

# INTRODUCTION

---

## Why Parents Need to Help



### ❖ **Parents will benefit in the long run.**

It's your home that your child will return to at age 25 or 35 if he or she is unable to pay bills or find the motivation to keep a steady job. If you help your child make smart educational and career decisions when he is young, you'll be able to share your child's future successes and won't have to share your home, expenses or debt.

### ❖ **The school counselor can't do it all.**

Public school counselors in Arizona are swamped with many students, rarely able to provide individualized career exploration assistance. In Arizona, the ratio is: 1 counselor to 750 students - 3 times the recommended national ratio.

### ❖ **Your child can't do it alone.**

Parents can help break the process into manageable tasks, providing support, guidance and perspective. It's difficult for youth to perceive life beyond age 25. If left to their own devices, many choose not to choose and limit their future options by focusing on the present, not the future.

## Facts about Career Decision-Making

- ❖ Career decision-making is a process a skill that can, and should be taught.
- ❖ The goal of career decision-making is to help students organize their thinking about topics important in choosing a career.
- ❖ It's important to assess one's style of decision-making to help overcome obstacles that might inhibit the process. Students should not expect to make a final career decision lightly.

## General tips to helping your teen with career decisions.

- ❖ If your teen is interested in a certain class such as science or math, talk to those teachers about careers in that field.
- ❖ Help your teen learn more about a career of interest by arranging a "job shadowing" experience. Contact a career coordinator to assist in arrangements
- ❖ Don't assume that your teen has to wait until college to decide on a career choice. The number 1 reason students drop out of college is lack of focus.
- ❖ Businesses are very interested in an applicant's school record.

# CONVERSATION STARTERS

---



The best way to begin career exploration is by using everyday conversations with your child to talk about your own career. Your child probably knows very little about your work history, unless you've taken him or her to work. And even then, he or she might not really understand what you do or the decisions and achievements that lead to your current position.

## Begin by talking about ...

- ✓ What exactly do you do?
- ✓ Where did you acquire your skills?
- ✓ What did you have to learn for your job?
- ✓ What do you like best about your job?
- ✓ Talk about each job you've held and how it prepared you for the next one.
- ✓ Discuss what it is you liked most and least about each job.
- ✓ Be sure to include the education and training that you needed.
- ✓ Describe how your job has changed over time.
- ✓ Be honest about the mistakes you've made and hope your child will benefit from your experience.

Little kids **love** talking about possible jobs — the future seems wide open and full of adventure to them. Use this time to help your child explore some things they might or might not enjoy in a future job. These preferences often stay with people as they grow older and can have a positive influence of career and education choices.

As children get older, they become less interested in dreaming of the future and prefer living in the present. Teens often think negatively about having to work for a living. So, don't be surprised if your teen doesn't find career exploration interesting. They're influenced a great deal by other teens and by the media. Sometimes these messages might get in the way of successful planning. Be aware of what some of your teen's attitudes toward work and career exploration might be so that you can confront them, if need be.

It's likely your teen has heard that it's not cool to get good grades, that entry-level jobs don't matter, that office work is for "losers" or other mistruths. Such messages can make your child reluctant to explore certain career paths.

As a parent, it's up to you to counter these claims, to point out the value in all work and to show a realistic view of occupations. Demonstrate the hard work and perseverance that's needed to be successful in any job that might be considered easy or glamorous, like singing, athletics or even medicine.

Adapted from  
*Starting the Conversation: A Career Exploration Guide for Parents and Children*  
[Texas Workforce Commission]

# CAREER PLANNING SUGGESTIONS

---

As parents, you are an *essential* resource for your son or daughter as they plan their future career. Below are suggestions to help you assist their career planning process.

