

The Future

Help Your Child Make Career Decisions

Helping your child plan for a positive, successful future is a vital parenting role. It is really important for parents whose children have gotten off-track or are involved with the juvenile justice system.

Help Your Child:

◆ Figure out his likes and dislikes and what is important to him.

Choosing the right career requires that your child understands his interests, personality, skills and values. There are tests school counselors use to help students identify their interests. Talk to him about the things he likes and dislikes and how those preferences relate to different careers.



By Tampa 1 Prodigy Artist Laura

◆ Learn about different kinds of careers.

Young people often do not know what different jobs are really like. When career decisions are made with limited information, it can result in wrong choices. For example, crime scene investigator jobs are popular but does your child know how much time will be spent writing long reports?

◆ Have more than one career in mind.

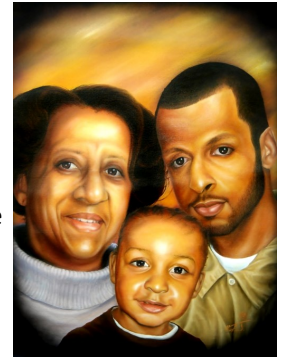
Your child may have a dream career but he should explore other ones too. For example, if your child's first choice is to be a professional athlete, he could also consider other jobs in the field such as sports medicine, sports promotion, coaching or physical education. It is always wise to have alternatives.

◆ Create and follow a plan.

Help your child create a plan to reach his career goals. This includes carefully researching careers and choosing courses to take in school. It may also include volunteer work.

Why Is Your Help Important?

- ◆ Research shows that parents have the greatest influence on their children's career choices.
- ◆ You have more interest in helping your child choose a rewarding career than anyone else.
- ◆ You know your child best and can make sure his career choice matches his skills and interests.
- ◆ Because of your child's limited knowledge about career opportunities and typical teenage trouble with decision making, he needs guidance.
- ◆ Planning will save time, energy and money.



What Information Does My Child Need to Choose a Career?

Here are some questions that should be explored:

- ◆ What will I do in a typical workday?
- ◆ What knowledge and skills are used in this work?
 - ◇ Do I already have them?
 - ◇ How can I get more education or training?
 - ◇ How can I get experience?
- ◆ Will I like the work environment (indoors/outdoors, office/factory, groups/alone)?
- ◆ Does the work require physical activity and am I willing and able to do that type of work?
- ◆ Can I move up in this career?
- ◆ Will there be jobs available in the future when I complete my training?
- ◆ How much does this job pay?
(A budgeting exercise can help your child see if he will be able to enjoy the lifestyle of his choice on the salary typically paid for that job.)



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The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

Rick Scott, Governor

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How Can I Help My Child Experience Different Careers?

While your child is in middle and high school, he can explore careers through:

- ◆ **Informational interviewing.** Help your child talk to people who work in his chosen career. Have him ask:
 - ◇ What daily activities do you do on your job?
 - ◇ Why did you choose this career?
 - ◇ What kind of training did you need?
 - ◇ What do you like most and least about your work?

Have him follow up with a thank you email or letter.

- ◆ **Career fairs.** Career fairs are often offered in high schools, colleges, or chambers of commerce. They are a gathering of different businesses that are looking for people to work for them. Attend one or more with your child so he has the chance to learn about various careers. (He does not have to be looking for a job.)
- ◆ **Job shadow experiences.** The more your child sees people in work environments, the more he will know about possible careers. Check to see if programs such as "Take Your Child to Work Day" exist in your community. Ask anyone your child interviews if he can watch that person work — for a short period of time when it is convenient.
- ◆ **Internships.** Check with your child's school guidance counselor about paid or unpaid internships. Find programs that allow him to gain high school credit while getting first-hand experience.
- ◆ **Volunteer work.** Encourage your child to help out for a business or organization that has jobs in his career.
- ◆ **Vocational classes.** See if your child's high school offers vocational classes in a field that interests him. Urge him to take classes to experience the tools and skills used in that career area.
- ◆ **Field trips.** Before your child goes on a school field trip, ask him to watch for different types of work and careers while there. Afterward, discuss them with your child. You may also arrange a field trip, just for you and your child, to a business that hires people in your child's chosen career.



Reminders

Career choice is a personal decision.
Do not try to steer your child to a particular career because it is something you like.

Also, your child may change his career interests. Continue to be encouraging.

For More Information:

The following resources can provide you and your child important information on career decision making:

- ◆ U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook. Find it at your local library or online at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>.
- ◆ Florida's Career Resource Network Office has career and decision making information online at: <http://www.acrnetwork.org> under "Network."
- ◆ The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network can be found online at: <http://online.onetcenter.org/> under "Skills Search."
- ◆ America's Career InfoNet can be found online at: <http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp>.

Your Child's Records:

Your child's record could affect his future job, education and military service options. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is in charge of arrest records. Criminal history records may be:

- Sealed (kept confidential). While juvenile records are considered confidential, they are not automatically sealed and, in many instances, can be accessed by the general public through local law enforcement.
- Expunged (destroyed).

Generally, youth can have most misdemeanors (and some felonies) sealed and most misdemeanors expunged.

To learn more about requesting your child's records be sealed or expunged, the application process you must follow and frequently asked questions, view the FDLE web site: <http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Content/Seal-and-Expunge-Process/Seal-and-Expunge-Home.aspx>.