

10 Ideas To Help Parents Talk Careers With Their Teens

Career Coaching
Information for Parents



Chamber of Commerce
and Industry WA

**Your
parental
support and
coaching is
vital**



A career is a lifelong journey

In the 21st century, very few people will have one job for life. Young people can expect to make several changes and reconfigure their career throughout their lifetime.

For any individual, finding the right career is a process of trial and error that requires lots of exploration along the way.

Our careers are influenced by many things, such as our interests, age, education, families, our cultural values, and economic, geographical and societal conditions, most of which change over time.

With the likelihood of several changes, as opportunities and events occur along the way, a career is something much larger than a job or an occupation.

It's up to each young person to actively manage the process of building their career, rather than just letting it happen. They will need to plan and manage their lifelong career journey. They, with your assistance, are the best person suited to make choices on the basis of their own skills, knowledge and interests.



1. Parents hold the key

“Only 20% of parents feel they currently have sufficient knowledge of employment and training options to help their child make a decision about what to do after leaving school.”

(Acknowledgement: Brotherhood of St Laurence)



Making decisions about future career pathways can be both an exciting and confusing time for young people.

Teens are influenced by parents when considering career pathways. Research, both in Australia and overseas, has found that parents are one of the most commonly consulted and influential sources of career information and advice for young people.

The complexity and competitiveness of today's labour market often requires you as parents to be able to coach your young person. There is no doubt that school provides a solid foundation to prepare young people for a job, but it's also important for young people to start building skills for the workforce outside of the education system.

It is important to help your teen build core skills for long term career success. These include: communication, decision making, meeting expectations, multi-tasking, managing stress, making a great impression, coping with difficult people and solving problems.

Parents, you hold the key.

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2. Tips before you approach your teen about careers

Let them find out the pros and cons of a particular occupation for themselves, as opposed to telling them. This helps them to learn responsibility, good decision making and to develop resilience.

As we know, parents play a range of roles when parenting their teens. From the teacher to the enforcer, parents can wear different hats at different times when interacting with their teen to guide and develop them.

Parents should take a flexible approach when discussing careers with their teens. The time will be dependent on their temperament, age and situation. The challenge for parents is to make sure you wear the right hat in the appropriate situation.

Choose a time to speak to your teen about careers when you are both in an open frame of mind.

Most teenagers will not want to perceive that your interest is to plan their lives for them, but will appreciate you working with them to plan their career goals. Listen to their thoughts and ideas, and help them to explore the world of careers.

To start the career exploration process:

- **Be aware of your reactions** to your teenager's ideas, and their extracurricular interests and activities. Dismissing ideas will prevent your teen from exploring all their options.
- **The way parents talk about jobs** can impact enormously on teenagers. If parents are negative about work, continually complaining about the people, the hours, or their boss, teenagers may think that work is an awful place.
- Make sure your teenager feels that any **decisions are theirs**, with your support. Taking responsibility **for important life decisions** is a significant step towards becoming an adult.
- Encourage your teenager to **research opportunities** and take advantage of help available from school and other community services. Seeking ideas and suggestions from more than one person can be helpful, and may ease the pressure on you. The course counsellor or careers advisor at school may know about options you have not heard of, and they are there to let you and your teenager know what is available.

- Encourage your teenager to **participate in community activities** through volunteer work, sporting clubs and other organisations. This can be a great way of getting to know more about a particular area of work, and what your teen’s strengths and weaknesses are.
- **Help your teenager to think about planning for the future.** Most goals require some planning, even things like buying a particular piece of clothing or a new skateboard. Saving up for a car purchase provides an opportunity for your teen to work out how to plan.
- Let your teenager know **you are interested in their goals and dreams.** Your support will encourage them to value their individual goals, and realise that they are worth working towards. Encourage them to ask important questions about themselves and the world of work.