- \* Get involved in your child's education and encourage his or her teachers to integrate career exploration activities in the classroom.
- \* Take time to **TALK** and **LISTEN** to each other.
- \* Help your child build a positive self-concept.
- \* Become aware of his or her interests, abilities and temperament.
- \* Explore various occupations with your child.
- \* Expand the range of career possibilities by eliminating gender bias from your child's perceptions.
- \* Discuss your occupation and the steps you took during your career decision-making and planning process.
- \* Use valuable career and education resources see page 28.
- \* Assist your child in developing a resume showing work experience, previous activities and volunteer experiences. Practice preparing an electronic portfolio.
- \* Start saving now for your child's future needs. Information can be found: [www.getreadyforcollege.org](http://www.getreadyforcollege.org)



## Home is the first workplace

- \* Share responsibilities and make decisions that develop work skills at an early age.
- \* Resolve problems and work as a team to develop important work skills.
- \* Let your child plan meals for a week.
- \* Let your child set up and organize a family outing.
- \* Let your child work with another family member on a project.
- \* Discuss with your child how a problem situation was resolved.
- \* Be a role model – children learn by example.



## When to talk to you child

You don't necessarily need to sit down and have a formal conference with your child. It's often easier to make use of the natural opportunities when a parent and child spend time together.

## Take advantage of teachable moments

Anytime parents and children spend time together to talk and get to know each other better is a teachable moment. Work on creating new opportunities to discuss the future.

# PARENTING CAREER QUESTIONS 101

---

Why do I need to help my child explore careers?  
My parents didn't help me and I turned out OK ...

Twenty or thirty years ago the need to plan for a career wasn't as urgent. It was more common for high school graduates to find good-paying jobs right out of school and work their way up the socio-economic ladder without further training. At that time, a college degree — in any given field — was seen as a ticket to success.

Times have changed! Today, positions in almost every industry require some type of post-secondary education or specialized training. Jobs that don't require additional training or education often don't lead to advanced positions or better pay. Today, entry-level employees are competing with workers overseas. It's the job candidates who have specialized skills and a career plan who have the best chances of long-term employment.

Won't locking my child into a specific career goal  
at a young age narrow his or her options?

The aim isn't for your child to choose one particular occupation. It's to understand the selection process, narrow the list based on his interests and to ensure that his educational path doesn't limit his future options.



When can I find the time to help my child explore careers?

If you're like most parents, you're very busy. You work. You run a household. You drive kids to and from practice. Squeezing in one more activity seems hard to do. The reality, though, is that you **do** have time. Whether you're aware of it or not, you're already shaping your child's career development.

Every time you talk about your salary, your workday highs and lows, even your selection of work clothes, you send a message to your child about careers. What you do for a living, and how your child perceives it, all influence your child's vision about work.

Preparing your child for the world of work is a critical part of parenting — like a bird showing its offspring how to catch worms. Think about the messages you received about working when you were young. Your efforts to help promote your child's career exploration will be part of your legacy to him.

Adapted from  
***Starting the Conversation: Career Exploration Guide for Parents & Children***  
[by Texas Workforce Commission]

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

These Questions are asked by parents regarding career information:

## **How can I be a good role model for my children in career development?**

Be proud of the work that you do and the contribution you make to the family and community. If possible, allow your children to visit you at your job.



## **How can I contribute to my child's work skills and values?**

Let your child know that the work you do is important and necessary. Teach them the value of reliability, honor, dignity and self respect. Household chores, volunteering and part-time work can help young people develop these traits. Experience teaches responsibility, decision-making skills and that there are consequences to the choices individuals make.

## **Should my child know what he or she wants to do by the time they graduate from high school?**

It's not uncommon that a 18-year old will be uncertain about what they want in a career. It's better for him or her to understand oneself well, so that she can consider a number of occupations that reflect ones interests. Statistics show that people ages 18 to 36 change jobs approximately 10 times. As we evaluate our life choices, we make adjustments if they don't fit our needs. The same goes for career choices – they're not always permanent.

## **How can I help my child understand how career choice impacts lifestyle?**

If your child "values" a lifestyle that includes travel, luxury cars, an expensive home and lots of other material possessions, then a career that supports such a lifestyle is important. Labor market information provides salary levels that can be expected given the occupation, experience and educational level. But remember that motivation is also a factor. Be sure to use labor market information and discuss material "wants" versus "needs" (use Worksheet #15).

