

## 17 Tips to Help Launch Your Teen into Their First Job

1. **Encourage your teen to work once they reach age 16.** Teen work is primarily about experience and new relationships, and less about money. Research shows that the earlier a teen starts working, the better they will do later.
2. **Talk about your memorable early work experiences,** both good and bad. Make sure to include your embarrassing moments. My story was falling asleep standing up while working the night shift in a pea cannery. Your stumbles will teach them that adults can make mistakes and still thrive.
3. **Get your teen thinking about work by asking them what their friends' parents do for work.** Then discuss what kinds of work they find interesting. Does your teen enjoy watching hurricane hunters or make-up artists on YouTube? Videos that interest them might give clues for their job search, whether it's cooking, science, outdoor adventure, or animals.
4. **Talk to your son or daughter about what they do well.** People get hired and stay hired because of their personality **traits** as much as their skills. Are they curious? Diplomatic? Do they offer useful suggestions? Do they finish projects? Cooperate? Your teen will value your endorsement.
5. **Let your teen take control of their job search.** That way your teen makes the decisions, you are an advisor, and your teen learns that they will live with the results. Aim for **them** to take ownership of **their** choices.
6. **Suggest they draft a very simple resume.** Have them include their contact information, where they are studying, their activities, interests, responsibilities, and volunteer or leadership roles. Search online for "teen resume" to see good examples. Creating a simple resume will help your teen see himself or herself as employers do.
7. **Encourage your teen to call several adults outside the family and ask them to serve as references.** Those calls—not emails—give your teen the chance to ask the references for feedback on their strengths and occupations they might fit.
8. **Mention that half of working teens work in retailing.** If retailing interests your teen, ask what kinds of products interest them and what kinds of people they'd like to sell to. And add that selling is problem solving for the customer.
9. **Talk with your teen about nearby employers they could contact.** Drive past several sites with your teen in the car, including locations on side streets and in



industrial settings where teens seldom go. Town-wide lists of companies are valuable, so they may not be online. Local library reference sections have them.

10. **Encourage your teen to research the employers that interest them.** Suggest they look those businesses up online or stop by to check them out. Let your teen decide whether an employer seems like a good fit.
11. **Talk with your teen about work as a privilege and a grown-up relationship.** Work is how we adults support ourselves. Discuss how the employer expects to give your teen good money, in exchange for their good effort.
12. **Raise the idea that there is no second chance to make a good first impression.** Let your teen know that employers carefully read teens' eye contact, upright posture, firm handshake, restrained dress, politeness, and speech clarity. Discuss the ways some young people make it hard to be hired.
13. **Describe how much is going on in a job interview.** The interviewer will be judging your teen as a candidate, comparing them to others, seeing if they fit the company, the work and the co-workers, figuring out how easy your teen is to work with, how much training they'll need and whether they ask questions.
14. **Talk about the basics that employers expect from their workers.** Come to work every day. Be on time. Listen to instructions and follow them. Have a positive attitude. Get along with your co-workers. Put your phone away.
15. **Suggest they observe their bosses carefully.** Good bosses have knacks. Smart employees look for them and learn by imitation. You might tell your teen that they will remember each boss for the rest of their lives.
16. **Point out that when they are on the job, they should take the initiative.** When there's nothing to do, find something. If they finish one task, they need to ask what they can do next, not sit around waiting for someone to tell them what to do. They are being paid to work—go find it.
17. **Suggest your teen treat the boss with respect.** At the very least, each boss is going to be your teen's next job reference. They can make sure that reference is a good one!

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PS: If you have a favorite tip you would add, please email it to me at <research@newmassjobs.com>.