

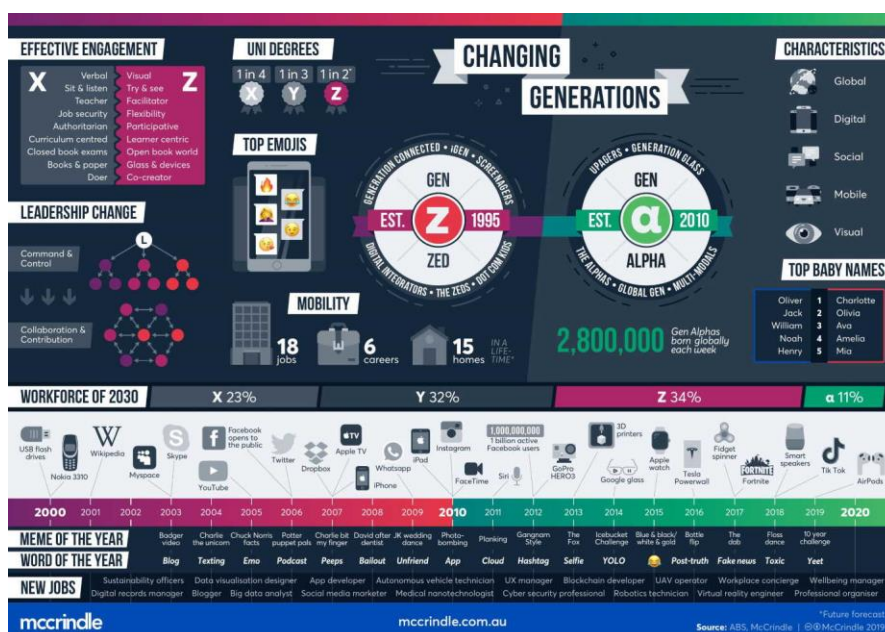
Parents as a Career Coach

Parents are often the first and preferred choice for information, advice and guidance for young people when making career decisions. Parents, working alongside school Career Advisors, have a positive impact on student learning and transition outcomes.

Currently we are experiencing a rapidly changing world of work, where the concept of “occupation for life” is rare. Most young people entering the workplace today will have several different careers over their working lifetime. There is pressure when leaving school that students will know what career they want to pursue, but how do we prepare them for jobs that have not yet been invented!

What was working life like for you growing up? Did you expect to be in the same job until you retired, are you still in the same job? What choices were available to you, what did you need to get into your line of work and how easy was it?

We now live in a different world and the Gen Z have a different outlook on life. Your teenager can expect to have “18 jobs across 6 careers”. Their focus on what is important is different to ours. This is an interesting infographic on the differences between different generations



<https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blogarchive/gen-z-and-gen-alpha-infographic-update/>

The future of work can be frightening for some and many have concerns about what this might look like for them especially now with Co-vid 19. Does the changing world of work concern you? Are the concerns that your teenager has of their future career paths the same as your concerns about the future?

Think about your own career journey, how is it similar or different to how you imagined it as a 16- 18-year-old? Did you know what you wanted to do when you left school? Are you doing now what you thought you wanted to do at 16-18? Did you make your decision based on research and labour market information? How did you get to where you are now? Was this a planned event or a chance encounter?

Here is some background information and tips that might be useful when tackling that “career conversation” with your teen.



What is a Career?

A career is the paid and unpaid roles across a lifespan; life roles, leisure, learning and work. Career education and development is about lifelong learning. Teens worry about making one big career decision, but they need to be reassured that the decision they need to make is about their “first step” on their career journey. We need to encourage young people to find an occupation or study option that fits their skills, interest, values and beliefs right now. This is their “start point” and as they progress through life they will continue to evaluate and adjust their careers plans in response to external factors such as changes in their workplace, and internal factors like a shift in interest, opportunities that arise or a change in their family circumstance. Young people need to be aware things do not always turn out as planned and they need to understand the importance of Plan B or alternative routes to achieve their career goals.

In career development we aim to develop student career management competencies; self-awareness, exploring opportunities, deciding and acting and transitions.