The 7 Hats of Confident Parents



Teaching hat



Supportive hat



Listening hat



Firm Parent hat



Protective hat



Playful/fun hat



Encouraging hat

Adapted from Parenting ideas – parentingideas.com.au



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3. Help to identify their likes and dislikes

In today's digital world, there are many useful online tools, tests and activities to assist your teen explore careers.



To find satisfying careers young people need to know their own interests, abilities and values. As parents we can assist them to identify who they are, so a range of careers can be explored.

Tread carefully when discussing this with your teenager. We all need a balance with hobbies for enjoyment and relaxation. You will need to make sure your teenager understands the difference between having a hobby and earning a living from that hobby.

Play the Questions Game

Here are some easy activities for you and your teen to work through together to compliment online research.

Who am I?

To get your teenager thinking about what their interests are, you could ask these questions:

- a) How do you like to spend your free time?
- b) Are there activities you take part in that makes you lose track of time?
- c) What do you currently think your ideal job could be?
- d) What kind of subjects at school do you most enjoy doing?

Ask them to think about their achievements in the past, for example:

- a) Have you volunteered at a community event?
- b) Have you written a poem or story that was published?
- c) Have you won any awards at school or through sporting clubs?

TIP! Clues to determine their interest, likes and strengths may be found in their:



- Hobbies
- The items or activities they save for?
- What activities they do with their friends?
- Favourite school subjects
- Favourite TV Shows/internet downloads
- Sporting interests

What do you enjoy doing?

Ask your teenager to compile a list of their interests, likes and strengths. The list might include statements like these:

- I enjoy being with people
- I like writing and/or reading
- I like caring for plants/animals
- I like to watch TV shows about lawyers
- I like fixing things
- I prefer being outdoors

Pursuits/Interests	Preferred subjects at school	Other likes

What do you not enjoy doing or have no interest in?

Ask your child to compile a list of the things they are really not interested in, weaknesses and subject areas they really don't like. The list might include statements like these:

- I do not enjoy working on projects alone
- I do not like playing soccer
- I do not enjoy Social Studies
- I do not like being inside all day

Pursuits/Interests disliked	Weaker subjects at school	Other dislikes

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4. Personality Career Quiz

Career assessments are tools that provide a methodical system to gather information to help make informed decisions, based on interest and personality traits. They can be helpful in narrowing down the types of careers your teen might be interested in or at least give a starting point to begin their career research.

Why don't you get your teenager to have a go at the sample quiz below?

Circle one response from each question that relates the most to you:

When it comes to hangin out with friends...

- A You're happy to be the organiser to get friends together.
- B You are laid back about making plans with friends and just like to do whatever, whenever.
- C You plan which bus to catch to the movies.
- D You need to feel that all your friends include you in the group.

When you are with friends...

- A You notice things that others might not, like a friend that has a new haircut or new sports gear.
- B You listen more than talk. You enjoy hearing about what your friends have to say.
- C You like to share new things that you have discovered with your friends.
- D You talk to your friends about your feelings and emotions.

When meeting up with friends...

- A You are always on time to meet with friends and wonder why others aren't.
- B You hate having to be at a certain place at a certain time and are often late for catch ups.
- C You enjoy being the person who comes up with the ideas on what you should do and where you should meet.
- D You would not tell your friends if you didn't like the plan they came up with to meet up, but say that you liked what you all did last time you got together instead.

When playing games for fun...

- A You play games according to the rules.
- B You like to play games - but with rules that feel right at the time.
- C You look at the rules and try to come up with some different versions.
- D You offer help and support to your friends when playing games.

When it comes to hanging out with friends...

- A You plan your social catch ups well ahead of time.
- B You love friends dropping in unannounced - it's a great surprise.
- C You will only hang out with friends once you have finished all your homework, even when they are doing something really fun.
- D You like to tell your friends how much they mean to you and you like them telling you how much they enjoy hanging out with you too.

When it comes to school work...

- A At school you work steadily and always hand your work in on time.
- B You like to work on lots of projects at once.
- C You hate doing the same type of work tasks over and over again.
- D You enjoy having your teacher help you with your work - it's good to be able to ask lots of questions to complete a task.

