

# How to Have Career Conversations with Your Kids

**W**hat do you want to be when you grow up?"

"So, what do you want to do with your life?"

"You know, you are going to have to work for a living. What are you going to do?"



What do you want to be when you grow up?

These are common questions, but they can be extremely overwhelming, especially for teens.



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Preparing your teen for the world of work is one of the most important things you will do as a parent. But, how do you talk to your kids about making career-related decisions?

Career planning is something we have to learn to do and there is a vast amount of information on this topic. The information in this publication should provide helpful direction to you and your kids.

One of the best strategies for talking about career planning is to wait until it comes up in conversation and then take the opportunity to talk about it further. Keep in mind that many teens don't want to have to think about working for a living, it can seem to be drudgery compared with their current lives.

Deciding on a career path is not always easy. It may not be a straight, planned out path. Usually it is more of a process that can start as early as a five-year-old saying she wants to be a teacher when she grows up. She wants to be a teacher because that is the job she sees people doing each day. Talking about what you have learned from your experiences working can be helpful in opening up dialogue with your teen.

## Conversation ideas:

**Talk about your education** and training background, your job, other jobs in your company, what you like about your job, and challenges in your job.

**Encourage your teen to talk** about what they like to do, hobbies they have, summer job experiences, and classes they enjoy. Tie these things to jobs and emphasize the importance of education and training in reaching these goals.

The idea isn't for your teen to choose one occupation, it is to help him or her understand the decision-making process.

**Talk about education and training** and the importance of learning fundamental skills at school. Point out how what they are learning now will create opportunities in the future.

**Has your teen taken a career or personality assessment?** Talk about jobs that relate to the outcomes.

**There are many misconceptions** about the world of work that we might have due to media. For example, one of the "hot" jobs for teens has been a CSI investigator because of the successful T.V. show. It is important for parents to help teens make a reality check on jobs such as rock star, actor, and even doctor without crushing their dreams.

**Finally, talk to your teens** about gaining work experience through summer jobs, volunteer opportunities, and visiting places of work that interest them. Explore with your teen; it will give you the perfect opportunity to talk with and assist them.