

PARENTS CAN HELP

Parents can have the greatest influence over their children's career choices.

- ✓ You have the best knowledge of your child's interests and abilities.
- ✓ You have the strongest interest in their well-being and success.
- ✓ You spend a great deal of time with them and can help to cultivate a variety of career considerations.
- ✓ You are one of their first role models. You can instill a positive view of all kinds of work and career planning.



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.

Adapted from
Many Doors to Opportunity
[Minnesota Department of Education]

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

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 and is a **teachable moment**. Work on creating new opportunities to discuss the future when:



Riding in the car or on the bus

Doing household chores or yard work



Eating a meal

Walking, bicycle riding or fishing



Playing games

Watching television



Putting puzzles together

Adapted from
Many Doors to Opportunity
[Minnesota Department of Education]

MY CHILD IS NOT INTERESTED ...



What if my child is simply not interested
in career planning?

- Decisions about the future can be overwhelming to you child – and to many adults, too! Each person develops interests and makes decisions at to 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 just as much about being available for your child as it is about being knowledgeable about career opportunities.

Adapted from
Many Doors to Opportunity
[Minnesota Department of Education]

TEN 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. To learn more about work-based learning, visit ISEEK at: www.iseek.org/sv/20204.jsp.
- 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]

GENERAL TIPS FOR ENCOURAGING TEENS

Below are some general tips when it comes to helping your teen with career decisions.



If your teen is interested in a certain class such as English, 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 worker in the career your teen is interested in and have your child spend part of the day with that worker, or contact your school's career coordinator to assist in arranging this.



Don't assume that your teen has to wait until college to decide on a career choice. The number one reason students drop out of college is lack of focus. And, the more undecided a college student is, the more likely they will need to spend extra money and years in college before choosing a field and earning a degree.



Businesses are very interested in an applicant's school record. They especially want to see the types of classes the candidate has taken and attendance records from high school. Remind your teen that employers and college admissions reps pay attention to tardiness and the amount of school missed when making admission or hiring decisions.

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

PLAN B: 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 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?
- Did you plan on working for a friend or family member and have that fall through?
- How did the arrival of a new boss or change in work policy affect your career plan?
- Did you ever receive an unexpected promotion that altered your career path?
- Have you ever been laid off or work for a company that was being significantly restructured?
- Was there an unexpected relocation that impacted your career plan?
- Did you go to college but dropped out for some reason?
- 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 major?
- 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.

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HOW PARENTS CAN HELP DEVELOP GOALS



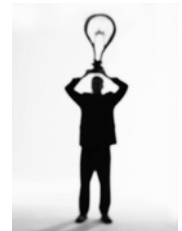
An important part of a child's development is the setting and achieving of goals.

Goals help to define your child's capabilities and work ethic.

- ✓ Set goals that encourage exploration and achievement. Read books, perform chores or try new art forms. All these activities have components that nurture career development.
- ✓ Have your son or daughter write down their goals. This makes goals more concrete and attainable.
- ✓ Young people live up to the expectations set for them. Be sure to set goals that are both realistic and challenging. Goals that are set too low may not be taken seriously. Goals that are set too high may result in discouragement and negatively impact self-esteem.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Always encourage your child to keep trying and be sure to praise your child for a job well done!

IDEAS*

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



Adapted from
Many Doors to Opportunity
[Minnesota Department of Education]

*IDEAS adapted from Quattrociochi, Susan M. and Peterson, Barbara
Giving Children Hope and Skills for the 21st Century (1996)

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP DEVELOP SELF-CONFIDENCE

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



- Provide positive reinforcement whenever possible; reward and praise your child's achievements.
- Teach your child the power of wise decision-making. You can show how good judgment leads to positive results by setting up achievable goals and tasks (saving money for a large purchase for instance).
- Become active in your child's choice of friends and activities; having positive friends and participating in constructive activities build a child's self-confidence.
- Take part in your child's activities — attend sporting events, plays and recitals. Drive them to movies, concerts and other outings.
- Be active in you 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 and school board meetings.

Eliminate Limitations

- Encourage your child to explore his or her own interests, capabilities and dreams. When children are excited about their future, they naturally develop the drive and persistence needed to make dreams come true.
- Keep an open, positive mind about their choices. The opportunities available to today's children are very different from what was available to you.
- Encourage your child to imagine how things will change in his or her lifetime. What are some job possibilities that will be needed in the future?

Discuss Success

Success can be defined in many ways: personal expression, self-fulfillment, family connections, financial independence, career achievement, social standing or community involvement, among others. A successful career is measured by much more than dollar signs or academic degrees.

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

Adapted from
Many Doors to Opportunity
[Minnesota Department of 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 both school and the workplace.

An **ability** is the capacity to do something well. Many of the abilities we develop at home and at school — mathematics, reading, writing, interpersonal communication, dexterity or artistic skills — are the same abilities needed for success in the job market.

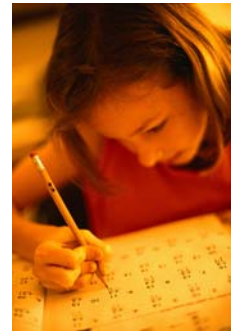
Abilities come in many forms. Some are specific and easy to demonstrate, like reading or mathematics. Others are not as easy, like getting along with others, solving problems, making decisions or being a team player. These abilities are equally important to employers who need employees who can work collaboratively, deal with unanticipated and changing circumstances and communicate effectively.

IDEAS*

- ❖ for better math scores ...
- ❖ for better readers ...
- ❖ for better thinkers ...
- ❖ for better team players ...

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.



DEVELOP ABILITIES, CONTINUED

FOR BETTER Readers

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



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 decisions, as appropriate for their age and maturity level.
- ❖ Give kids important jobs to do within the family or work on chores together.
- ❖ Teach them to get along with others.
- ❖ Emphasize the learning that takes place in groups, whether on school projects or team activities like sports, music, theater or volunteering.
- ❖ Practice mature conflict resolution.



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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. More than ever before, people must continually acquire and develop skills in order to be successful in the job market.

An important element about the changing jobs of tomorrow is the ability to work comfortably with technology. More and more jobs involve computers. People who use computers at work often earn more money than those who do not. So, encourage your child to try out different technologies, especially computers!

IDEAS*

- ✓ Identify the skills associated with occupations of interest to your child and relate these skills acquired through daily activities.
- ✓ Demonstrate how to schedule and perform household tasks.
- ✓ Maintain high standards for chores around 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 children that sometimes you, too, must sacrifice to do a good job.

IDEAS specific to high-tech skills

- ✓ Introduce your child to all aspects of work, including technology, business, artistic, social and customer service perspectives.
- ✓ Discuss new technologies and how they change our lives.
- ✓ Work with schools to ensure that creative, mathematical, scientific and people skills are taught.
- ✓ Discuss ways to improve products, processes and services with your children.
- ✓ Encourage your child to brainstorm solutions to technical and human problems.



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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 change the picture. 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 to get around obstacles 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 on your teen's career choice. The most important thing any parent or guardian can do is to be a positive role model.

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