You like projects or subjects at school that...

- A Allow you to finish one project before starting another.
- B Let you work with different tools.
- C Ask you to complete inventive or creative projects.
- D Get you to work in teams with others.

The best classes at school are...

- A** Subjects that stick to a strict timetable so you know exactly what is due and when.
- B** The ones run by teachers that seem to wing their class plans and come up with ideas as they go.
- C** The ones where you can ask lots of questions and can explore new ideas, concepts or theories.
- D** When you can get lots of help and attention from your teachers.

When it comes to your school work...

- A** You organise your workload well so you don't have to rush to get homework, assignments or projects finished.
- B** You like distractions from the usual daily process, like a teacher saying you are going outside today to play sport when you thought you were going to be doing maths.
- C** You like to further investigate projects or problems you have enjoyed at school, just because you can. You enjoy the discovery.
- D** You like to be told that you are doing a good job and doing well.

When it comes to listening to instructions...

- A** You listen closely and like to know what is arranged prior to undertaking tasks.
- B** You listen to instructions but will often put off doing tasks until the last minute. You complete your best work when you are under pressure with a deadline.
- C** You take instructions lightly and like the freedom to explore what inspires you.
- D** You like doing what you are told to do.



If you scored mainly A's

You might find some of these attributes fit your personality:

Loyal, dependable, prepared, thorough, sensible, punctual, faithful, stable, organised, caring, concerned, a natural preserver, a good citizen and helpful.

Key Skills:

Drawing on experience and knowledge to serve others; Taking care of others through service and support; Gathering information to produce results; Devising and implementing a workable plan.

You might like to consider these occupations:

Accountant	Dentist	Nurse/Nurse Assistant
Military Officer	IT Consultant	Administrative Assistant
Sales Assistant	Teacher/Teacher's Aide	Bookkeeper
Insurance Broker	Office Manager	Human Resource Advisor
Customer Service Officer	Community Worker	Retail Owner
Police Officer	Hospitality Worker	Health Worker
Lawyer	Engineer	Construction Worker
Child Care Worker	Travel & Tourism Operator	Real Estate Agent
Social Work/Counsellor	Librarian	Health & Safety Advisor
Doctor	Interior Decorator/ Painter	



If you scored mainly B's

You might find some of these attributes fit your personality:

Witty, charming, spontaneous, impulsive, generous, optimistic, eager, bold, physical, resourceful, a natural trouble-shooter, competitive.

Key Skills:

Practical application of technical expertise; Using practical skills to respond to changing needs; Realising a mission or purpose by using practical skills; Using practical skills to add enjoyment and value to life.

You might like to consider these occupations:

Engineer	Pilot	Truck Driver
Medical Therapist	Driver	Physiotherapist
Social Worker	Delivery Motorcyclist	Digger Driver
Carpenter	Veterinarian	Fashion & Beauty Assistants
Animal Trainer	Vet Nurse	Small Business Owner
Pharmacist	Entrepreneur	Medical Technician
Artist/Musician	Early Childhood Teacher	Athlete
Fire Fighter	Counsellor	Wildlife Carer
Mechanic	Real Estate Agent	Forest Ranger
Fashion Designer	Travel & Tourism Operator	Conservationist
Hairdresser	Telecommunication	Farmer/Primary Producers
Paramedic	IT Consultant	



If you scored mainly C's

You might find some of these attributes fit your personality:

Analytical, broad thinker, cool, calm, inventive, logical, perfectionist, abstract, investigative, a natural non-conformer, a visionary, problem solver.

Key Skills:

Devising new strategies to implement a plan; Exploring and analysing possibilities to solve problems; Implementing a plan and setting visionary goal; Innovating to create diverse processes and solutions.