## **How can my child experience different careers?**

It might be a good idea for your child to "test drive" different careers. Hospitals, libraries, churches, professional and civic associations all have multiple opportunities for volunteers. Also encourage your child to talk to people in different positions to get first-hand knowledge.

## **My daughter wants to be a carpenter or work in construction and my son wants to work as a nurse. I feel these jobs are not suited for either of them, how do I advise them?**

It's an old belief than men are better at some things and women are better at others. This belief has caused many women in the past to hold lower status or lower paying jobs than men with the same amount of education. Times have changed and you will see men and women in all areas of the workforce. Men are also choosing occupations previously dominated by women, such as nurses, hair stylists or secretarial work. It's important to find a job that matches an individual's interests rather than excluding occupations because of gender.

## **Why should my child explore career clusters? Doesn't a person simply decide on ONE job?**

Children might believe that there is only one career for them. And if that career doesn't work out, they might feel they're inadequate or a failure. Many different careers require similar tasks and skills. If their interest and abilities match one cluster, they might be other occupations within that cluster that match their interests and skills.

Adapted from  
**Parent Primer on Career Exploration**  
[Florida Department of Education]

# THE BIG PICTURE: LABOR MARKET TRENDS

---



The world of work has changed dramatically over the past 40 years, and it continues to change with each new technological breakthrough. So what does this mean in terms of your child's employment future? Your child is going to enter a service-oriented and knowledge-based economy where specific knowledge sets and the ability to learn matter more than physical abilities. Competition for jobs is global, and layoffs or job changes are commonplace. Your child will have a better chance of success if he is aware of the labor market he is entering.

- **Companies lay off workers even in good times.** During the record-low unemployment of the late 1990s, layoffs and turnovers were the highest on record. Today's workers must be prepared for a very dynamic labor market.
- **Tenure doesn't always matter.** Employers no longer automatically keep workers who've been at the company the longest. Instead, work skills and the ability to interact well with others matter more than actual time on the job.
- **Accomplishments do matter.** Employers often rely on employee performance to determine who to promote or keep. Forty percent of companies now base compensation on performance, compared to just 17 percent just 10 years ago.
- **Ongoing education and lifelong learning is crucial.** Since technology can change jobs dramatically, workers have to be flexible — able to learn new skills or shift occupations and careers as needed.
- **Many jobs continue to move overseas.** Now that e-mail, faxes and teleconferencing are commonplace, Minnesota workers are not only competing for jobs with people in other states, but with workers from other countries as well. While many new jobs are created, other are moving overseas. As a result, most growing jobs in the U.S. are service-related.

## Why Use Labor Market Information (LMI)?

---

Updated, local labor market information is a critical component to assisting students and adults in career transition informed career choices. For more information: [www.workforce.az.gov](http://www.workforce.az.gov)

### Labor Market Information enables students and jobseekers to:

- Understand the value their skills have in today's job market.
- Understand changes within the labor market of the state and local area where they live or wish to relocate.
- Understand the implications for choosing occupations or training in particular labor markets.
- Understand that career decisions made without referring to Labor Marketing Information can lead to missed opportunities.
- Understand that career planning is a lifelong process.

### Jobseeker tools on Arizona's Department of Employment and Economic Development's LMI site:

- Arizona wages and salaries
- Projected job growth in Arizona
- Region-specific job vacancy rates
- Current unemployment rates



# EDUCATIONAL PLANNING MYTHS

**Myth:** Everyone should go to college.



College is not for everyone. It's fair to say that most people need some type of training beyond high school, but not everyone needs to go to a 4-year college to get that training. No one should attend college because they feel it's their only option. There are additional options.

**Myth:** College costs too much. There's no way my family and I can pay \$15,000-\$20,000 for tuition.



Despite rising tuition costs, not all colleges are that expensive. In fact, few schools charge \$20,000 per year. Most public colleges and universities charge tuition and fees under \$5,500 per year. And remember, many types of financial aid are available.

**Myth:** My family and I can't save anything on our income. College is out of the question.



Even if you save only a few dollars a month, you can reduce the cost of college — especially if you start when your child is young. Get in the habit of saving a few dollars a week and let your savings grow over time.

