

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: HELPING YOUR CHILDREN MAKE CAREER CHOICES

Center for Literacy
University of Illinois at Chicago
© 1995

From the day your children are born, believe that they can be anything they want to be. As your children get older, encourage them to feel that way too.

After your child finishes middle school or junior high, start asking what he/she wants to do after high school. A high school career counselor can help you child explore his or her interests. It is never too late to think about college or other career opportunities. If your child works hard and plans ahead, there will be more educational opportunities available. Your child may want to get a job right away, or he/she may wish to go to college. If your child has dropped out of high school, he/she may want to return to it or take GED (General Equivalency Diploma) classes which help get a high school diploma.

- How can I help my children while they are in high school?

- Find out what the high school graduation requirements are in your state.
- Make a list of the classes your child has taken and what he/she needs to take. A high school guidance counselor can help you plan your child's coursework.
- Make sure your child goes to school every day unless he/she is sick or there is a family emergency. Regular attendance in school is very important so that your child does not fall behind in the work.

- How can I help my child if he/she dropped out of high school?

If your child has dropped out of high school, he/she can return anytime or join a GED program. It is never too late to get a high school diploma.

- Talk to the high school personnel in your neighborhood about what it is needed to return to school and get a diploma.
- Find out about special classes in GED programs that can help your child get his/her high school diploma.
- Ask the high school guidance counselor for information about opportunities after finishing high school. For example, ask about going to college or trade school or where to find available jobs.

- Who can help my child and me decide about opportunities after high school?

- Choose those teachers that your child respects. They can help you decide what careers or what colleges are best for your child.
- Ask any role model in your community or outside the community to talk to your child about career decisions.
- Encourage your child talk to someone that holds a job in which your child has an interest in.
- Get information from the high school and college career counselors about: entrance requirements, tuition costs, financial aid, etc.
- Find out if your child prefers vocational education courses or college preparatory classes. These classes will help your child be better prepared for either college or vocational schools. Discuss this with your

child's high school guidance counselor.

- How can I help my child go to college?

Colleges and universities award four-year degrees, called bachelor's degrees. They also have advanced degrees, such as master's degree, Ph.D., and law and medicine degrees.

- Find out what high school classes he/she needs to take to get in college. Ask the high school office to give you that information or call the college or university directly for admission requirements.
- Find out when college entrance exams (SAT or ACT) are offered in your area. Make sure your child signs up to take the tests.
- Ask the high school counselor for help with financial aid forms early in your child's last year of high school (senior year).
- Request financial aid information from each college or university your child might be interested in.
- Encourage your child to do well in high school. Good grades will make it easier to get financial aid. Special talents in sports or music may also help get financial aid. The high cost of universities and colleges should not prevent your child from applying to them.

- How can I help my child attend a junior college or community college?

Junior or community colleges offer two-year degrees, called associate degrees. Education and training are offered for numerous jobs. For example, your child can study for two years and become a nurse assistant, physical therapist, data processor or dental assistant as well as many other positions in professional careers. After completing an associate degree at a community college or junior college, your child can continue his or her education in a four-year university or college if he/she wants.

- Call or go to community colleges near you and ask for catalogs that inform what careers are available that might interest your child.
- Make sure your child knows that good grades will help him/her get financial aid.
- Ask the high school or community college counselor for financial aid forms.

- What if my child is interested in a technical career?

Trade or vocational schools prepare people for technical or service jobs such as machine operator, draftsman, auto mechanic, and others.

- Find out if the trade school requires any admission tests and make sure your child takes the.

Authors:

Ana U. Colomb
Cynthia Reyes
Flora V. Rodriguez-Brown
Melanie Schikore

Editor:

Suzanne Wagner

Art and Design:

Peggy Ford, Geoffery Blanton, and Lorraine Jossick Weber

This brochure was produced by the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

For more information contact the

Center for Literacy
University of Illinois at Chicago
1040 W. Harrison M/C 147
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone (312) 413-1914.

The contents of this brochure were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.