

Career Development Tips for Parents of Middle School Students

1. Encourage your child to use the local library as a resource on careers and information gathering. Invite your child to help you to do research if you are conducting a job search yourself.
2. Have your employer sponsor learning activities at your child's school. For instance, if your employer is a bank and you are a bank teller, provide assistance to the students and teachers by helping them to establish a school bank. Prior to starting the bank at the school, arrange a tour of your worksite.
3. Help organize field trips for your child's class related to the world of work.
4. Participate in parent involvement activities at your child's school, particularly those related to career exploration.
5. Have your child volunteer for a charity or community organization. This will encourage your child to be of service to the community and develop interpersonal and organizational skills.
6. Make your child aware of the connection between education and careers. Talk about how you apply your own education to your daily work.
7. Discuss with your child the changing nature of the job market and work. Discuss the shift in downsizing and rise in temporary workers as compared to the past.
8. Encourage your child to find summer and seasonal employment. Evaluate the job application and give feedback on communication skills if an interview is involved.
9. Plan leisure time activities that explore interests, abilities and skills.
10. Urge schools, employers and businesses in your community to encourage and reward academic achievement.
11. Make presentations or speeches at your child's school during Career Day.
12. Allow your child or other students to shadow you for a day at your workplace. (Shadowing is when a student attends work with an adult for a day to learn more about a career in which he/she is interested.)
13. During vacations, work with your child to explore the occupations and careers that are abundant in your community. Review newspapers and attend business and community meetings.

14. Read the newspaper together: What are the headlines? What are the jobs of people in the news? Examine the business section. What companies are growing? Increasing their workforce? Developing new products? Exploring new territory? What school subjects are related to the businesses mentioned? Is it a favorite subject for your child? Review job ads. Discuss qualifications and their relation to academics.
15. Have your child take an interest inventory. What does your child think about the results?
16. Keep a portfolio on your child. Encourage your child to choose its contents. Suggest such things as school activities, interest inventory results, schoolwork samples, special accomplishments, report cards, extracurricular activities, volunteer activities, etc.
17. Involve and encourage friends, relatives and acquaintances to talk to your child about skills and values they see in the workplace.
18. Review four types of work with your child: human (deals with activities requiring interactions between people), enterprise (involves industrious and systematic activities, especially those of large scope and complexity), invention (involves study and experimentation which leads to a new device, method or process), or technology (the application of scientific knowledge). Identify several jobs that fall into each type of work. What type of work is your child most attracted to?