**Myth:** It's too late for me. I haven't saved anything and I don't have time to save now.



It's never too late. During college, many students work to offset the cost and you might be eligible for financial aid in the form of grants and scholarships. To find out, electronically ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)) complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and submit it promptly. Federal tax credits for higher education and deductions in student loan interest make paying for college costs easier. Although loans are the least desirable option, they are available to make college affordable.

**Myth:** It won't do my family or me any good to save because saving will only reduce my chances for financial aid.



Actually, the penalty is very small. Under current law, the maximum amount of aid you can lose is \$5.65 for every \$100 of savings.

**Myth:** Our family income is too high to receive aid, but we can't afford the full cost of college. There's no assistance available for me.



It's true — some families are not eligible for grants. However, there is assistance available. There are tax benefits, low-interest loans or scholarships based on academic achievement, talent, merit or other criteria.

Adapted from  
[Minnesota Office of Higher Education]



# **HOW PARENTS CAN HELP DEVELOP ABILITIES**

---

When you help develop a child's abilities, you develop the traits they will need for success in school and the workplace. An **ability** is the capacity to do something well. Abilities come in many forms. Some are specific and easy to demonstrate such as reading and mathematics. Others are not as easy, like getting along with others, solving problems, making decisions or being a team player. These abilities are equally important to employers who need employees who can work collaboratively, deal with unanticipated or changing circumstances, and to communicate effectively.

Parents some things you can do:

## **FOR BETTER** *Math Scores*

- √ Explain fractions and measurements while cooking.
- √ Illustrate percentages with pennies and dollars.
- √ Keep a chart of daily temperatures.
- √ Play simple games such as "how far is it?"
- √ Have your child check the grocery receipt and calculate prices.
- √ Demonstrate an interest in mathematics
- √ Make math a part of the family routine.

## **FOR BETTER** *Readers*

- √ Spend 20 minutes a day reading to preschoolers.
- √ Have older children daily read to you or take turns reading.
- √ Discuss the content of what you or they have read.
- √ Tell stories and have child re-tell them to you in detail.
- √ Let your child see *you* read at least 20 minutes a day.
- √ Keep lots of quality reading materials around the house.
- √ Make visits to the library part of your family routine.
- √ Point out that pleasurable reading comes from good reading.



## **FOR BETTER** *Thinkers*

- √ Have your child act as a navigator on a family outing.
- √ Have your child follow a new recipe
- √ Have your child learn the rules of a game by reading and enforcing directions.
- √ Have your child build a model or assemble store purchases by following directions and using schematics.
- √ Have your child anticipate and experience the consequences of a decision.

## **FOR BETTER** *Team Players*

- √ Involve children in family discussions or decision, as appropriate for their age and maturity levels.
- √ Give children important jobs to do within the family or work chores together.
- √ Teach your child to get along with others.
- √ Emphasize the learning that takes place in group, whether on school projects, or team activities such as sports, music, theater or volunteering.
- √ Practice mature conflict resolution.

# HOW PARENTS CAN HELP DEVELOP GOALS

---

An important part of a child's development is the setting and achievement of goals. **GOALS** help to define your child's capabilities and work ethic.

1. Set goals that encourage exploration and achievement, such as read books, perform chores, or try new things. These nurture career development.
1. Have your child write down their goals. This process helps to make goals more concrete and attainable.
2. Set goals that are realistic and challenging. Young people live up to the expectations set for them.
3. Set a time by which a goal should be achieved. Discuss whether the child has reached the goal at that time and why or why not.
4. Always encourage your child to keep trying and be sure to praise your child for a job well done!



