

Developmental Services Worker

Support adults and kids with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live, work and belong. A 2-year diploma, and nearly every grad is hired.

TYPICAL PAY

\$54,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$75k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Group homes, day programs,
schools, clients' own homes**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grade 12
Grade 12 English is the standard requirement. Volunteer with Special Olympics, Best Buddies or a local community living agency.
- 2 College diploma** 1 to 2 years
The Developmental Services Worker program is a 2-year Ontario college diploma. Other provinces offer 1-year certificates or 2-year disability studies diplomas. Courses cover disabilities, positive behaviour support, health, counselling and advocacy.
- 3 Field placement** Built into the program
Fanshawe's program includes nearly 700 hours of community placement, including evening shifts.
- 4 First job** Weeks to months
Most grads are hired within months as direct support professionals, case coordinators or educational assistants.

Pros and cons

- + Two years of school and almost guaranteed work
- + Cheapest health-adjacent diploma around
- + Long relationships with the people you support
- Pay is low for the responsibility
- Personal care, lifting and occasional aggression
- Rotating shifts including overnights and holidays

Good to know

Institutions closed, jobs opened

Ontario closed its last large institutions for people with developmental disabilities in 2009. The work moved into small group homes, supported apartments and family homes in every town, which is why...

Almost everyone gets hired

Fanshawe College says the majority of its developmental services grads, if not all, find work within six months. Few 2-year diplomas can say that.

Optional boosts

Behaviour therapy or autism intervention. Dual diagnosis training. Degree in disability studies or social work. Medication administration and first aid instructor.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Developmental service worker, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Fanshawe College: Developmental Services Worker diploma
Developmental Services Ontario

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/developmental-services-worker>



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