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ABSTRACT

Written for employers, personnel directors, vocational rehabilitation personnel, placement specialists, and all others involved in helping the mentally handicapped find their rightful place in the world of work, these guidelines discuss significant factors to consider when employing or seeking employment for the mentally handicapped. These factors include a list of occupational groupings in which qualified mentally handicapped individuals can perform; a list of major recruitment sources for employers seeking to hire mentally handicapped workers; guidelines for helping the employer decide what kind of work the applicant can do; helpful hints for conducting the job interview; orientation ideas to help the new worker adjust; follow-up assistance; and advantages of planned social events. A brief review concludes the booklet.
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Guide to Job Placement of Mentally Retarded Workers

The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped in Cooperation with National Association for Retarded Citizens and the U.S. Employment Service Bureau of Employment Security U.S. Department of Labor

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In Appreciation

The President's Committee expresses deep appreciation to Dr. William A. Fraenkel, Regional Administrator for Mental Retardation—Region VI, author of this Guide, to all the many persons who lent encouragement and counsel in its preparation, and to thousands of recipients who had kind words to say about it. This is a revised printing.

First Words I

There are employers ready and willing to hire qualified mentally retarded people and many retarded men and women ready, able, 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 citizens of our Nation.

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

Through these efforts, mentally retarded people are gaining their rightful place in our national life.



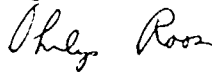
Chairman
The President's Committee
on Employment of the
Handicapped

First Words II

The slogan of the National Association for Retarded Citizens — "Retarded Citizens 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 "Mentally Retarded People Can Be Helped To Help Themselves."

In increasing numbers, mentally retarded men and women 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 Citizens 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 Regional Administrator for Mental Retardation — Region VI.



Dr. Philip Roos
Executive Director
National Association for
Retarded Citizens, Inc.

One-Act Play

The Cast
Ralph Jones,
selective
placement
worker

Anne Stevens,
his coworker

George
Randolph, a
mentally
retarded job
applicant

The Scene
A local public
employment
office
Anywhere

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 mentally retarded people 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 of his family wanted him to get an education and there weren't any public school programs for retarded people 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 that where he learned how to sort and assemble sub-contract jobs?

Jones: Yes. He also learned a lot about how to hold a job. Very important: this personal adjustment training, and 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, is he 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 common sense, or recognizing that there are some jobs that don't require a college education or even a high school education. Jobs that retarded workers actually can perform better than others. What's involved is bringing these common sense 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 facts about mentally retarded workers and their abilities. We hope that it will be informative and helpful to employers, personnel directors, vocational-rehabilitation people, placement specialists, and all others involved in helping retarded persons find their rightful place in the world of work.

Throughout this guidebook we refer to "mentally retarded" men and women. There are many degrees of mental retardation ranging from mild to severe. The "mentally retarded" people to whom we refer here are those with the capacity to be trained for work, and to hold productive jobs when properly placed.

Mental retardation does not mean that the person's total being is retarded. His intellectual capacities may be retarded but he may have other skills and aptitudes in which he conceivably excels other workers.

Those skills and aptitudes can make him a valued employee.



Perspective

There are an estimated 14-15 million retarded persons in the United States today. More than three 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 people are living longer.

Less than 5 percent of retarded persons (or about 200,000) require institutional care. Some of these can be rehabilitated and made ready for some kind of employment.

Throughout the Nation, programs for mentally retarded persons are demonstrating the truth of the slogan of the National Association for Retarded Citizens that "the retarded can be helped." They are in fact beginning to show that, not only can they be helped, but that they can be helpful.

Through the combined efforts of the National Association for Retarded Citizens, professional groups, and public and other voluntary agencies, emphasis has been focused on the abilities of retarded people. Greater numbers of them are being diagnosed earlier in life. More home training, family counseling, pre-school, school, recreation, and religious education programs are preparing retarded youngsters for eventual employment.

Satisfied employers who have hired retarded people know that what a man or woman cannot do is not as important as what he is capable of doing. A better informed public is coming to realize that among all persons, it is ability that counts, not disability.

A Positive Approach

Employers are coming to realize the advantages of hiring trained and qualified mentally retarded workers. They can often make a greater contribution to employers than the individual who has no particular skills or abilities. The key, of course, is proper placement—the right man in the right job. Some studies have shown mentally retarded persons with high degrees of clerical aptitude, mechanical aptitude, dexterity, and other types of skills. Proper placement insures utilization of these skills.