## **FOR BETTER** *Development of Goals*

- √ Ask your child about their school day and what they learned. Ask about homework.
- √ Require your child to do age-appropriate chores around the house.
- √ Become a model for responsible behavior.
- √ Work with teacher to set challenging goals with your child.
- √ Review homework assignments. Check for attention to detail and "the little things" noting how completing assignments time to the world of work.
- √ Praise both the finished product and the effort it took to complete it.
- √ Discuss family schedules to allow your child time to plan and complete homework.
- √ Support school activities.
- √ Volunteer to chaperone activities, work in the classroom, or for



## **HOW PARENTS CAN HELP DEVELOP SELF-CONFIDENCE**

---

**Self-confidence** is needed to achieve in school, make career decisions and make good choices in life. Parents can make a tremendous influence on their child's level of confidence.

- √ Provide positive reinforcement whenever possible. Reward and praise your child's achievements.
- √ Encourage your child to explore his or her own interests, abilities or dreams.
- √ Keep an open, positive mind about their choices. The opportunities available today are very different from what was available to you.
- √ Encourage your child to imagine how things will change during his or her lifetime. What are some job possibilities that might be needed in the future?
- √ Teach your child the power of wise decision-making. You can show how good judgment leads to positive results by setting attainable goals or tasks.
- √ Become active in your child's choice of friends and activities. Having positive friends and participating in constructive activities builds self-confidence.
- √ Take part in your child's activities. Attend their sports events, plays and recitals. Drive them to movies, concerts or other outings.
- √ Be active in your child's school career. A student will take school and the future more seriously, knowing that his or her parents are attending conferences, job fairs, career nights, or school board meetings.

Discuss **success**. Success can be defined in many ways. Personal expression, self-fulfillment, family connections, financial independence, social standing, career achievement, or community involvement are a few ways. A successful career is measured by more than dollar signs or academic degrees.

It is important for you to help your child define what success means to them and help your child find a way to achieve it!



# PARENTS AS PARTNERS

---

While your child is in school and preparing for the future, you can reinforce the career development activities at school. Use the following checklist to assess your child's career development needs and goals.

## Parent Checklist

- Does your child's school have a career development plan for your child? Has your son or daughter been assigned a career counselor at school? Do they have access to a career center?
- Is your child following a sequential course of study?
- What career assessments has your child taken? What career fields do the results suggest?
- From what you know about your child's interests, abilities and personality, are you in agreement with the results of the career assessment?
- Do you know which occupations your child is interested in exploring?
- Have you visited the school's library or career center or searched the Internet to gather information about various occupations?
- Have you taken your child to work with you or exposed him or her to the world of work through community programs, internships, mentoring or job shadowing experiences?
- Are your child's career dreams realistic in terms of his or her aptitudes and personality?
- Have you explored all the post-high school options for your child – college, the military, apprenticeship programs, training and work?
- Do you know the requirements for admission to the colleges your child is considering?
- Have you visited college campuses or taken virtual tours online? Or have you viewed college videos with your child or other links to Arizona Sites?
- Do you know where to access scholarship information?
- Have you started to save money for your child's higher education? Have you looked into the State Educational Savings Plan?
- Have you discussed the cost of college with your child?
- Have you gathered information about financial aid options, or advice on costs and saving for Arizona schools? Information can be found at: [www.azhighered.org](http://www.azhighered.org)

Adapted from  
**Youth and Career Decisions** (J. Davis and M. Dickmeyer) and  
**Get Ready for Your Child's Higher Education** [MOHE].

# COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE

---

Decided that you want to go to college after high school, but aren't sure which college? This Countdown to College will help you to prepare for the application process and decide which college is best for you.