You might like to consider these occupations:

Scientist and Chemist	Mathematician	Vet Nurse
Architect	Lawyer	Wildlife Carer
Engineer	Forensic Researcher	Forest Ranger
Business Analyst	Writer	Medical Technician
Teacher	Veterinarian	Researcher
Engineer Technician	Lab Technician	Archaeologist
IT Consultant	Conservationist	



If you scored mainly D's

You might find some of these attributes fit your personality:

Enthusiastic, sympathetic, personal, warm, communicative, compassionate, idealistic, spiritual, sincere, peaceful, flexible, imaginative, a natural nurturer.

Key Skills:

Visualising and adapting solutions to help others; Using ideas and innovation to serve a mission or purpose; Motivating others by finding innovative ways to reach potential; Creating opportunities for positive change.

You might like to consider these occupations:

Social Worker/ Counsellor	Artist	Marketing/ Advertising Officer
Charity Worker	Photographer	Entrepreneurs
Teacher	Events Coordinator	Tour Guide
Creative Arts Director	Psychologist	Musician
Child Welfare Officer	Special Needs Education Assistant	Public Relations Officer
Naturopath	Communications/ Media Advisor	Actor
Priest	Hospitality Worker	Television Reporter
Human Resource Advisor	Writer/Journalist	Retail Worker
		Careers Counsellor



Give them 5 key messages

A team of experienced career development practitioners have come up with five key messages that will help you to support a young person's career learning. Known as the "High Five" of Career Development, these messages will help if the young person you are assisting doesn't yet have an answer to the question, "What career pathway are you going to take?"



1. Change is constant

Taking a flexible approach when planning a career can greatly assist when unexpected changes happen. Making plans are great - just be prepared to adjust them along the way.



2. Follow your heart

Encouraging a young person to dream of a future full of different types of career choices, enables them to explore and expand their career possibilities. What may appear to be an unconventional or unrealistic choice may just be the very thing that materialises into a career.



3. Focus on the journey

Enjoying the journey to your child's career destination is vital. Whilst outcomes are important, remembering to explore and experiment with different career paths can be productive and lots of fun.



4. Keep learning

Keeping up-to-date and adapting to change is important in today's environment. Learning comes from many experiences not only from school or workplace training, but also from everyday activities such as using social network sites, being part of a community group, sporting teams and family members.



5. Be an ally

While wanting young people to be self-directed we also want them to feel supported. Being a career "ally" is part of being a support network for those who are exploring career paths. These support networks can consist of parents, youth workers, neighbours, family, friends, and employers, and can be a terrific support for a young person when making career choices.

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6. Understanding education and training pathways

Your teen's choices as they head into Year 11 and 12 can be confusing. While there are many options, classes, subjects and ways to complete high-school, parents need to understand the basics.

West Australian Certificate of Education (WACE)

In Western Australia, all students who complete Year 12 and have met a set standard during Year 11 and 12, receive their WACE at the end of Year 12. Attaining a WACE is important as it is often the minimum requirement to be considered for lots of jobs and courses in further education.

Students can mix and match their options to provide themselves with the best platform to meet these requirements to achieve their WACE -and for life beyond school.

In year 10 students have the opportunity to choose what they will study in Year 11 and 12. For more information on requirements please go to the School Curriculum Standards Authority (SCSA) website: scca.wa.edu.au/publications

Achievement of your child's WACE acknowledges that at the end of their compulsory schooling they have achieved or exceeded, the required minimum standards in an educational program that has suitable breadth and depth.

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)

ATAR courses are higher level subjects that prepare students for university study. On the completion of ATAR courses, students receive a combined score which allows them to be considered for university entrance. The higher the ATAR score achieved, the more choice students will have in regards to courses and universities to go to. Universities set minimum entrance scores, making some courses very competitive to get into. Important to note that Business and Industry look for students that study high level English and Maths regardless of the pathway your teen takes.

Vocational Education Training in Schools (VET)

Students' studying VET in school may be required to complete mandatory industry-related workplace learning. They can undertake full or partial Certificate I, II, III or IV, in the business/industry area they choose to work towards achieving a nationally recognised qualification. Certificates can be completed after your teenager has finished school, either full time at a training provider or as an apprenticeship/traineeship. If your teenager is looking at going straight into work once they have completed high-school, looking at options of completing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship or pre-apprenticeship is a good idea. School-based apprenticeships/traineeships allow students to start their training whilst still finishing school and obtaining a WACE.



