and misunderstandings about autism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ As you and your child become more confident that his performance will not be hindered by having an ASD, the issue of disclosure becomes less important. |

Adapted from Aase, S., & Smith, C. (1989). *Career development course sequence*. University of Minnesota, Disability Services.