



Australian Government



PARENTS

Talking Career Choices

2012

As a parent, you play an important role in helping your child to make educational choices and career decisions. This role begins when your child is young—as they watch you and others around them take part in working life.

As they grow older, you can play an even greater part in guiding their career development and fostering

their optimism, enthusiasm, energy and curiosity. A lot of this relies on good communication.

This brochure covers practical and beneficial ways for you to be involved in your child's career planning. It outlines current information on the many options your child will have when they leave school. It also identifies useful resources and websites.

Start talking

Take advantage of all opportunities to talk to your child about possibilities for their future.

Most young people respond well to casual conversations about careers, so be ready when they ask questions about life after school. Your child probably wants to know how you made decisions about your career. Be ready to tell them about your own work and life experiences and the paths you took to get where you are. They'll gain from knowing about your different jobs, how you found them and whether you liked them. They may also like hearing about experiences of other family members and friends. It's quite possible you know someone who works in a job or industry that interests your child. See if they are willing to tell your child more about their work, and its positives and negatives.

Be ready with questions too. Ask your child if they have thought about different types of further learning. Find out what their friends are planning to do. Ask if they have talked to their school career adviser. Ask if they know other ways to find out more about careers or if they would like to attend career expos. Expos are a great way to find the education and training providers in your area, and meet potential employers.

Think about your child's experiences.

Have they helped in your business? Do they have a creative hobby or a special skill or talent that could lead to an occupation? Have they worked as volunteers, held casual jobs or done work experience? How did they feel about these experiences? Learning what they don't want to do can be as important as learning what they do want to do. So even if they didn't enjoy an experience, it is good to talk about why they didn't enjoy it.

You can take this further by helping them to fully understand their interests, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, skills and what is important to them. Be sure to discuss the importance of gaining employability skills (see the checklist on page 6).

And above all, be encouraging and supportive. Be positive about their ideas and chances of finding a satisfying career path. Let them know you believe they are a capable and resourceful person. This kind of parental influence can help to boost your child's confidence, maturity and desire to succeed.



Life experiences

A young person's story

I started skipping class in primary school, I'd spend days playing in the neighbourhood. Later I moved on to graffiti: plastering my tag throughout my suburb and the wider city. In the end, I dropped out of school completely.

I'm sure everyone thought I'd never actually make anything of myself. Mum and Dad were completely frustrated by my behaviour, but they always stuck by me and encouraged me to 'find' myself. Mum, who is very artistic, was the

first to realise that art and photography actually captured my attention and provided a way for me to harness my skills and energies. She and Dad both worked to create opportunities for me to know myself better and to see how I might fit into a career in the world of art. I'll finish my fine arts university degree next year. I could finish earlier, but I'm working two jobs this term to keep the money coming in. I'm so grateful Mum and Dad never gave up on me.

The options

There are plenty of pathways to a rewarding career. The most common options are:

- complete an Australian Apprenticeship or Traineeship
- take up a cadetship
- study at TAFE
- study at university
- take a gap year to earn money, volunteer and/or travel
- start a business; or
- find employment.

The great thing is that a career or study choice made today does not limit a person's range of choices in the future. It's no longer common or necessary for people to stay in the same job or even the same field of work for their entire life.

This flexibility is wonderful and can be a source of great personal satisfaction. To get the most from this freedom of choice, everyone should make it a priority to learn and to keep learning. In fact, in order to expand their options many adults return to formal study, to upgrade their qualifications.

Research shows that people are more likely to get a job if they have a Year 12 or equivalent education. They are also more likely to be able to take advantage of new career choices if they continue to learn. Today many people are working in jobs that didn't exist when they first entered the workforce.

So let's look more closely at the most common pathways.

Career—The sum total of paid and unpaid work, learning and life roles you undertake throughout your life.

Job—A position in which you perform tasks for payment.

Australian Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Australian Apprenticeships (encompassing all apprenticeships and traineeships) offer practical work experience and formal training in more than 500 occupations. Australian Apprentices gain new skills, make a great start to an interesting career and earn a pay packet—all at the same time.

Australian School-based Apprenticeships give young people a head start in a chosen career. Students earn a wage as they work and study.

See www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au for more information.

Trade Training Centres are being created in schools around Australia, so students have greater access to top quality trade-related schooling and to training facilities that meet industry standards.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools lets students combine vocational studies with their other subjects. It's a great way for young people to learn about possible careers and gain useful skills while keeping their options open to pursue future training and/or study. Find out what your child's school is doing.