Here are some tips on how you can help your teen develop these competencies.

- **Self-Awareness** – Who you are and who do you want to be? have become more important than “What do you want to be?”. We encourage students to have a strong awareness of self and their identity. Assist your teen to describe their strengths, interests, values and how these might relate to their goals and aspirations for the future.

How can I help my teen to identify their attributes, strengths and values?

Personality tests are fun to do as a family and may help you to learn more about each other. The Myers Briggs Personality Profiling is a popular test which identifies 16 different personality types.

Have a go: <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>

Get your family to complete the test and then get everyone to write down what they agree with when reading through their individual results. Each person could then show another member of the family and can add to the list pointing out their strengths and attributes. Once your teen has identified their personality type, they could research careers that are popular with this personality type.

Understanding their strengths and skills is important but students often find these difficult to identify. Talk with your teen about some of their interest and point out the skills they demonstrate when doing this activity. For example – skate boarding requires persistence to nail a new trick and resilience when they fail. Cooking shows the ability to follow instructions and be systematic. Have a go at the skill matcher on Career NZ website <https://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/skill-matcher/> and identify careers that might match the skills they have developed from activities they have enjoyed.

Values can be difficult to explain, young people need to understand what is important to them in a work environment. For many of working with others is important or being part of a team. Help your teen identify what is important to them.

<https://www.careers.govt.nz/assets/pages/Who-am-I-and-what-am-I-good-at/What-do-I-value-in-a-career-worksheet.pdf>



- **Exploring Opportunities** – students can identify opportunities that available to them in life, learning and work that relate to their culture, strengths, interests and aspirations. Help your teen access accurate information from a range of sources to explore their career interests and understand job prospects for the future. Rather than focusing on a specific occupation, encourage your teen to explore a career sector or cluster such as education, sport, business and understand the different



roles within the sector. Look at what they need from school to access these opportunities e.g. what NCEA level do they need to achieve, what subjects would be useful.

How can I help my teen to identify what opportunities are out there based on their strengths and interests?

Career NZ is a fantastic resource and has several different tools to assist students to identify their “first steps” in their career journey. Have a go!

Encourage your teen to build a portfolio of different career options they have an interest in, emphasising they are looking at all options and there is no need to decide on a pathway until they are in the later years of school.

Career Quest <https://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/careerquest/>

Subject Matcher <https://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/subject-matcher/>

There are also other New Zealand based career quizzes such as School Connect <http://www.schoolconnect.co.nz/quiz>.

Got a Trade helps broaden young people’s minds about apprentice and trade options – there is a small quiz they can do which might give them some ideas about trades they were not aware of. <https://www.gotatrade.co.nz/>

No Major Drama is a great resource to help those looking at university to understand what majors might be worth investigating. <https://www.nomajordrama.co.nz/>

The following websites give information about employment level and growth in different industries and careers.

Labour Market - <https://www.new-zealand-immigration.com/the-skill-shortage-lists/>

Occupational Outlook - <https://occupationoutlook.mbie.govt.nz/>

Students should also attend guest speakers and liaison visits from tertiary providers and industry. Work experience and/or job shadowing is also a very effective way of exploring career options and getting a feel whether it is the right pathway for them. Take the opportunity to attend information evenings and Open Days with your teen.

- **Deciding and Acting** – this is a critical step in the career planning process. Armed with self-knowledge and research, your teens’ next step is to create a vision of what the preferred future might look like.

How can I help my teen to make good informed decisions?

These are great resources designed by Career NZ to help them understand what is important and how to compare options. The PMI exercise is also important where student identify in each option the pluses, minuses and interesting, this exercise allows your teen to consider



the consequences of their decision. As a parent it is helpful to do this alongside your teen so they can see the options from a different perspective.