- 10. Continually check and make sure you're properly prepared**
  - 1 Check high school graduation requirements.
  - 2 Stay involved in school activities, community services, clubs, jobs, etc.
  - 3 Develop a 4-year Plan for college and career planning.
- 9. Review your areas of interest**
  - 1 Explore your goals, abilities and knowledge by taking assessments and talking to others.
  - 2 Visit the career center and use the Internet to research career possibilities.
- 8. Identify the educational program(s) in your area(s) of interest**
  - 1 Use Internet sites like and the career center to do research. Talk to someone in that career.
  - 2 Visit the annual local college/career days and regional college fairs.
- 7. Prepare for and take the required college entrance tests (ACT, PSAT, SAT and others)**
  - 1 Find out the dates and locations of college entrance tests in your area. See page 29 for information.
  - 2 Pick up registration materials from your high school counselor or career center.
- 6. Gather information about college options to weigh the pros and cons**
  - 1 Decide what's important to you in a college: location, programs, size, athletics, etc.
  - 2 Research different schools and their admission policies.
- 5. Create a priority list of schools**
  - 1 Make sure schools on your list have the programs you are interested in.
  - 2 Rank each school on your list according to the items that were important to you in step 6.
- 4. Visit ALL the schools you might consider attending**
  - 1 Talk to students and professors, as well as the admissions department and financial aid staff.
  - 2 Sit in on a class, eat in the cafeteria or just hang out.
- 3. Apply to a minimum of 4 schools, can file any**
  - 1 Type or neatly write your applications in pen. Have someone check for errors before you send the application. Many applications can be filed online.
  - 2 Highlight all of your achievements and personal goals.
- 2. Apply for financial aid**
  - 1 Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
  - 2 Apply for many scholarships and grants (use the Internet, library and resources at your school).
- 1. Choose your school**
  - 1 Notify the school(s) you chose not to attend.
  - 2 HAVE FUN!

Adapted from  
**Youniversity**

[Minnesota Office of Higher Education]

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP DEVELOP SKILLS

---

The forces of technology and global competition have caused significant change in job requirements and the creation of new jobs. The 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace requires workers to be better educated, better skilled and have the flexibility and ability to meet the changes in knowledge and skill requirements in order to be successful in the job market. An additional element is the ability to work comfortably with technology.

- √ Identify the skills associated with occupations of interest to your child and relate those skills to daily activities.
- √ Demonstrate how to schedule and perform household tasks.
- √ Maintain high standards for chores about the house.
- √ Give praise for a job well done and discuss jobs done incompletely.
- √ Expect all homework and school assignments to be done completely, neatly and on time.
- √ Help children be punctual for school and other appointments.
- √ When you have to stay late for work, explain to your child, that sometimes you must sacrifice to do a good job.
- √ Introduce you child to all aspects of work, including business, technology, artistic, social, and customer service perspectives.
- √ Discuss with your child new technologies and how they change our lives.
- √ Work with schools to ensure that creative, mathematical, scientific, and people skills are taught.
- √ Discuss with your child ways to improve products, processes, and services.
- √ Encourage your child to brainstorm solutions to technical and human problems.

### WHAT ABOUT SOFT SKILLS?

The needed 21<sup>st</sup> century work skills have changed. Increasingly, employers recognize that another set of skills are just as crucial to a potential employee's ability. These skills are frequently referred to as "**soft skills.**" Soft skills are the personality traits, social graces, and attitudes that employers in all industries value. What soft skills do employers want from their employees?

- **Flexibility** is the ability to adapt to changes in the work environment as opposed to coping with a stable work environment.
- **Problem solving skills** is the ability to solve unforeseen problems on the job as opposed to referring unforeseen problems to others.
- **Teamwork** is the ability to do one's best work in a team-orientated fashion, as opposed to working independently.
- **Life-long learning** is the ability to continue to expand skills and grow rather than focusing on specified duties in one's present job. In short, always be open to learning new ways of doing things. This includes formal training and informal self-taught skills.



