

Helping your child choose a career path



There are lots of different methods you could use when it comes to helping your child to choose and plan their career effectively, but an easy way to approach the subject is to use these three simple steps:

Reflecting – helping your child to think about what makes them tick from a personality perspective, identifying what they are curious about, what skills they enjoy developing and using and what motivates them all matters. It also helps if they think about what they don't enjoy or are less good at also matters to ensure that they don't end up doing work which doesn't suit them.

Exploring – support them as they find out about the different courses, training schemes and jobs that they could move on to which they feel attracted towards.

Planning – working with them to sort the different options open to them into priority order so they can decide what steps they need to take to move forward effectively.



Reflecting about themselves before choosing a career path

Before they start planning their next move and start choosing a career path, your child will need to find out more about their own interests, likes and dislikes. They could start by answering the questions below and making their own list as they go.

What are their interests? What do they enjoy doing at school or in their spare time? For example, they might like:

- *art*
- *music*
- *sports*
- *writing stories*
- *looking after pets*
- *playing computer games*
- *socialising with friends*

What are their skills? What kind of things are they good at, in school or their free time? For example, they might be good at:

- *science*
- *maths*
- *talking and writing*
- *using computers*
- *creative work, like painting or music*
- *practical tasks, like making models or repairing things*
- *researching information for a project*

What are their personal qualities? What are they like as a person? For example, they could be good at:

- *managing their time and meeting deadlines*
- *working well with other people*
- *planning ahead*
- *talking to groups of people*
- *joining in discussions*
- *caring for other people*
- *coming up with original ideas*
- *listening to other people's views*

NB: you will hear these referred to 'transferable' skills. Whatever you call them, they are what employers look for in their employees.

How do they like to learn? Different options will offer different ways of learning. For example, some education courses will be mostly classroom-based while others will involve placements with employers or practical project work.

If they enjoy classroom-based learning with exams they may want to take A Levels in the sixth form or at college.

If they prefer practical project work with hands-on work experience they will probably be interested in a vocational course like an NVQ or BTEC which are also available in sixth forms or college.

If they like the sound of learning new skills while they work and gaining qualifications for the job they are doing they may be interested in an apprenticeship, a traineeship or a job with training.



STEP 2

Exploring careers

The world of work is changing all the time. To help them plan their career, they'll need to find out more about the kind of jobs that are out there now, and which ones could be big in the future.

For a comprehensive approach, the National Careers Service site has over 800 **job profiles**. They can look at job families or use the search facility to find out more about careers.

If you think your child is likely to go to university, then **Prospects** site has extensive information for graduate level occupations. It is worth checking an individual role out on several sites to get a rounded view.

Many of the jobs on these sites simply didn't exist a generation ago and have developed a result of new technologies, engineering and research developments which is one of the reasons why parents, carers and teachers can find it a challenge to provide appropriate advice.

Once your child knows what direction they want to go in, GET Into <https://www.get-into.co.uk/> is a great starting point to research post-16 courses and work-based learning using its **searchable database**.

At Castle Hall we ensure that careers advice is available to your child through our C & K Careers Advisor.

Once they've got some career ideas, they could try listing those they are most interested in and why they like the sound of them.



Planning a career path

Once they've found the jobs they are interested in, encourage them to answer the following four questions:

Can I start this career straight from school? This may depend on what qualifications they have or are predicted to get when they leave school. Remember, the majority of jobs these days ask for some qualifications. The Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) means that they can still go straight into a job, but there must be some recognised training as part of that job.

Could I do an *Apprenticeship*? For some areas of work, an apprenticeship is one of the main ways to start their career. They may need some qualifications before they can begin an apprenticeship.

Do I need to get some more qualifications for this type of job? They may need to gain some more qualifications at school, college or even university. Find out what subjects and types of qualification they may need. For example, they might need a general course like A Levels, or a vocational course (sometimes called an applied general course) like a BTEC (one that helps prepare them for a particular area of work).

Do I need to build up my confidence and skills? They may not feel ready yet to start a higher level course, apprenticeship or job. Foundation Learning could help them to progress towards a Level 2 qualification (for example, GCSEs or a BTEC), which could move them closer to their career goals.

Finally...

Have a backup plan! Even if they've got their ideal career in mind, it's a good idea to think about other choices for the career path in case things don't work out the way they planned. This is especially important if they're aiming for a very popular course or career.

For example, if they don't get the grades they are hoping for or there aren't any places available on their chosen Apprenticeship, they'll need to have a good alternative to fall back on.

Ask them to think about their alternative career choices and have a second or third option ready in case their plans need to change. This could be a different career choice, or perhaps a different route towards their first choice career — or a similar one.

Useful websites:

Prospects - <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

National Careers Service - nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/

Calderdale and Kirklees Careers - <https://ckcareersonline.org.uk/>

GET INTO - <https://www.get-into.co.uk/>