

# 8 Tips for Parents to Assist a Child's Career Path Decision

Navigating a career path is a tough gig for young people these days with seemingly more choices than ever.

Here are our 8 top tips to support your child in making the right decision for them!

## 1. THE CAREER CHAT

When having the 'career-path' conversation with your child, make sure you set aside allocated time and engage in 'active listening'. This involves being completely present, listening to what they say but also how they say it. For instance, signs of emotion (excitement in their eyes or a suddenly animated tone) or the use of emotion-words like 'I love it when...' or 'I feel sad for...' These clues allow you to ask further questions that can help your teenager explore what kind of work they may be interested in.

## 2. IT'S ALL ABOUT THEM, NOT YOU

It's easy to reminisce about what could have been your dream career path (once upon a time) and fall into the dangerous belief that your child could fulfil that lost dream for you. Not good for anyone. That's right up there with trying to influence career choices that are all about impressing your friends - 'oh Johnny has just enrolled in Biochemical Engineering at Bond University'. 'Whoop-di-doo-da to that', you should say (perhaps to yourself).

## 3. RESEARCH PEOPLE THEY ADMIRE

You can talk to them about your career path and what it was like for you but just remember that they are most likely typical teenagers and striving to be as far not you as possible. If you honestly can't help yourself, keep it really short – like 'I started as the site cleaner and over time worked my way up to site manager'. Another option is to research people they admire – they are sure to be inspired by the often surprising twists and turns a career path can take. Here are just some [celebrities who started their careers completely differently](#).

## 4. NEVER DISMISS AN IDEA

Never dismiss a career path choice they are considering (with words or your body language). For example, if they say they are interested in becoming a hip-hop dancer or a video-game animator, do not roll your eyes or sigh. Instead, ask them further questions like 'what kind of training will you need to become that?' or 'what interests you about that work?' They may well do further research and either decide it is not for them or find career possibilities aligned to that industry, for instance stage production or software development. And who knows, they could also go on to star in 'Step Up 10 – All the Way'! The moral to this tip is, step out of their way...

## 5. CAREERS EXPOS

Take them to careers expos – they can gather heaps of information from people who are there purely to talk about industry careers. You can often try-a-trade (even virtually!) and bring home heaps of brochures and lots of free give-aways, so all-in-all, it's not a bad day out.

## 6. VOLUNTEER OR WORK EXPERIENCE

Encourage them to volunteer or find work experience – not only does this give extra kudos on their resume, volunteering can give them early insight into the working world, teaching them valuable skills like working in a team and making a positive impact.

## 7. TO LEAVE OR NOT TO LEAVE? THERE ARE OPTIONS

Not everyone enjoys the school system, for various reasons. If your teenager wants to leave school before completing Year 12 there are plenty of other options including completing their high school equivalent or university entrance elsewhere (eg TAFE). They could also head straight into the workforce with the options of gaining industry training through an apprenticeship or traineeship. Before contemplating leaving school they may also consider a School-based apprenticeship or traineeship which could give them the practical, real-world work experience, while still undertaking their schooling part time. Many students have found that a new sense of career and workplace direction has renewed their confidence and happiness at school.

## 8. LOOKING FOR WORK

Whether they are at school or have moved onto further study and looking for a part time gig or they have left school and are looking for a full time job, they are going to need help with their resume, job applications and interview skills. We've got some handy resources here to support their success. It's great to get some work experience for their resume and will help them stand out against other young people when applying. This is where prior work experience, volunteering or any part time work they have previously completed will show employers they have motivation and acquired workplace skills.

As they say, the true path to career success is never a straight line and getting your first start is perhaps one of the most important career moves ever.

Check out our [other resources](#) to support young people into work