<https://www.careers.govt.nz/plan-your-career/make-a-career-decision-2/>
<https://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/compare-jobs/>
<https://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/compare-study-options/>
<https://studyspy.ac.nz/?qclid=CjwKCAjw1cX0BRBmEiwAy9tKHnSgPF1ZJefmNqKMeufxGIsZFGPj7djB8vBqYqQr9l- E3zVhoRpUhoCc7MQAvD BwE>

Get your teen to review the information on different career pathways and get them to rate each option on how well it fits with the following factors they have identified that are important to them from the self-awareness work they have done:

- Do these careers fit with what is important to me and my work values?
- Does it fit with my interests and use my strengths?
- What will my lifestyle look like in the short and long term?
- What would I gain and what would I have to give up?

Acknowledge your teens fears and remind them that their “first step” is not carved in stone; their plans can change as they discover more about themselves and different courses and occupations. Some teens may find it hard to make a decision. Reinforce this is a short-term decision and encourage them to keep as many options open as possible. There are several pathways to get to the same point. Young people fear that a decision in year 12 or 13 is irreversible – that once you opt into a course of study, that is it! Fortunately, in New Zealand this is not the case, many of our education facilities are flexible and have multiple entry points and are not age specific. However, with the high costs of study and student loans, it is important students do research their options and make their decision based on information.

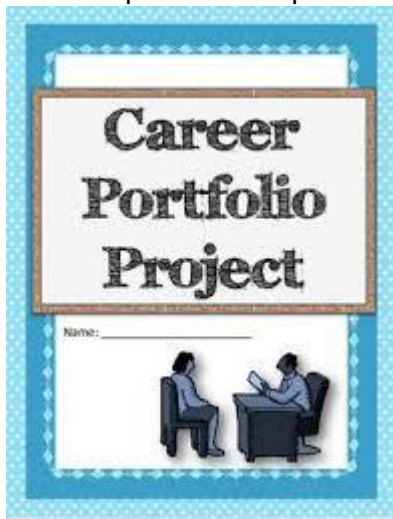


Transitions – Once they have a goal, your teen needs to develop a plan that will assist them to successfully transition out of secondary school, and on to further education, training or employment. This involves understanding the education and training they will need for their chosen career. This includes preparing

applications to tertiary providers, ensuring students have a relevant up to date CV and understand how to write a cover letter and develop their interviewing skills. See links below.

It is also important that young people start either a manual or online portfolio gathering evidence of courses attended, part time work, volunteering and community work, sport and cultural activities. These are important for applications to tertiary training organisations and job hunting as they demonstrate transferrable skills gained from the activities. Some schools have a career management programme that allows students to store this information such as Career Central, Dreamcatcher, My Mahi, One Note and Kamar. Find out about the programme and what facilities are available to parents.

A career portfolio is a place to store and organise information about their:



- Interests, strengths, attributes and personality
- Skills developed
- Achievements, accomplishments, awards achieved in school, work or community activities
- Paid, unpaid and volunteer work, including roles and responsibilities
- Career goals and the activities and work they have done towards achieving them
- Letters of reference from people who can speak to their skills and achievements
- Research on different occupations of interests
- Information on how to gain entry into courses, they are interested in, what qualification they need

from schools, subjects that are important, where they can train and what qualification they will gain on completion.

- Any resources that are relevant and to their career search, websites, prospectus, pamphlets etc.

Managing finances, understanding student loans and scholarships are important for both students and their families. Having an open discussion about budgeting and how they might finance their studies is important.

School Leavers Toolkit <https://school-leavers-toolkit.education.govt.nz/>

CV's <https://www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv/>

Cover Letters <https://www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cover-letter/>

Interview Skills <https://www.careers.govt.nz/job-hunting/interviews/>

Study Link – information about student loans and student allowances

<https://www.studylink.govt.nz/>

These sites are help students identify scholarships they may be eligible for.

<https://studyspy.ac.nz/search/scholarships>

<https://www.moneyhub.co.nz/scholarships-nz.html>

Students develop these competencies as they progress through the career education programme delivered in the school alongside individual interviews, work experience, industry and tertiary speakers and attending tertiary open days etc. Understand what the career programme is at your school and attend relevant seminars, workshops and interviews.

Be supportive if your teen encounters obstacles and help them over come these barriers, under pressure some problems can seem insurmountable. Encourage your teen to persevere when they face adversity and work with them to look at alternative ways of reaching their goals.