Take up a cadetship

A cadetship can be a great option for starting a career, especially in professions such as finance, engineering and journalism. In general, cadetships provide work experience and financial support, with cadets combining employment and study for several years. See The Facts section of www.myfuture.edu.au for information on specific cadetships. Click on Awards and Scholarships, and then search for Cadetships.

Across Australia, TAFEs and other training organisations offer a vast range of practical, hands-on and job-related courses. Students can gain nationally recognised qualifications in subjects as varied as aviation, aged care, cardio-technology, children's services, car mechanics, earth science, hairdressing, plumbing, nursing and many more.

Work—A set of activities with an intended set of outcomes. Can include parenting or volunteering as well as paid employment.

University

About 40 per cent of students go directly from school to university. This is a big step, often meaning a move away from home. To ensure that potential students have access to clear and meaningful information about higher education providers, the Australian Government has developed the *MyUniversity* website.

MyUniversity will be an interactive, searchable website. The first release will comprise data collected from universities, including; course information; student demographics; results of student satisfaction surveys; results of graduate destination surveys; information about fees; information about student services and campus facilities; and research student numbers and scholarships.

See www.myuniversity.gov.au.

Gap year

Some young people opt to take a year off before returning to further study or training. This gap year gives them a chance to travel, learn a language, pursue a sport or hobby, earn money, gain a new skill, volunteer or simply figure out what they want to do in the future.

Many community organisations rely on volunteers and a gap year spent in this way can provide useful new skills and solid work experience.

Visit www.govolunteer.com.au for volunteering opportunities in your area.

The Australian Defence Force also runs a gap year program for those wanting to know more about how the Army and Navy operate.

See www.defencejobs.gov.au/education/gapYear for more information.

Start a business

Enterprising young people sometimes begin a career by starting a business. There are programs and training available that can help them to develop innovative ideas and increase their business skills.

Go to www.business.gov.au and www.enya.com.au for information to help your child start their own business.

Occupation—A group of similar jobs found in different industries or organisations.

Start a job

Some young people choose to head straight to employment after completing school. Finding that first job can be made easier if the job seeker knows more about the labour market, skills needed, various industries, occupations, incomes and job prospects. Remember many jobs are not advertised, so word-of-mouth and local knowledge can play a big part in finding a job.

See Key online planning resources below for more information.

Australia's job growth

Over the next five years, Australia's main job growth is projected to occur in the industries of Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

Reasonable job growth is expected across most other industries. These include: Education and Training, Transport, Retail Trade, Mining and Accommodation and Food Services.

The law about schooling

Australian law says that all young people must stay in schooling (or an accredited equivalent) until they complete Year 10. After that, they must continue in full-time (at least 25 hours a week) education, training and/or employment until they reach the age of 17.

This requirement stems from the nationally agreed Compact with Young Australians. Read more about the compact at www.deewr.gov.au/compactwithyoungaustralians.

Key online planning resources

Here are various online resources that can help you and your child to better understand the career options and pathways that exist in Australia today. Visit these websites together or individually — and then make time to discuss the options and opportunities they describe.

Bullseye Posters

Bullseye posters are a great way to start a conversation with your child about the school subjects

they like and are good at, and the jobs those subjects might lead to. The posters cover more than 30 different subjects and list the hundreds of occupations related to each one. The Australian Government produces the posters and makes them available for free at www.deewr.gov.au/bullseye.

Job Guide

Job Guide has in-depth information on over 500 entry-level occupations. In particular, it explains the education and training pathways that lead to each job. This can help young people to determine what jobs might suit them. The guide also has a helpful glossary of useful terms.

Job Guide is produced annually and distributed free of charge to all Year 10 students. It can also be accessed from your mobile phone and is available online at www.jobguide.deewr.gov.au.

Year 12 – what next?

This website helps Year 12 students to plan their post-school life. It has detailed explanations about options such as apprenticeships, TAFE, university, employment, volunteering, and even starting a small business. It also identifies where the jobs are and what skills are in demand. Visit www.year12whatnext.gov.au.

myfuture

The *myfuture* website is a one-stop shop of career information. It is an interactive resource, with tools and information that allow people to investigate career pathways and opportunities. There is comprehensive information about occupations, courses, state labour markets, job hunting tips and much more. The section for parents includes advice on how you can support and encourage your child as they plan their future. See www.myfuture.edu.au.

Job Outlook

Job Outlook is a careers and labour market research information site to help you decide on your future career. Use the various search options to find a wealth of information covering around 350 individual occupations. Don't forget to take the short Career Quiz to help guide you to the most suitable jobs for your interests and skills. See www.joboutlook.gov.au.

