

Great! You Got the Job! Now What?!?

Congratulations! You're hired. It's so nice after the hard work it takes to get a job, to hear, "you got the job!" But now that stress is over. Life rolls on until the day you start.

The First Days at Your New Job

Whoa! The tension rises again as your first day of work approaches. You ask, "Will I like it? Can I handle the job? What will my coworkers be like?" These are some ideas to think about when you begin your job.

You were hired because your employers believed you would be an asset to their business.



learn. You will do some things well. But, you will also make mistakes. *Everyone does.* For the first few days or weeks, expect to make mistakes and to feel frustrated. Know that you will continue to make mistakes throughout your work career. *Everyone does.*

Have you ever watched a new employee operate a cash register? You can tell that she is new and nervous. You can be the smartest person or the best athlete and yet, a cash register can seem overwhelming.

The following are some things you might find to be obstacles. (Then again, the difference between a problem and an

opportunity is your perspective.)

Keeping the Job

Let's talk about some things that you can do, whether this is your first job during high school, or your first professional job after graduating from college. Some rules apply to all jobs.

Have faith in your skills, and don't focus on the parts of the job you don't think you'll be good at. But don't go in with a know-it-all attitude, either.

Write down your skills if you need reassurance. Talk about them with a friend or trusted adult who will support you and give you honest feedback. Take some time on the way home after work to reflect on what you did well and what you learned that day.

Know that you have never worked in this new employment situation and you have things to

Workplace Culture. Be respectful of your supervisors as well as your coworkers. Each workplace has its own culture, just like families.

- In some places, you will be invited on breaks and to lunch, and included right away. In others, coworkers will hardly acknowledge you the first day.
- Sometimes people are indifferent or worse, downright rude, until they get to know you. In time, you will develop good relationships with your coworkers.

40-hour weeks. You are not alone if you working a job for eight hours a day, 40 hours a week a real adjustment. Even if you have worked part time during school, you

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have been in school all your life. You had summers off, and now you have little vacation time. You were expected to be in class less than 30 hours a week. This is 40 hours a week. It takes time to adjust, but the vast majority of people who work have done it, and, yes, some even love it. You can handle it! If it is too difficult, you may be in the wrong job.

Age. For the most part, you've spent your days with people your own age. The person next to you at work now looks like your grandmother.

Ask Questions. If you are not sure how to do a job, ask questions. The smartest people ask questions when they begin work. Asking relevant questions is usually a sign of a good worker.

Punctuality. You may have been a little lax in the attendance and tardiness department. That's why there was an attendance lady. There won't be one at your job. Time clocks are not forgiving. In school, there were study halls and free periods. Those won't be scheduled into your work day, although there *are* labor laws that say you *have* to get breaks.

- Return from lunch and breaks on time. Your coworkers appreciate it if they do not have to do your work because you came in late or back from lunch late.
- If you have to be late, call your boss before it happens to tell her that you will be late, and have a good reason. Your employers will look at this as an important measure of a good job performance.
- Be on time. Every day. Take the earlier bus if you have to. Figure this out before you start.

Your Look. Come to work neat and clean every day—you will feel less self-conscious, and you will be viewed better by bosses and coworkers. If you have a uniform and the

Telling Your Story

Have you decided how—or if—you are going to tell about being in care? People who have been in care have life stories that are not run-of-the-mill. They are touching, sad, and sometimes difficult for others.

Telling your story can be a great way to educate others about the myths surrounding foster care. On the other hand, you have as much right as anyone else to privacy about your private life.

Read the tip sheet, [Sharing Your Story](#) for ideas about how much to tell and how to tell the unique story about who you are and your journey to adulthood.

pants need to be shortened, hem them. If you have to, wash that uniform out by hand in the sink. You won't be the first one to do that.

- Piercings? In her new book for first time job seekers, *Can I Wear My Nose Ring to an Interview?*, Ellen Gordon Reeves answers “yes” to her title question, but she adds that you need to know if it's acceptable at the company before you come to work with all your rings attached. If it's a hip music store or the latest vegetarian restaurant, it's probably okay. But for a lot of jobs, you will have to remove those rings.
- What to wear? I know: your look is part of who you are. But the vast majority of employers tend to like their staff to look neutral, like everyone else. Save your cool stuff for after work and time with your friends. And yes, at most places, skirts should not be too short, stomachs should not show between

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shirt and pants, and your pants might need to be pulled up. It may look boring to you, but that part of your personal expression in most work places will not be welcome.

- Make-up? Use in moderation. You might really have great eyes, but be subtle.

Ask to Help Out. If you have completed your work, ask for more, but be careful to follow company procedures so that your coworkers do not resent you for it.

Other Considerations

Abusiveness. Work relationships are rarely abusive, but some people who have suffered abuse might have a hard time recognizing abuse. Discuss anything that feels abusive with a social worker or another adult you trust.

Some companies have human resources departments, and you might want to talk to someone in that department. Read the company policies. If you feel that you are being treated in a manner that is abusive, *write down the time, day, persons involved, and save that information.* Tell your supervisor and if that does not work, go to the next supervisor up.

Money management. Save some money, no matter how little, from each check. Use the company retirement plan if there is one. Some places may match your investment.

Changing Jobs. Being in your 20s is a time to try different jobs so that you can find the kind of work you want to do for the rest of your life. But this philosophy also has some limitations.

- Don't job hop. You may change jobs once or twice over a few months, but don't ever let that become a rule. Future employers want to see on your resume that you have stayed with some jobs for a year or longer.

- Stay with the job you have until you have a new job. Unless you are not safe at a job, don't quit.

Problems vs. Solutions

- If you face a problem at work, don't just complain to a supervisor. Suggest a solution, too. Most good supervisors appreciate that.
- So you don't like working at a fast food place. But don't ignore opportunities that may be there. Have you considered that there may be other positions that you may like? Maybe you would make a good cook or a supervisor. Many people are well paid and move into jobs they enjoy when they stick it out. Don't trash your place of employment until you have considered all the options there for you.
- And along with that, don't be part of the gossip chain or the complainer club. You will find that the most well-liked people in most companies are not goodie-two-shoes, but neither are they the ones who can never be happy and share all the dirt with everyone else.

Workplace Training. If your company offers training, take advantage of it. It's hard to go to school while working, but education pays off. Your future will unfold with more opportunities when you can say that you took advantage of available work training.

Work is just that: work!

A lucky percentage of the population work just because they love to work. If you are one of those, count your blessings. Some of what you do is out of your control.

But a lot of it is something you can look at and have input. Above all, you *can* control your attitude about work. Life always has something exciting around the corner and a lot of it will be determined by your job choices. Go for it!



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Library Resources

- *Do You Have What It Takes, A Comprehensive Guide to Success After Foster Care*, by teens who have been there.

Related Tip Sheets

- [Managing Your Money](#)
- [Sharing Your Story](#)
- [How Career Assessments Can Help You Make School and Career Choices](#)

Other Resources

- *Can I Wear My Nose Ring to the Interview? A Crash Course in Finding, Landing, and Keeping Your First Real Job*, by Ellen Gordon Reeves
- **[Ten Commandments for Keeping a Job](#)**
A list that has been around since 1998 and till applies.



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