There is also a dollar and cents advantage to hiring qualified mentally retarded people. As with physically handicapped workers, mentally retarded workers return 10 in income taxes for every 21 spent on rehabilitation.

The kinds of jobs that mentally retarded people can perform are unskilled, service, or short-cycle repetitive. Other workers would be bored by them. Retarded workers seek these jobs. They are actually better qualified for them than most others. The employer can expect enthusiasm and a high degree of job interest and satisfaction. In occupations ordinarily showing a high degree of turnover, they tend to excel. They display great stability.

They prove more reliable, more loyal, more dependable than other workers.

All of this indicates that on certain types of jobs, the qualified mentally

retarded people 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 numbers and types of occupations qualified mentally retarded people are able to perform. These jobs tend to pattern themselves in the major occupational areas listed below. The year 1969 is used because it represents 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 26,762 retarded persons vocationally rehabilitated through Federal-State programs, fiscal year 1969—11% of all rehabilitations that year)

Type of Occupation	Percentage
Service	36.7
Industrial	36.4
Sheltered workshops	6.1
Clerical	5.8
Homemaker	5.1
Agriculture	3.8
Unpaid family work	3.5
Sales	1.6
Professional	1.0

Within these occupational areas there has been a noticeable increase in the types of establishments and places of employment where the mentally retarded have found jobs. Among other places, they are working in laundries, dry cleaning establishments, restaurants, gas stations, barbershops, beauty parlors, hospitals, nursing homes, private homes, nurseries, publishing houses, retail stores, factories, and farms.

A note about the "Professional" category. This includes technical and managerial, architectural and engineering, medicine and health, education, administration and management. But this does not mean that retarded men and women have become architects, engineers, etc., rather it means that within these professional areas there are jobs that retarded people are performing.

Over the years qualified mentally retarded persons have been successfully employed in the following jobs (as well as hundreds of others): general office clerks, messengers, office persons, mail carriers, stock clerks, sales clerks, domestics, day workers, housekeepers, nursemaids, nurses' aides, attendants, ward helpers, busboys, kitchen helpers, dishwashers, bootblacks, manicurists, ushers, personal service workers, porters, janitors, sextons, recreation and amusement workers, farmhands, landscape laborers, groundsmen, bakers, upholsterers, construction workers, unskilled laborers, textile machine

tenders, welders, routemen, packers, assemblers, inspectors, laundry sorters, filling station attendants, carpenters, helpers, metal workers, warehousemen

And the list grows and grows

A vital reason for successful placements has been preparation and training provided by the more than 300 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 Citizens. In addition, many Goodwill Industries of America workshops and Jewish Vocational Service workshops can assist mentally retarded persons.

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, and is evaluated and trained by a professional staff in a wide variety of work situations. Individual vocational analysis is made, and suitable preparation is given for competitive employment. The trainee learns the basic skills essential to work, and is given every opportunity to demonstrate his ability to use hand and machine tools. Eventually, he is ready for fulltime 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 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 six major recruitment resources. Any employer who has a job opening 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 that the job opening could be filled by a qualified mentally retarded worker.
3. Ask that such persons be sent to you for interviews.
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— Work Activity 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 Citizens, or see "County Workshop for the Retarded," "Opportunity Center," "Opportunity Workshops," "Work Activity Center," 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 retarded workers with your local mayor's committee or your State's Governor's Committee on Employment of the

Handicapped Governor's Committee headquarters are usually 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 provide you with printed guides and other materials and refer you to the right agency.

Community Residence Programs

A number of new job preparation programs now are being furnished through State agency sponsorship. Former residents of State schools are enabled to leave institutions, acquire job and living skills and become qualified workers. Most of these programs can be located through telephone directories where they are usually listed under "Mental Health," or "Mental Retardation" agencies.

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 judgement, independent thinking, or decision making. 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 guides might be helpful.

Qualifications

Before the applicant 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? What pay does he receive?

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

Did he go to town, to church, to the movies, to the Y or elsewhere?

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

The I.Q.

Factors such as education, training, job experience, motivation, attitude, appearance, personality, and general health need to be considered. The I.Q. 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 potential, his or her good points and "plus" factors. It is the best way to judge abilities and match them with job demands.

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

The Interview

Some companies require 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 like to have both the job applicant and his placement interviewer present during the interview. The presence of the placement interviewer or job counselor may help the applicant to be more at ease during the initial interview.

