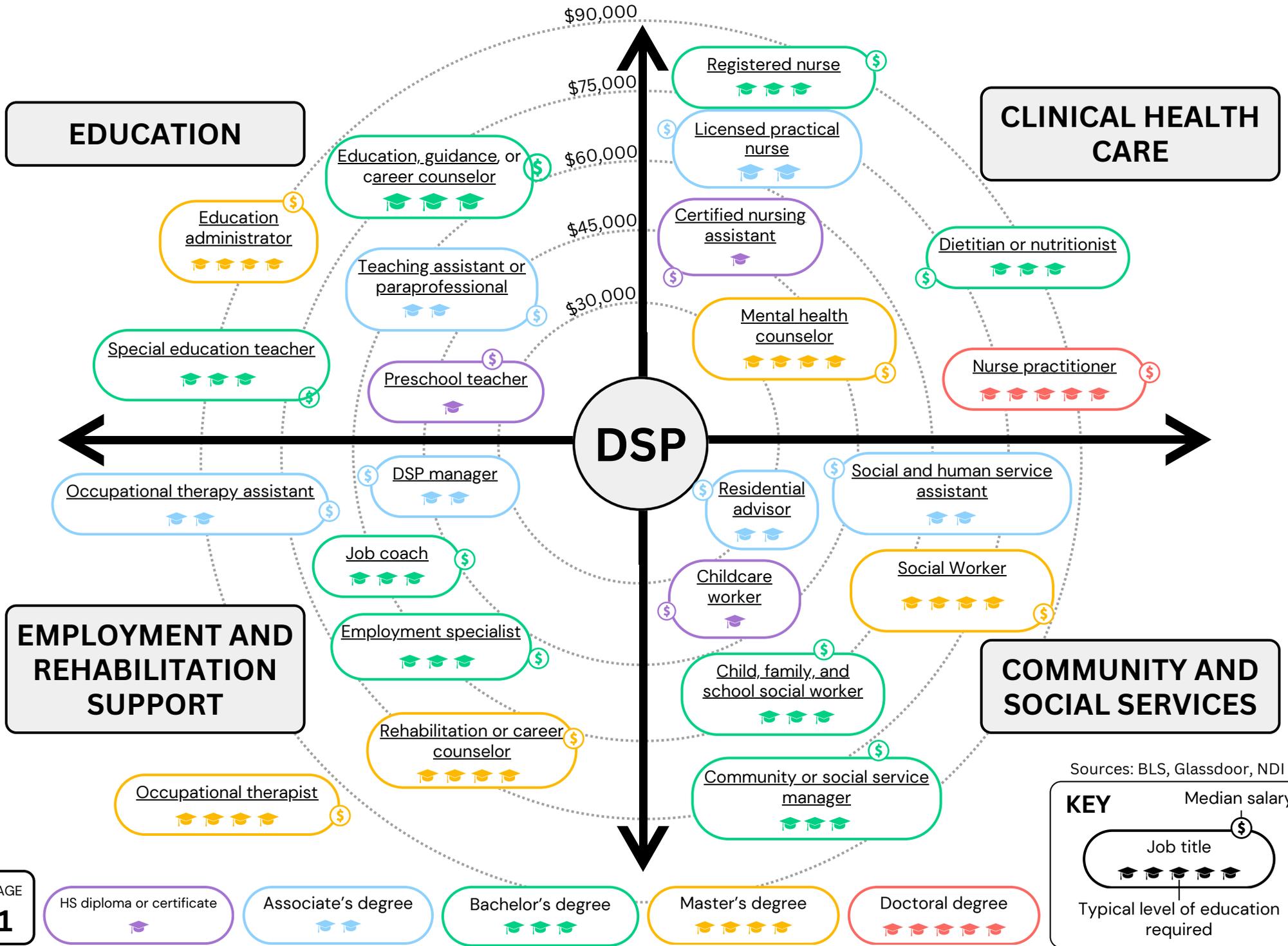


Direct Support Professional Career Exploration



How to Become a Direct Support Professional



Direct support professionals (DSPs) support people with disabilities to develop and strengthen life skills for independent living, community participation, and employment. DSPs' duties may include helping people live more independently, advocate for themselves, complete education or training, and be ready for work.

1. FIND A DSP JOB

Job boards are a good place to start looking for DSP jobs. DSP work may be listed under different job titles, so you may consider broadening your search to include terms like *employment services provider*, *job coach*, or *job developer*. DSP positions typically require a high school education at minimum and some employers further require a background check, professional and personal references, or a driver's license. Required training varies by state or local area, but many DSPs receive training on the job. Your local American Job Center (AJC) can also help you identify DSP career opportunities in your community.

2. DEVELOP SKILLS ON THE JOB

Gaining skills as a DSP prepares you for many career opportunities in fields such as health care, education, social services, employment services, and rehabilitation services. DSPs develop transferable skills like effective communication, critical thinking, advocacy, assessment, observation, time management, relationship building, problem solving, and many others. Learn more about how DSP skills can lay the foundation for success in the many career paths and jobs featured in the infographic on page 1. If you are viewing this resource digitally, you may click on each job title to find out more at My Next Move, a career exploration tool and interest profiler from the U.S. Department of Labor.

3. SEEK TRAINING AND ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

Training and education improve your on-the-job skills and may help you earn more or advance in your career. Seek training that gains you credentials, such as CPR or first aid, and consider pursuing a Registered Apprenticeship Program or postsecondary education. Some states and career pathways require their own industry-recognized credentials (e.g., certified employment support professionals). In the infographic above, see how DSPs can advance in their career by pursuing further education and credentials: See median salaries for each occupation by noting which salary tier  the job falls into (salaries vary by geography). See the graduation caps  to discover the typical education levels required for each occupation.

Scan to read one
DSP's story!



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