

How can I help my child explore a career?

Your child can participate in many career exploration activities during middle and high school including:

Informational interviewing - Encourage your child to call people who work in his or her chosen occupation and set up an informational interview. Important questions to ask include:

- ✓ What daily activities do you do on your job?
- ✓ How did you decide to choose this occupation?
- ✓ What kind of training did you need to enter this occupation?
- ✓ What do you like most about your work?
- ✓ What do you like least about your work?

Career fairs - Attend career fairs with your child to learn more about various occupations. Career fairs are offered in high schools, local colleges or by the local chamber of commerce.

www.dlt.state.ri.us/esu/esuevents.htm

Job shadow experiences - The more your child sees people in the work environment, the more informed he or she will be about possible occupations. Check the Rhode Island Junior Achievement web site to find out about "Groundhog Job Shadow Day". <http://ri.ja.org/>

Internships and work-based learning - These programs sometimes allow your child to gain high school credit while exploring his or her career interest area, and may be paid or unpaid experiences.

Volunteer work - Encourage your child to volunteer for a business or organization that provides jobs in his or her occupation interest area.

Vocational classes - If your child's high school offers vocational classes in an area that interests him or her, encourage your child to take those classes to get hands-on experience with the tools and skills used in the area of interest.

Field Trips - Field trips are another way for your child to see workers in various jobs. Before your child goes on a field trip, ask him or her to watch for different types of workers while on the field trip. Then discuss them with your child afterwards. You may also arrange a field trip, just for you and your child, to a business or organization that employs people in your child's chosen occupation.

Career Choice is a personal decision!

Do not try to steer your child to a particular job because you think it is something you might like.

Your child may change occupational interests as a result of increased exposure to occupations. Continue to encourage your child as career choices change - the more informed he or she is, the better his or her career decision will be.

For more information:

US Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook - www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm

Rhode Island Labor Market Information - www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi

The US Dept. of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O*Net) can be found online - <http://online.onetcenter.org> - Click on *Skills Search*.

America's Career InfoNet - www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp

This brochure was originally prepared by America's Career Resource Network (ACRN)

www.acrnetwork.org

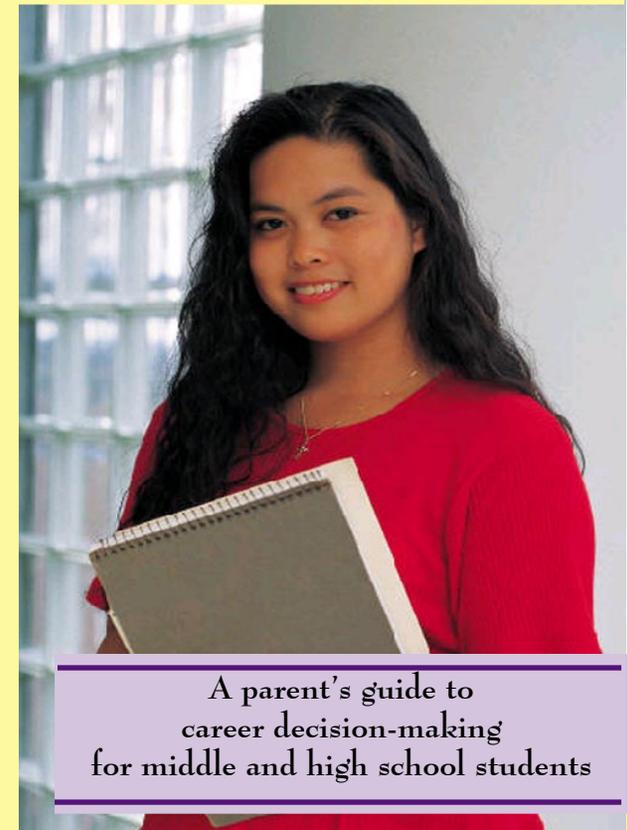


Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

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Your child has a long educational path toward his or her future

Help your Child make Career Decisions



A parent's guide to career decision-making for middle and high school students

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
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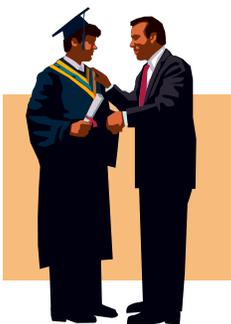
Why is my help important?

Great careers do not simply happen. That is why it is important for your child to make career plans. You are the best person to ensure that your child is making wise career choices.

- ✓ Research shows that parents have the greatest influence on their children's career choices.
- ✓ As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else does.
- ✓ You have more interest in helping your child choose a rewarding career than anyone else.
- ✓ Your child's future is too important to be left to "luck" or "chance."

Here are some important notes about your child's career decision-making process:

- ✓ Because of your child's limited knowledge about career opportunities, he or she needs guidance to choose the best educational and career path.
- ✓ Your child should explore many different occupations and think about what he or she likes and dislikes about each one before setting a career goal.



- ✓ It is important to have a career plan in place before investing time, energy and money in college.

How can I help my child make career plans?



Be an active partner with your child as he or she takes each of these steps. You can help:

Figure out your child's likes and dislikes as well as what he/she feels is important - Choosing the right career requires that your child understand his or her interests, personality, skills and values. There are many assessment instruments that career counselors use to help students identify their interests. You can also discuss the things your child likes and dislikes and how those preferences relate to career choices. For more information on interest assessments, see the "Helping your Child Identify Interests" at www.acrnetwork.org/parents/CIIdentifyInterests.htm.

Learn about occupations - It is important for your child to have as much information as possible about his or her career interests. Many career decisions are made with limited information, and this can result in wrong career decisions. Help your child gather written information about his or her career interests, talk with people who work in related occupations, and experience work in his or her chosen occupation. See the US Dept. of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O*Net) at <http://online.onetcenter.org/>. Click on "Skills Search."

Set primary and secondary goals - Your child may have a dream career in mind, but should also explore alternative goals as well. For example, if your child's primary career goal is to be a professional athlete, he or she should also consider other goals in the sports field such as sports medicine, sports promotion, coaching or physical education. It is always wise to have alternative goals.

Create and follow a plan - Help your child create an educational plan to reach his or her career goal. This includes carefully choosing courses to take in high school. Make sure that your child is well prepared for college or other post-high school training.

What information does my child need about occupations?

Assist your child in gathering information that will help determine if an occupation matches his/her personal interests, skills and values. Explore these questions with your child:

- ✓ What will I do in a typical workday?
- ✓ What preparation/education do I need?
- ✓ Where can I get training for this occupation?
- ✓ Will there be jobs available in the future, when I complete my training?
- ✓ How much does this job pay? An exercise in budgeting can help your child decide if he or she will be able to maintain the lifestyle of his or her choice on the expected salary.
- ✓ What knowledge and skills are used in this work?
- ✓ Are these knowledge and skill areas in which I am already strong, or will I need additional development? How do I get that development?
- ✓ What are the opportunities for advancement in this occupation?
- ✓ Is the work environment (indoors/outdoors, office/factory, groups/alone) one in which I work best?
- ✓ Does the work require physical activity, and am I willing and able to perform at the level required?