The High 5 Career Development Principles

When approaching the subject of career options, it is important to consider the following. The High 5 Career Development Principles outline the key considerations when making a career decision. This was originally developed by career planning experts in Canada but has been adopted by Australia and some European countries.



The High Five Principles were created by career development specialists across Canada and are helpful to those exploring the Career Planning Process.

1. **Change is constant**

Recognise that the world around you is constantly changing, especially now with Covid 19. Talk about what it was like when you were at school, what were the popular career choices, which of these careers still exist, which of these don't? Encourage your teenager to be open to change and recognise new opportunities. People are now likely to experience many jobs, in different career fields and with various employers, during their working lives. Learning how to adapt to change is critical. Flexibility, versatility, and adaptability during periods of change can be the key to successfully growing through change. Help your teen identify how they show these skills and communicate examples in their CV or a job interview. Help them to understand the current labour market information and identify where there might be opportunities and how jobs in the future might change.

2. **Learning is ongoing**

Leaving school or a tertiary education provider will not be the end of their learning. With the changing world of work and the constant need to upskill, education will be ongoing for young people. Learning is a lifelong process that is intertwined with skills developed through their interest, school, and work. Together, these activities form a continuous cycle of career-building experiences. The information and skills students learn today are just the basis for the knowledge and skills they will need in their future.

3. **Focus on the Journey**

Encourage your teen to see life as a journey of experiences and not to focus on one destination only. Get them to appreciate and value each experience along the way. Encourage them to focus on their goals and to think about what they are learning along the way. Some young people are so focused on the endpoint; they don't see the doors of opportunity and new possibilities along the way. Sometimes the destination is not their first choice but rather a "stepping point" and use this opportunity to move towards their ultimate career goal.

4. **Know yourself, believe in yourself and follow the HEART**

Encourage your teen to pursue their passions. Get them to discover ways to combine interests with career opportunities. Your teens' career should be about doing something that they can commit to and have the skills or ability to have a realistic chance of achieving. We all do our best when we are doing something we love or have a passion for. Pursuing dreams provides motivation and direction and helps to clarify what is important to them.

5. **Access your ALLIES**

Family, friends, mentors, colleagues, and peers are important "allies" and can assist us in making career decisions. Career success can be a team effort. Think about

who you know who may have had a career your teen is interested in. Talk about questions that would be useful to ask what information they need to make an informed decision. Approach the person and ask if they will talk with your teen and, if successful, ask if they can spend some time with them in their workplace job shadowing or on work experience.

Many jobs are never advertised and are filled through using contacts – networking.

Summing Up

- Get involved. Be active in your teens' life and build experiences you can share and talk about together. Spending time with your teen may help them to be more open and willing to discuss career options with you.
- Think about the Career Development Guiding Principles and help your teen use them on their career journey
- Think about your career journey and the pathways you chose and think about what you have learned along the way – share these with your teen when the moment is right.
- Show curiosity. Explore your teens' passion, interests, strengths, and experiences. Try not to judge, even if you do not share the same passion or interest.
- Model what you know and want. Your teen is watching and listening; take the time to connect, put your phone away, and make sure the time you have with your teen is uninterrupted. Ask for your teens' input, what help do they want from you, when would be a good time to talk. Ask for feedback, if you give them some information or advice, ask if that is helpful and of benefit to them.
- Tap into your networks. Introduce your teen to people and opportunities that are in line with their career interests.
- Connect with the school. This includes classroom teachers, their Dean, the Career Advisor. Show your teen that you support their goals and understand what they need to do academically to achieve these.
- Be informed. Take some time to become familiar with the websites and career management programme the school is using. Organise visits to training provider Open Day and Information Evenings.
- Encourage your teen to take opportunities to explore different careers through work experience, job shadowing or volunteering.
- Help them to prepare answers for questions such as "What are you going to do when you leave school?". Most teens feel uncomfortable when asked this question especially if they do not have a firm plan. One way that has been suggested by experts to answer this is by saying, "I have several options I am considering, what do you do/How did you get to the position you have today? This then takes the emphasis of them, and from the conversation, they get to learn about another career pathway.