7. Employability skills

“Employers today are looking for employees that have real life work experience.”

(Acknowledgement: CCIWA Business Member)

The average teenager uses a multitude of skills every day whilst pursuing their school and leisure activities. However, teenagers often do not realise that these skills they are developing can be applied in the world of work. They need to build a 'skills language' that allows them to describe what they've learned and explain what they are able to do.

We tend to think of skills as experiences gained through a job. While this is definitely one of the best ways to develop technical skills, it doesn't necessarily reflect the non-technical skills or soft skills you build while at school. Skills are things you have learnt to do. You will have skills at various different levels: high, moderate and low. The more you practice, the more your skills levels will heighten.

Helping your teenager understand their skill set, as well as how to talk and write about skills is critical. This is the link to employment.

Employers are looking for the set of skills referred to as employability skills when employing young jobseekers. These include:

- **Communication** – Writing and forming clear messages; speaking and listening; understanding; interpreting; getting the message across; and presenting.
- **Working with others** – Self-awareness; building rapport; cooperating and collaborating; recognising different perspectives; responding to and utilising diverse perspectives; and managing conflict.
- **Working within protocols** - Understanding roles and responsibilities; operating within legal conforms; and recognising and responding to policies.
- **Planning and organising** – Planning and organising workload and commitments; planning and implementing tasks; and time management.
- **Making Decisions** - Establishing decision making scope; applying decision-making processes; and reviewing impact of decisions.
- **Identifying and solving problems** - Identifying problems; applying problem-solving processes; and reviewing outcomes.
- **Creating and Innovating** - Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas; generating ideas; and selecting ideas for implementation.
- **Digital Literacy** - Using digitally based technologies and systems; connecting with others; accessing; organising and presenting information; and managing risk.



8. Talking skills

Start by making a regular habit of talking to your teen about what they are doing in school or in recreational activities.

Getting your teen to talk about skills regularly, will help them when they are looking for jobs and understanding what employers are asking for in job ads.

Discuss curriculum topics, class projects, reports and tests they have completed. Ask them to describe their learning activities and the process they went through to achieve their goal. If you can re-frame their activities as skills, they may see them that way too.

When your teen gets the opportunity to undertake an interview and the interviewer asks them to name their strengths and give examples, they'll be better prepared to answer the questions.

For example, if they put away their clean clothes, or plan their homework around favourite TV shows, they are good at time management, planning and organisation. If they are always home at curfew, they are respectful, responsible and dependable.

Play the skills game

Get your teen to start thinking about how they would or how others often describe them.

Here is a list to get them thinking:

Respectful	Creative	Loyal
Motivated	Consistent	Works well in teams
Honest	Passionate	Organised
Inspirational	Takes Initiative	Hard-working
Practical	Conscientious	Adaptable
Reliable	Enthusiastic	Self-Aware
Persistent	Have leadership qualities	Clever
Precise	Analytical	Punctual

Get your teen to answer this question:

“When I complete tasks or participate in activities, I mostly get described like this...”

Write down four descriptors:

1.	2.	3.	4.

Finding your soft skills

Get your teen to list 4 descriptors identified in the activity template below.

Get them to think about a time where they have completed a task that has led them to be described in this way. These are the types of examples employers are looking for in interviews when candidates make statements on their abilities.

For example:

Skill	Reliable	Organised
Example	I turned up on time to an appointment by preparing beforehand by checking the route, the bus/train timetable and allowing time for delays.	I gathered all that was required to complete my homework and stayed focused to finish the task. I even said “no” to my friends invite. Upon finishing my task I checked my work and remembered to put the homework paper in the right folder and put the folder inside my backpack so it was ready for the next day.

Now you have a go:

Skill

1.

2.

Example



Skill

3.