# Tips for Talking To Teens

---

- Encourage your teen to investigate a variety of careers. Talk about work and your job at the dinner table. Also, talk with friends and relatives about their jobs when your children are present.
- Stress to your teen that school is their work. Attendance and effort are important. You don't take a day off from work just because you feel like it. The same goes for school.
- Explore their personal talents, strengths, likes and dislikes — without being judgmental. Ask: What do you like to do? What skills do you have? Do you like to be around people? Do you prefer working outdoors or indoors? Do you like to take things apart? Assessment tools can relate these to specific occupations. The more teens know about themselves, the easier it is for them to recognize careers that suit them best and the greater chance for job satisfaction.
- Help your teen experience as many work situations as possible. Have them take advantage of work exposure opportunities like job shadowing, mentoring, internships, youth apprenticeships and cooperative education. This educational approach connects school experiences to real-life work activities.
- Provide as many opportunities as you can for your child to learn technical skills. Encourage computer literacy coursework in school, a community center or through a youth group. If you don't have a computer at home, visit your local library. Give them a chance to experience hands-on tools, techniques and skills which can be applied in a broad range of careers.
- Support your school's efforts to expose students to various career possibilities. Work through your parent-teacher organization or ask teachers or administrators to offer students career fairs, field trips and class speakers.
- Talk about a career as a goal of education. It's OK that teens usually don't know what they want to do for the rest of their lives. Try not to limit future options as a result of poor planning.
- Guide your teenager toward acquiring skills. Encourage them to take courses that provide the opportunity to apply skills - like keyboarding, automotive technology, accounting, graphic design, construction, marketing, etc. Applied learning is important whether your child is college-bound or not.
- Give your teen responsibility — the more the better. Begin with jobs around the house. Young people need to learn that we're all important and that people rely on us to get things done.
- Suggest that your teen explore career opportunities that were once considered only for males or only for females. Nontraditional jobs often provide excellent opportunities.



Adapted from  
***Preparing Your Teen for a Successful Career***  
[American Vocational Association, Alexandria, VA]



## PICTURE POSITIVE

---

Ensure a **positive picture** of your teen in the eyes of prospective employers or educators.

**Emphasize** the importance of good attendance and being on time — always! A high school transcript is a permanent record.

**Encourage** positive study habits and provide a space to study.

**Monitor** your teen's attendance and grades.

**Ask** to review your teen's permanent record and/or career plan with the school guidance counselor.

**Know** that grades and attendance in grades 11-12 are considered the most important by employers and admission representatives.



### What if "improvement" is needed?

Talk with your son or daughter and help them make a plan of action to identify the following:

- Why is there a problem?
- What new action is required?
- What steps need to be taken to have the change occur?
- What types of things can get in the way of making needed change?
- How can obstacles be removed that could slow progress?

**Encourage** your teen to recognize the problem. Help him or her understand that improvement in grades, tardiness or attendance will show growth to a prospective employer or college personnel. **Motivate** your teen to continue improving.

*As parents or guardians, you are the number one influence in your teen's career choice. The most important thing you can do is to be a positive role model.*

## WHAT IF My Child is NOT Interested IN CAREER PLANNING?

---

- Decisions about the future can be overwhelming to your child — and to many adults. Each person develops interests and makes decisions at his or her own pace. Career planning is not a one-size fits all process.
- It's not unusual for a child to change his or her mind often about career choices. Most adults do this throughout their lifetime!
- Remember, **don't** constantly question or nag your child about career plans. Rather, ask your child about his or her interests, likes or dislikes. Then, use the discussion as a springboard to talk about how these things relate to future career plans.

Eventually, your son or daughter will want to make a decision about how to earn a living as an adult. When your child is ready to talk about the future, you should be prepared to discuss the various decisions that need to be made. Your contribution to your child's career planning is about being available for your child as it is about being knowledgeable about career opportunities.

# PLANNING FOR THE UNEXPECTED

---

Sometimes, unanticipated events in life alter career or work plans. Take the time to sit down with your son or daughter and share any unplanned events in your own life that impacted your work or career path. Emphasize the need to plan for the unexpected.



Below are some questions that will help you think about events which might have changed things for you.

- Was there ever a family crisis, such as divorce or personal injury that affected you?
- Did you ever receive an unexpected promotion that altered your career path?
- Did you go to college but dropped out for some reason?
- Did a serious illness, death or birth in the family change your career plans?
- Did receiving an unexpected inheritance or sum of money create a change?
- How did the arrival of a new boss or change in work policy affect your career plan?
- Were you planning to go to college but later decided you couldn't afford it?
- Did you transfer to a different college or change academic programs or majors?
- Did you plan on working for a friend or family member and have that fall through?
- Was there an unexpected relocation that impacted your career plan?
- Have you ever been laid off or work for a company that was being significantly restructured?
- Did your plans after high school work out exactly as you expected?



