

# Helping Your Child Make Career Choices

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## PARENTS ROLE

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Parents are supporters and mentors in helping their children to make important career choices. As a parent you know your child better than anyone else. You have more interest in helping your child choose a rewarding career. Your child will have limited knowledge about job and career opportunities. As a parent you can help them to gain knowledge and choose an appropriate educational path to lead them to their chosen career choices.

## LIKES AND DISLIKES

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Choosing the right career requires your child to understand his or her interests, personality, skills, and values. Discuss with your child what they like and dislike and how those preferences relate to career choices. There are many tests and assessments that schools utilize to help a child understand their interests and skills. Talk with your child's school guidance counselor about what testing data is available on your child to continue the conversation.

## HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN ABOUT CAREERS

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Help your child to have as much information about their career interests as possible. Help your child to search for information about jobs and careers through the internet. Help your child to connect and speak with people who perform those jobs. Help your child to volunteer or visit a job in their career of interest. Help your child to explore many jobs in a career field for instance your child may

want to be a Doctor of Medicine but help them to learn about many jobs and careers in the medical field.

## CREATE AN EDUCATIONAL PLAN

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Help your child to develop an educational plan of action based on their career goals. A student must choose classes in high school that will align to their chosen career field. Make sure your child is educationally prepared for their chosen path to independent living, working, technical training or college environment success through their chosen high school coursework.

## CAREER PLANNING IN THE IEP

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If your child receives special education services transition planning is a required part of the IEP process. Transition planning must be considered by the IEP team and in place by the time your child is 16 years of age. This transition planning may include career exploration assessments that assists your child in becoming college or career ready. In Alabama students are required to choose coursework on an educational pathway before entering high school.

## CAREER EXPERIENCES

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To help your middle or high school child be well informed they should experience as many opportunities to learn about careers as possible. These opportunities can include the following:

- *Information Interviews with individuals who work in that job or career field.*



Alabama Parent Education Center 

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- *Career fairs are great ways to learn about jobs and careers.*
- *Job shadowing allows your child to see people in their job environments.*
- *Volunteering is a great way to learn about jobs and careers hand on.*
- *Internships and work-based learning often in high school provide training or college credit in your child's career interest areas.*
- *Vocational classes in high school allow opportunities for your child to learn the tools and skills in their career interest fields.*
- *Arrange a field trip or visit to a business of your job or career choice.*
- *Does the work require physical activity, and am I willing and able to perform at the level required?*
- *If you have a disability; what types of accommodations and or supports would you need to perform the job?*

## DECISION-MAKING INFORMATION

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To help your child to be well informed about their career choice, help them gather good data on that job or career field to assist them in deciding if their chosen field aligns to their interest, skills, and personality. Here is a list of sample questions to help your child to answer:

- *What will you do in a typical workday?*
- *What preparation or education do you need for that job or career?*
- *Will there be jobs available in the future in that career?*
- *Where can I get training for this?*
- *How much does this job pay?*
- *What knowledge and skills are used in this work?*
- *What are the opportunities for advancement in this job or career field?*
- *What is the work environment like? (Indoor, Outdoor, Office or Factory Setting)*

## RESOURCES FOR EXPLORING CAREERS

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To help your child explore their career interest visit the following for information:

**U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Handbook** <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

**U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O\*Net)**  
<https://www.onetonline.org/>

**Career One Stop**

<https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/ACINet.aspx>

## APEC IS HERE TO HELP

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APEC provides free training, information, and consultation to families. Visit our training calendar for more information about learning opportunities at [www.alabamaparentcenter.com](http://www.alabamaparentcenter.com) or call our center.

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