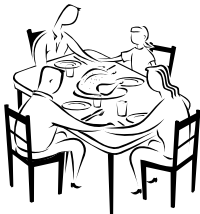




WHAT PARENTS CAN DO



1. Encourage your teen to investigate a variety of careers. Talk about work and your own job at the dinner table. Talk with friends and relatives about work when your children are present - but not complaints and gossip.



2. Stress to your teen that school is their work. Attendance is important. You don't take a day off from work just because you feel like it. The same goes for school.



3. Explore with your teen, without being judgmental, her or his personal talents, strengths, likes and dislikes. Ask: What do you like to do? What skills do you have? Do you like being around people? Do you prefer working outdoors or indoors? Do you like things neat and organized? Do you like to take things apart? Do you prefer school courses with a lot of "doing" or with a lot of reading? This process will help teens learn more about themselves, and highlight careers that best suit their interests and abilities.

4. Help your teen experience first hand as many different work situations as possible. Through school, your employer, your friends and relatives, get your teen to take advantage of both formal and informal work exposure programs. These include:
- Job shadowing - going through a day or two of work watching someone do his or her job.
 - Mentoring - being paired with a working adult for discussion of jobs and career likes and dislikes and to identify particular skills and knowledge an employee needs on the job.
 - Internships - a chance to work in a job with an employer for a few weeks or longer to learn more about a career field.
 - Youth apprenticeships - a work experience in a technical field that helps the apprentice begin to learn skills required to carry out a specific job.
 - Work-site Field Trips - Local Business field trips increase students' awareness of community and careers.

5. Provide as many opportunities as you can for your son or daughter to learn technology. This knowledge is essential for success in the workplace. Encourage your teenager to sign up for a computer literacy course in school, at the "Y" or through a youth group. If you don't have a computer your child may be able to use one at your local library. Find out what technology courses your school offers and talk them over with your teen. Taking such a course will give your student a much better understanding of today's technological world and a chance to take a hands-on look at the tools, techniques and skills involved in a range of careers.

6. Encourage your schools to expose students to career choices. Work through your parent/teacher organization or ask your teachers and administrators directly to provide students with career fairs, field trips and class speakers who focus on careers and career paths. Go with your teen to career fairs in your area. Find out what career information is available through your school. Many schools maintain extensive career reference libraries, including computerized resources. See if your student's guidance counselor can give him or her a career interest test.

Finding a career focus has a big payoff -

- If your teen is doing well, a career focus can make selecting a college and choosing a major easier.
- If your teen is struggling in school, a career focus can add purpose to his or her studies and give grades a lift.

7. Talk to your teen about a career as a goal of education. It's okay that teens usually don't know what they want to do for the rest of their lives. What's not okay is avoiding thinking about future career goals altogether. Preparing for a career is part of what education is about. Don't let your son or daughter get shortchanged.

8. Guide your teenager toward acquiring skills. Every employment opportunity requires people to use both head and hand skills. Encourage your teen to take courses that give him or her the opportunity to apply skills - like keyboarding, automotive technology, accounting, graphic design, construction, journalism, and marketing. These are equally important to both College-bound and Non college-bound teens.

9. Give your teen responsibility, the more the better. Begin with jobs around the house or for a neighbor or an older relative. Young people need to learn that we all have to carry our own weight - that we're all important and that people rely on us to get things done.

10. Suggest that your teen consider career opportunities that were once considered only for males or females. These are often excellent job opportunities for persons entering non-traditional career fields. It may take extra commitment to cross gender lines, but there are rewards.

11. **MONEY MANAGEMENT**

- Make sure that your child is learning about personal money management. If he/she is not learning it in school, you can be their best teacher.
- Help your child develop a spending plan for their time in school. This should include their income and expenses for school and personal living.
- Help your child learn how to effectively manage a checking and savings account.
- Have a talk with your child about credit cards and other credit arrangements including bank and other types of loans. Take a credit card application example from your "junk mail" pile and read through it with your child. Discuss the implications of signing on the dotted line and the expectations for payment when card/loan arrangements are made. How will using a credit card fit into their spending plan?
- Do everything you can to prevent your young adult from encountering their first financial crisis. It usually occurs when parents and kids have not completed a spending plan.