Centrelink

The Australian Government, through Centrelink, offers financial support and career assistance to young people who are studying, or in training or an Australian Apprenticeship, or who are looking for work.

Financial support

Financial support for living assistance is available in the forms of Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY and Assistance for Isolated Children. See [Centrelink.gov.au](http://www.Centrelink.gov.au) for more information about these programs.

To help students undertaking university studies or higher-level vocational education and training studies pay for their tuition, the Australian Government funds Commonwealth supported places and provides access to the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). Under the HELP scheme, eligible students can study now and pay their tuition costs later by accessing one of the HELP loans, which includes HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP, OS-HELP and VET FEE-HELP. There are various eligibility requirements for the different loans.

Students should be aware that the cost of higher education degrees varies between courses and providers. Most undergraduate university places are Commonwealth

Useful skills—Employers always look for a ‘little bit more’ in their employees. This ‘look’ usually goes beyond the technical skills needed to do the job and encompasses aspects known as ‘employability skills’.

Employers have told us their top eight employability skills.

They are:

- communication;
- teamwork;
- problem solving;
- initiative and enterprise;
- planning and organisation;
- self-management;
- learning; and
- technology.

supported which means that they are substantially subsidised by the Australian Government so that students only pay ‘student contribution’ amounts for their units. Eligible students can access a HECS-HELP loan to pay their student contribution amounts or receive a discount for some up-front payments.

If you are not enrolled in a Commonwealth supported place, you are a fee paying student. This means you pay tuition fees for a place that is not subsidised by the Australian Government. Eligible fee paying students may access a FEE-HELP loan to pay all or part of their tuition fees.

OS-HELP is available for eligible undergraduate Commonwealth supported students who wish to complete part of their course overseas.

For more information on HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP, or OS-HELP, please visit www.goingtouni.gov.au or call the Student Enquiry Line on **1800 020 108**.

VET FEE-HELP assists eligible students undertaking higher-level vocational education and training qualifications to pay their tuition fees. Eligible students must be enrolled in a VET-accredited diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate or graduate diploma course provided by Registered Training Organisations that are approved to offer VET FEE-HELP loans to their students.

Students who use a HELP loan are only required to begin repayments through the tax system when their income is above the minimum repayment threshold for compulsory repayment. For the 2011–2012 financial year, the minimum threshold is \$47,195. The thresholds are adjusted each year to reflect any changes in average weekly earnings. If you have a HELP debt, and your repayment income is above the minimum repayment threshold, the Australian Taxation Office will work out your compulsory repayment and include it in your notice of assessment.

See www.deewr.gov.au/vetfeehelp for more information including a list of all approved providers, or call the VET FEE-HELP information line on **13 38 73**.

Career Information Centres

Centrelink has 12 Career Information Centres around the country. Their services are available to all Australians, including young people, who want to find or change jobs. The staff can help your child make informed choices in relation to education, training and employment options.

Find the location of your nearest centre at www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internetnsf/services/career.centres.outlest.htm.

Key career development resources

Here are two key online resources that look especially at career development in Australia.

- www.deewr.gov.au/careerdevelopment has free resources for people working in the career development industry.
- Module 1 of the Australian Career Development Studies suite is for parents and others who want to help children make career choices. See www.career.edu.au.

More resources

- See www.deewr.gov.au/accessprogram for information on the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program. This program helps those who find it particularly hard to enter skilled employment by getting them involved in nationally recognised prevocational training.
- See www.grouptraining.com.au for more information on apprenticeships and traineeships.
- See www.ics.deewr.gov.au information for Indigenous Australians hoping to take up a cadetship.
- See www.training.gov.au for a comprehensive register of Australian courses, qualifications, competencies, training packages and Registered Training Organisations.
- See the Labour Market Information Portal (LMIP) at www.deewr.gov.au/lmip for extensive data on industry and regional employment trends and prospects in Australia.

The High Five Principles of **Career Development**

1. Change is **constant**

Recognise that the world around you is constantly changing. Be open to change and remain alert to new opportunities.

2. Learning is **ongoing**

Strive for continuous personal improvement. Stay motivated by learning new skills and developing new talents.

3. Focus on the **journey**

Don't focus on one destination only. Recognise that your career journey will be throughout your lifetime. Appreciate and value each experience along the way.

4. Know yourself, believe in yourself and follow your **heart**

Pursue your passion to find fulfilment. Discover ways to combine your interests with career opportunities.

5. Access your **allies**

Rely on the support of your family, friends, mentors, colleagues and peers. Career success can be a team effort.