

Hands-On Career Exploration

What resources should my child use to explore occupations?

There are many different ways for your child to “try-on” occupations during the middle and high school years:

-  Have your child volunteer for organizations that hire people in his or her career interest area.
-  Let your child take part-time or summer jobs that relate to his or her career interest area.
-  Find someone who works in your child’s career interest area and arrange for your child to watch that person work for a day.
-  Help your child find an internship or work-based learning experience related to his or her career interest area. Your child may be able to get high school credit for this type of work experience.
-  Find out if your child’s high school offers vocational classes in the field in which he or she is interested.
-  Learn along with your children. Participate in *Take Your Child to Work* days; talk to them about their career interests, their goals and their passions; help them find the materials they need. Support and encourage their career and occupational exploration.



There are many resources to explore occupations. The career center or library in your child’s school may be the first place to start. Your child’s school or local library may also have a computerized Career Information Delivery System to provide data to your child. America’s Career Resource Network has a website to identify and explore occupations. The address is www.acrnetwork.org, click on *Career Development*.

For more information:

RI Labor Market Information Unit at: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi
and RI RED, Research and Economic Database at:
www.dlt.ri.gov/rired

Occupational Outlook Handbook online at:
<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/>

America’s Career InfoNet at: www.acinet.org

O*Net On-line at: <http://online.onetcenter.org>

Career Decision-Making, Georgia Career Info. System at:
www.gcic.peachnet.edu/CRN/careerMAIN.htm

Your Child’s Career, A Website for Parents at:
www.yourchildscareer.org/

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www.acrnetwork.org



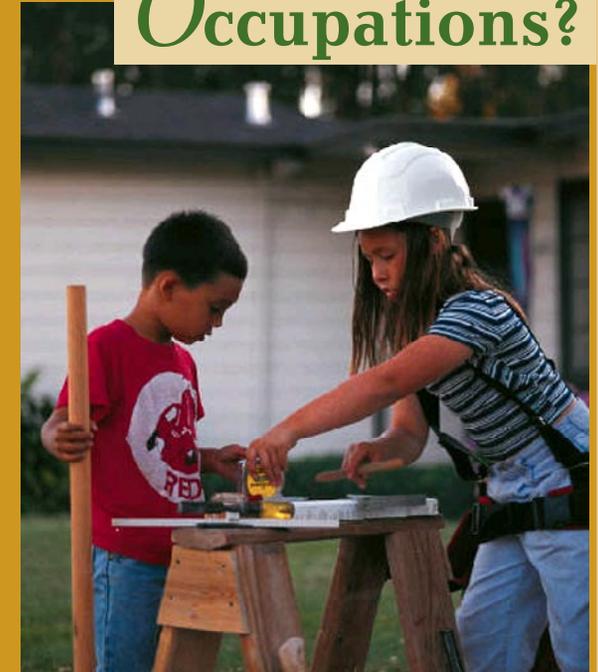
Rhode Island Department of
Labor and Training

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Occupation exploration can help your child achieve goals not yet dreamed...

Why should my child

Explore Occupations?



A parent’s guide to help their children explore occupations for their future

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Why should my child explore occupations?

For your child to make good career decisions, he or she must explore and investigate many occupations. Active participation in occupation exploration activities will help your child become aware of the many opportunities available and the steps that need to be taken to reach his or her career goals. Some advantages of occupation exploration include:

-  Understanding the work environments of interesting occupations;
-  Exposing your child to occupations he or she may have never considered; and
-  Discovering the types of post-high school education and training, as well as their costs, so your child does not waste time and money getting training unrelated to his or her career plan.



Start Exploring Early!

Occupation exploration should begin in elementary school. It should be a continual process throughout your child's school years.

Career development is a life-long process and your child's plans will probably change as he or she gathers more information. Exploring occupations does not mean that decisions have to be made and set in stone. It does mean that as your child makes decisions about his or her direction, those decisions will be based on concrete realistic information.

The number one reason students drop out of college is a lack of career focus. Also, the more undecided a college student is, the more likely he or she will need to spend extra money and years in college earning a degree.

How can my child begin the quest of exploring different occupations?

Occupation exploration begins with the awareness that different occupations exist. It continues with research and "trying out" several occupations. There are two ways to explore; one is to investigate and the other is to experience. Your child should engage in both.



Investigating Occupations: Your child should collect as much information as possible about several career options. Your child may be interested in occupations that are similar, such as an animal scientist, veterinarian and dolphin trainer; or your child may have wide-spread interests and want to explore occupations in a variety of fields, such as firefighter, mental health counselor and electrician. Whether your child's interests are focused or general, he or she will be able to create a more realistic educational and career plan by participating in occupation exploration activities.

Information about occupations that should be investigated include:

- What education does this occupation require?
- Where is the education/training available? Am I able to access the education/training needed to enter this occupation?
- What is the future outlook for this occupation?
- What is the path for advancement in the occupation?
- What other occupations are closely related to this occupation?
- What are the everyday tasks performed in this occupation?
- What are the normal work hours?
- Does this occupation require travel?
- What health and retirement benefits are generally found in this line of work?
- What are the typical wages for this occupation?
- Do I need to relocate to find a job?
- Do the tasks match my interests and values?

How can I help my child create a career portfolio?

A career portfolio is a collection of your child's academic and work experiences, career interest assessments and personal achievements. A career portfolio can encourage your child to keep a record of important academic and career information that he or she may need in the future.

Teachable Moment - Make a Career Portfolio

Help your child make a career portfolio using a file, envelope, journal, scrapbook or other storage device. As your child investigates occupations, encourage him or her to put copies of the information gathered into the career portfolio. The portfolio may also be a place your child can:

-  Record and save dates, places and duties performed in volunteer work, paid jobs, internships or work-based learning experiences. This information can be later transferred to a résumé or job application.
-  Record classes taken in middle and high school and grades received in those classes.
-  Store information about education and training research and the colleges or other training locations explored by your child.
-  Record results from interest and personality assessments.
-  Store records of awards, achievements or honors.
-  Record information about extracurricular activities.

When your child keeps career and educational exploration information in one place it will be easy to access when he or she is ready to apply to college, apply for a job or create a résumé. It will also help your child compare the information gathered in the occupation exploration process.