



Talk About the Future with your child!

All parents want their children to grow up and be as successful as possible in whatever they decide to do. It helps to start early, talking with your child about what they want to be when they grow up. Here are some more ideas to take the conversation further.

For children ages 5-7

- Ask your child what they like about that career, what makes it seem interesting or exciting? Whom do they know who does that work?
- Discuss with your child what types of things they will do in that job.
- What do you like to do more – talk or listen?
- Ask your child what they think they would need to know to do that job. Who could teach them?
- Ask your child what they like best (and least) about school.
- Ask your child who their favorite teacher is and why.
- Listen to your child. Take cues and keep the conversation going.

For children ages 8-10

- Connect your child's passions with a future career—it may be writing, it may be video games—encourage your child to follow his/her dreams.
- Ask your child who they look up to and why. Who do they want to be like when they grow up?
- Ask your child "What would you want to do?" Follow up by asking who could teach them to do that thing.
- Talk about various family members and what they do for work. Encourage family members to share their career path when together for family events.
- Help with homework. Working together might help unlock potential future interests.
- Ask your child who their favorite teacher is and why.
- Listen to your child. Take cues and keep the conversation going.

For children ages 11-12

- Talk with your child about your favorite subjects when you were in school.
- Discuss your child's favorite subjects and ask why they like them.
- Take your child to a local college while students are there. Many events at college campuses are free, and can be a great way to expose your child to a campus.
- Talk with your child about how people pay for college. Let them know that there may be money available from sources beyond the family, including schools and colleges, the federal and state government, private organizations, and sometimes employers.
- Ask them how they like to learn something new. Is it by having someone talk about it, by reading about it, by watching a video? This can help you understand your child's preferred learning style.
- Ask your child who their favorite teacher is and why.
- Listen to your child. Take cues and keep the conversation going.

For teens ages 13-18

- Talk with your teen about what you wanted to be when you grew up, why it interested you and why you either ended up following that dream or a different one.
- Discuss your career path. Make sure to tell your child how education after high school played a part in your life.
- Talk with your child about how grades really matter starting freshman year. Talk about how extracurricular activities can help them get into schools or sharpen an interest.
- Relate their chosen career to the type of education that is required: certificate, associates, bachelors or beyond and what type of school they want to attend.
- Talk with your child about the different types of schools (2 yr., 4 yr., trade, etc.) Discuss how they are different from one another.
- Try to determine what type of educational setting is best for them—ask questions like “Do you like knowing everyone you see each day or do you like meeting new people on a regular basis?”
- Start discussing how much money will be available for tuition and scholarship possibilities—an honest talk now could set realistic expectations and help your child reduce education borrowing.
- Listen to your child. Take cues about why this is a passion and keep the conversation going.

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