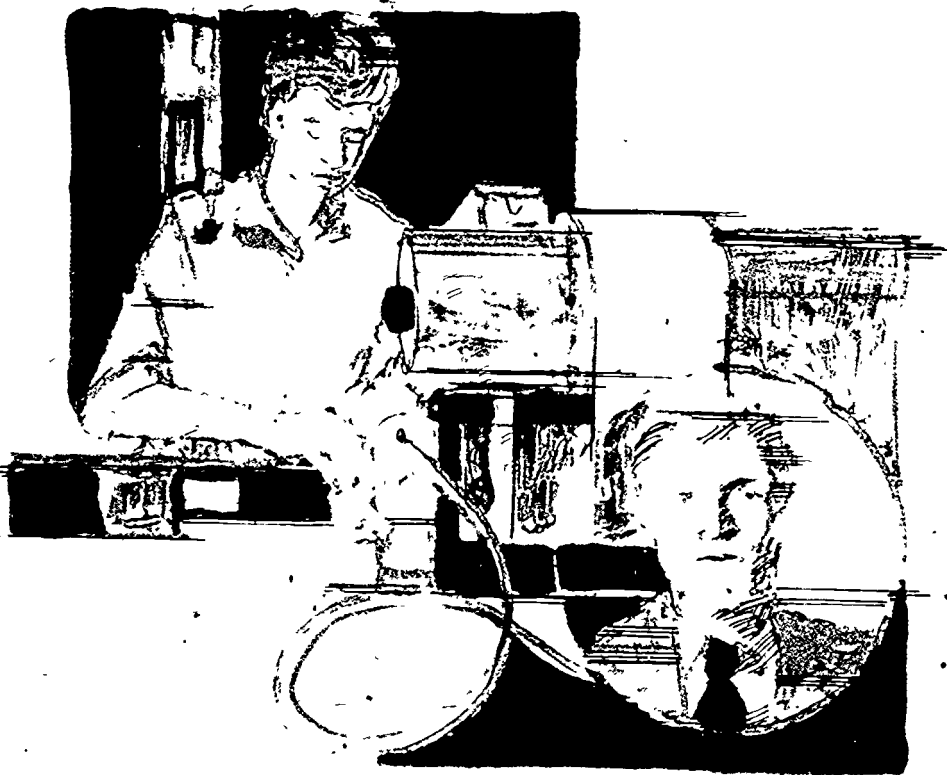
There is need to begin the job interview on the proper level of understanding by the mentally retarded applicant. This does not mean talking down to the applicant as though he were a child. A good way is to speak directly, using terms which clearly describe or illustrate what needs to be done on the job.

Should the company have any restrictions on hiring mentally retarded workers? Is at the initial interview that they can be modified most effectively?

There may be need to adopt a clear policy regarding employment of retarded people. 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 interest.

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?

Two things should be done:

First the employee should have an early opportunity to meet his co-workers as well as his foreman or supervisor in some instances, introductions can be made during the initial job interview. 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 few days on a new job. The new employee has a lot to learn and all at once. He needs to know the location of his work station; of his locker of the time-clock. 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—it happens to many of us our first days on the job.

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.

It will be easier for everyone if fellow-employees are cordial, neighborly, but not necessarily overfriendly or oversolicitous. There can be a world of difference between a pat on the back or an embrace. Retarded people are looking for pats on the back, just like everyone else.

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 employees are important. He has been hired to do a job, and what he wants most is to fully earn his pay.

There are a few rules that might help him fit into his job better, making him a more valued employee. These 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. They should help him fit more easily into the job and 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 workers are permitted to be and where they are 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 the 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 is now 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 time clock 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 are usually. 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.

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 although 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 him, or he 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. He may tend to limit his friendships this way at first. However, he is by no means antisocial. On the surface he may appear to be withdrawn—and this tends to forestall others from initiating friendly overtures—but the fact may be that he merely needs 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 retarded person 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 may get the notion that you are making the change because you are dissatisfied with their performance. So always explain.

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 him 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. It is simply a matter of selecting the best worker for consideration for promotion. However, organized labor would be rightfully concerned if a qualified mentally retarded worker were 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 to 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.

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

Often social contacts such as office parties can do much to remove any negative feelings on the part of others toward the new worker. The less the company focuses on him as someone who is "new" or "different" the less the chances are of negative feelings by his fellow workers. His chances of gaining acceptance increase.

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

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. He will begin to look over the possibility of hiring more.

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, qualified mentally retarded people 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, a chance to enjoy the happiness and life's fulfillment which are the birthrights of all men.