Reflect on your own life, do some brainstorming and emphasize the need for "Plan B." Remember: The more prepared teens are to overcome obstacles, the more likely they are to remain focused and become successful.

Adapted from  
***It's the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour in Your Teen's High School Career***  
[Ohio Department of Education]

# PREPARATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

---

Many students decide to go to college after high school. If this is their plan, they should start preparing while still in high school. Parents and their kids should read through the checklist below to see how to prepare for higher education.



**Do your best school work all of the time.** This means paying attention in class. If you're having a problem, ask for help from a teacher. Do homework and extra credit work when available. Work hard to learn. This will help you prepare for classes in college.



**Take the right classes.** To get into college, you need to take several English, writing, math, science and social studies courses. Colleges look for you to have taken these classes and done well in them. Other classes might be recommended, depending on your major.



**Finish high school.** In order to go to college, you've got to have a high school diploma or GED. You must go to school every day, stay in school and pay attention when you're there. When you're finished with high school, college will be waiting for you.



**Talk to people about their careers, which college they went to and how they paid for college.** If you know a career you're interested in, talk to people in that career. You might have to call them or ask a family member to help you meet people. But ask questions! Ask how many years they went to college and what advice they can give you about college and a career.



**Get involved in activities at school or in your community.** Being active in your community and at school helps you gain skills that last a lifetime and makes you part of the world around you. Volunteer, help people and work with others. When you get involved, you meet mentors who can help you throughout your life.



**Save a little money each day for college.** Start a savings account at a bank. When you get money, put some of it away instead of spending it all. You will have to pay for college. Financial aid is available, but saving is the best way to pay. Maybe you only have a small amount to save today, but it will add up! You can start a Arizona Family College Savings Plan. More information can be found at: [www.azhighered.org](http://www.azhighered.org) or [www.getreadyforcollege.org](http://www.getreadyforcollege.org)

Adapted from  
**Minnesota Office of Higher Education**



















# CAREER Planning RESOURCES

---



Helping your student with career and educational decisions are some of the most important and challenging responsibilities parents or guardians have. Its not always an easy task and you may feel that you don't have all the information you need.

This next section provides information, career tools and resources to successfully guide your child in career exploration. Most of the resources offer **FREE** information.

**Arizona Career & Educational Guide:** is a resource for career information. The publication includes Arizona specific occupational details, resources for career decisions, educational planning, Arizona schools, jobseeker resources, and more. *Arizona Career & Educational Guide* can be down loaded at: [www.ade.az.gov/cte/counselor](http://www.ade.az.gov/cte/counselor)

**ACareerOneStop:** is the nation's largest publicly funded resource for career information. CareerOneStop provides national, state and local labor market information at no cost to you. It includes America's Job ABank, America's Career InfoNet, America's Service Locator and many other education and career tools. [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

**O\*NET (The Occupational Information Network):** is a comprehensive source for occupational information. More than 900 occupations are described in detail, with the profiles of skills, knowledge and abilities in demand. Have your teen match their interests and values to occupations they are interested in by having them take the Interest Profiler or other online assessments. <http://online.onetcenter.org>

**No Child Left Behind:** This law was put in place in 2001 to ensure that every child is provided a solid education. There are many resources available at the Department of Education's website: [www.nclb.gov](http://www.nclb.gov) or go to the Arizona Department of Education's web site: [www.ade.az.gov/asd/](http://www.ade.az.gov/asd/)

**Career Info Net:** Links to references, popular links, and alternate website listings. [www.careerinfonet.org](http://www.careerinfonet.org)

**Arizona Tech Prep:** is dedicated to serving Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors and Tech students. Prep is a National educational initiative that involves restructuring traditional curricula and introducing new teaching approaches at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Viewed as one of the most innovative and effective educational reform efforts in American history, Tech Prep connects learning to career pathways and provides students with the knowledge, skills and behaviors they need to compete successfully in the technologically advanced 21st century workplace. The web site has tools and resources that deliver quality instruction and articulated programs between secondary and postsecondary institutions. [www.aztechprep.org](http://www.aztechprep.org)