4.

Example



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9. Handy Resources

There are lots of information sources and support available to assist parents to be valuable career coaches!

SKILLSROAD

skillsroad.com.au

Skillsroad is a great career development website with a bunch of tools, activities and tests to help you explore your career options. If you aren't sure what you want to do, Skillsroad is the perfect place to start!



jobsandskills.wa.gov.au

Western Australia's Jobs and Skills Centres are staffed by people who can provide free professional and practical careers advice, support, information and assistance on training and employment. Services are free, and accessible to all members of the community. The centres are located on thirteen TAFE campuses throughout Perth and regional WA, with additional outreach locations for regional areas.



myfuture.edu.au/

myfuture assists young Australians with career planning, career pathways and work transitions. myfuture is the result of a collaborative project, supported by industry and governments at both federal and state levels.

JOB OUTLOOK

joboutlook.gov.au/

Job Outlook is your online guide to careers and trends in the jobs market. It can help you find careers that match your interests, experience or skillset, and has information to help you discover jobs, study or training pathways.

Recommended reading: Your Boss's Boots, by Peter Coronica.

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10. Tips to remember

Help your young person to be self-aware of what their interests, skills, abilities and values are. Help them to find their motivators for long term success.



You are not on your own. There are lots of places to get additional support and career advice assistance from.

Follow up with your teen's school VET coordinator, course counsellor or careers adviser; contact Universities and training providers; or contact the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of WA to get the help you need to support your teen in making informed decisions.

Our top 10 tips

1. It's important that your teenager achieves the highest level of Maths, Science and English that they are able to before leaving school. These foundation skills support on-going learning at TAFE, University, and in the workplace.
2. If your teenager has a goal of going to university, make sure that their Year 11 and 12 subjects align with the university course of choice as much as possible. It will make their first year at university easier. i.e. doing Economics and Accounting in Year 12 will make the first year units of a Bachelor of Business or Commerce much easier!
3. The higher the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) score, the greater the choice of universities and courses that will be available to your teen.
4. It is possible for your teen to do a mixture of ATAR and Vocational Education & Training (VET) courses to achieve their WACE.
5. To get into university, your teenager will need to complete a minimum of four ATAR courses and two general or foundation courses in Year 12 to achieve an ATAR ranking for university.
6. If your teenager wishes to go straight into the workforce after school it is a good idea to explore a School-based Traineeship or a Pre-apprenticeship whilst still at school to get ahead.
7. A Certificate II qualification from a RTO is a basic qualification that can lead to further skill development i.e. Certificate III, Certificate IV or Diploma. A Certificate II isn't designed to deliver an employment outcome.
8. If your teenager is planning to go University or TAFE make sure they do their research on which institution and course will be best for them. Remember that institutions are businesses too and are selling you a product.
9. Digital literacy will be essential to succeed, irrespective of what career your teen decides to choose. A significant number of highly skilled jobs will become digitised.
10. It's never too late to get back into study. If your teen wants to take a gap year to travel or work, further education will be there when they return.

Acronyms

AASN: Australian Apprenticeship Support Network

ATAR: Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank

CCIWA: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia

RTO: Registered Training Organisation

SCSA: School Curriculum and Standards Authority

SBT: School-based Traineeship

VET: Vocational Education Training

WACE: Western Australian Certificate of Education



About us

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia (CCIWA) is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation providing quality, cost-effective information, services, and support for employers.

Our members include a diverse group of businesses, both large and small, across all industries.

CCIWA's commitment is to employers and the principles of free enterprise. As the peak body representing businesses, CCIWA does collectively for business and industry what individual employers struggle to achieve alone.

CCIWA considers the business community to have a strong role to play in working with youth, students and graduates, to develop the workforce of the future.

Contact us

Freecall: 1300 4CCIWA (22492)

Email: students@cciwa.com

Website: cciwa.com/students

Connect with us Facebook:

Students@CCI

Apprenticeship Support Australia

WIL at Curtin

Skillsroad

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