



Planning Your Career

What did you dream of being when you were younger? Fire fighters are favorite idols of lots of children. Others dream of being waitresses, social workers, and teachers—people they see in everyday life. Youngsters love the drivers of heavy equipment or the person who cuts their hair. Kids dream of being football players, singers, and movie stars. But as kids mature, most realize they are not going to be rock stars or sports heroes.

The dreams you have about your career are a great place to start. But the actual hardcore career planning is much different and can be much harder for kids in care who have had to focus on difficult issues growing up.

However, some of those difficult issues lead many people to gain great strengths from those very challenges of being in care. They learn that people have to take care of themselves, and they know that they have to meet basic needs like food, clothing, a home, and transportation.

Some key considerations for exploring career options

Learn about:

- Occupations and types of work.
- Job requirements. Do you need physical strength? Good people skills? Good math skills?

- The type of education you need to get that kind of work.
- How your personality, skills, and abilities fit with different careers.

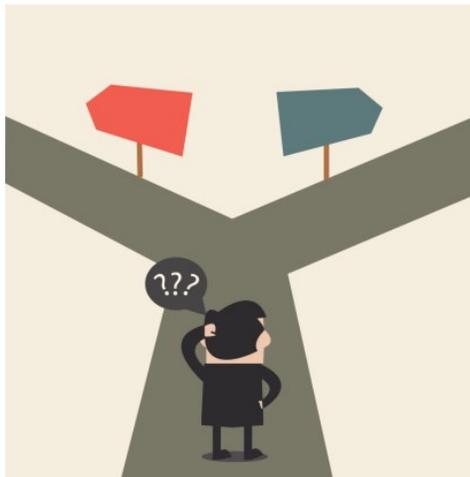
How Middle and High School Classes Can Influence Your Career Opportunities

Many school systems offer shop and life skills classes. Think about what you learned there. Do you like the wood working that you did? Do you like cooking?

Questions to Ask

Your parents, foster parents, and social workers can answer questions about careers and here are a few to get you started.

- That basic question: what do you do at work?
 - What skills are required for that job?
 - What training is necessary?
 - How many years of school and what classes are required in your field?
 - What do you like about it?
 - What don't you like about it?
 - How did you get into that line of work?
 - Would I be good in this career? Why or why not?
 - What advice do you have for me if I wanted to work in your field?
- Remember that some people are good at describing what they do and some aren't.



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Visit Places For Hands-On Career Exploration

Visit work places and talk to people who do the kind of work that looks good to you. You can do that on career days at school or when community colleges have their college visits.

Here are some examples of places or people to visit:

- Welding shops, manufacturing plants, construction sites, heating, and plumbing businesses. While the work can be dirty and challenging, the trades provide a good living. Explore apprenticeships, technical colleges and on-the-job training.
- Office work. Visit offices. Can you work in a quiet place, do repetitive work, sit for hours in one chair in a cubicle? Many offices workers do this every day.
- Traveling with your job. Talk to a trucker. What is it like on the road? Ask them about their deadlines for delivery and how much they have to lift.

School Counselors and Counseling Center Resources

If you are in care, you may not have had much chance to focus on your future. School counselors and school counseling centers are resources you can use to learn about careers.

Tell your counselors that you are interested in doing career planning. Ask them for their advice about the best general course of study for you.

And believe it, it matters. If you want to be a nurse, you will have to have take a lot of math and science classes. Take these courses seriously. There are many kids who realize they will have to spend a lot of time making up for what they missed in high school. It can be frustrating, demanding, and expensive to make up math, reading, or science classes you need to meet the requirements for the

Job Corps and the Military

Both Job Corps and the military branches also offer you career training, as well as providing for your basic needs: a place to live, food, medical care.

Job Corps is a free education and training program throughout the U.S. that provides the all-around skills you need to succeed in a career and in life. There are job corps in every state, and each one has a variety of different programs, ranging from massage therapy to nursing to carpentry to clerical work and beyond.

The Wisconsin job corps is in Blackwell. Go to: <https://blackwell.jobcorps.gov/> or <https://milwaukee.jobcorps.gov/>.

The U.S. Armed Forces are made up of the five armed service branches: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. Go to *Ten Steps to Joining the Military* for more information.

educational program to prepare for your field. If you missed it in high school, you will probably have to do this along with working to support yourself.

Don't minimize what you have to learn. A lot of people who want to work in mechanical fields think it is common sense and physical labor that you need. Those are not enough anymore. You will need math and sciences and language skills for many jobs that did not require as much formal education in the past. Technology, construction, and manufacturing require well trained workers.

On *Take Your Kids to Work Day*, try to find someone who will take you to his or her job. Talk to your school counselor or teacher to arrange for the visit, which usually happens on a school day.

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Learning About Jobs

Work if you can. Work in the summers. Work during the school year but keep it balanced so that it doesn't interfere with your homework and school. The best way to learn about work is to do it.

Cash registers are scary for the first few days until you know how to use them. You might be nervous waiting on tables for a few weeks but you might learn you love waitressing and working with the public. Many skills in one job relate to skills in other jobs. A good waitress may make a good nurse and vice versa, because both jobs require you working with people, being on your feet a lot, and serving others in a friendly, calm manner.

One of the best advantages of working—outside of getting paid—is that it builds your confidence and opens doors to new worlds for you. This is true for people of all ages.

If you want to work in a blood bank, volunteer for Red Cross to see if you can work with blood.

Other ways to learn about jobs:

- When you have a chance to visit the technical colleges on career days, go. It gives you a picture of what goes on there and an opportunity to see work related classrooms first hand.
- Find adults you respect to mentor and advocate for you.
- Use your foster parents as resources for advice and help with planning.

Assessments

Assessments are designed to match your

skills, interests and abilities with those required in various occupations. You can learn what education and backgrounds are required for careers.

You take career assessments in at most any age. Think about what they tell you. An assessment might suggest tell you that you have good people skills, which might mean you would consider becoming a salesperson, a child care teacher, or a nurse.

If you have already left school, go to the job service in your area

which will have comprehensive career planning support and assessments to help you choose a career path.

You can also call your high school counseling office to find out how to access career assessment you have taken. Your results are saved.

The *Career Locker* website is an excellent resource for people of all ages. You can also take assessments at [their site](#).

Talk to your foster parents, teachers, or other adults to get feedback and support in your career planning. At these sites, everything will be saved for you and you can go back and continue where you left off or update your responses.

You will also find information about:

- Specific occupations
- Specific schools
- Highest paying occupations
- Education Required for a specific occupation



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- Training schools apprenticeships, colleges, and universities

If you speak Spanish, you will have a better chance of getting a job.

No job is perfect. Some people love their work and some don't. Many factors play into this. A few are lucky and fall into work they love.

But for most people, it doesn't happen that way. They had to plan, train, get job experience, and search for a good job. Begin when you are young to find a career that suits you. Find one that matches your skills, educational background and interests. You will lead a easier life if you do some good career planning.

One great thing about careers—you will probably have several careers and choose several different career paths in your life. Start when you are young and looking forward to your first job. You will be glad you did.



Resources

[Wisconsin Job Center](#)

[Career One Stop](#)

[Youth Central Career Planning Resource](#)



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