



Parents as Career Coaches

Parent Guide

Junior High

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Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Reissued with a new cover and design, 2016

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Introduction

Parents as Career Coaches (PACC) is a program that helps parents, family members, mentors, and other adults who wish to assist youth in their career-development journey. During this journey, PACC helps you use the skills, attitudes, and personal qualities you have already developed. This program will provide you with a framework and ideas to help you better understand the career-development process and the ever-changing world of work.

One of the resources available to parents is this parent guide. It has been designed to

- provide you with important information on the career-development process
- assist you in helping youth use the student workbook and other resources
- ensure that youth make informed course selections and career decisions
- help you support youth as they identify and explore their passions and interests

The PACC Junior High program provides you with some basic career-development tools and approaches to assist you in helping youth discover their passions and interests. It will also help you and the youth to find out more about specific careers. This program has not been designed to pinpoint a specific career at this stage in a youth's career journey. The goal is to help youth make academic, training, and career choices that will lead to a productive and happy life.

What is Career Coaching?

The role of a career coach is to be a helper, supporter, encourager, and ally.

Like a sports coach who cannot play the game for their athletes, a career coach cannot live the life of the person being coached. The goal of the coach is to help prepare the youth to succeed.

Information and Suggestions

The Current World of Work

Change is constant in the world of work. The World Economic Forum suggests that 65 per cent of youth entering school today will likely work in jobs that currently do not exist. It will be increasingly uncommon for people to have a job for life. This will not only result in job changes but in many cases occupational changes as well. Workopolis states that a young person will have 15 job changes over the course of their working life. Youth need to understand that career paths are now rarely linear. Students who pursue post-secondary education and enter a job usually do not stay with the same job. They are choosing to retrain, change occupations, upgrade their skills or education, start their own businesses, etc.

Canadian youth today are well-educated but many have limited work experience. In this current climate, youth must be prepared for change and be able to adapt to change. The workplaces of today are looking for employees who have developed soft skills. A good work ethic, communication skills, and problem-solving, time-management, and teamwork ability make for a great employee and are critical in any job.

Not only is the type of work people do changing, but how they do it is also changing. These changes include the way a workplace looks and functions. The workplace is made up of people from multiple generations; it has more flexible working arrangements; it has increased the use of technology and the variety of tasks; it requires more freelance work and the expectation that employees will be lifelong learners who are willing to upgrade their skills. Therefore, one of the most important things young people will face and must learn is career management.

Many people encounter challenges coping with change. As a coach, assisting youth in developing attitudes and coping strategies to deal with change will be of great benefit to them in the future.

Suggestion

- Think about the job you are presently in or jobs you have had in the past. How have the tasks you perform and the way you do your job changed? Discussing this experience with the youth will help them to realize that everyone is affected by changes in the workplace.
- Consider how you react to change and the messages you send to the youth about change. If you demonstrate to them through your actions that change is a fact of life and you cope well with it, they may adopt this attitude and model your behaviour.
- Not all change is positive, and you should discuss this fact so the youth understands that change can be positive or negative, or perhaps both. You should look to promote dealing with change effectively.
- If you are having difficulty dealing with change, it might be helpful to read articles that could help you develop effective strategies to cope with change.
- If the youth is experiencing difficulties with change, you will want to address the matter. Again, many books and articles might help. Also, you might want to check with a guidance counsellor or others for some suggestions.

In the current world of work, many skills, personal qualities, and attitudes are transferable from one job or experience to another. Some common skills, called essential skills, are required to varying degrees within most occupations. Some of these skills are acquired in formal school settings, while others are developed through our informal experiences. The latter include the learning and skills we develop on the job and through hobbies, for example. We also learn through self-study, by reading or researching information.

A great many skills develop through our life experiences, such as being a parent or volunteer. Skills acquired through informal learning are important. The critical point is that essential skills, regardless of how they are acquired, will be important in terms of securing and maintaining employment.

The Government of Canada has developed the following list of essential skills:

- reading
- document use (e.g., ability with words, numbers, icons, diagrams, graphs, drawings)
- numeracy (math)
- writing

- oral communication
- working with others
- lifelong learning
- thinking (problem solving)
- computer use/ digital skills

Helping youth become aware of the importance of these skills will assist them in choosing a career and preparing for work.

Suggestions

- Think about your prior learning. Which of the previously mentioned skills did you develop in school, and which did you secure through work or life experiences? For example, you may have learned to read text in school but to use a computer through self-study or on the job. This latter type of learning is called informal learning. You may have learned to use a computer through both school and personal experiences. This would involve a combination of both formal and informal learning.
- Encourage the youth to complete the exercise on skills in their student workbook. This will help them to start thinking about their essential skills.
- The youth's development in some areas can also be explored by reviewing various educational assessments. For example, how are their skills in mathematics and literacy? This will help you to get some idea of where the youth is in terms of developing some of the essential skills.
- You can also observe the youth, considering the following:
 - Are they good at using the computer?
 - How do they get along with others?
 - Do they have a good attitude about learning more?
 - How effective are they at solving problems on their own?
 - Can the youth communicate their thoughts well in conversation, and do they seem to understand what is said to them?

Maintaining a positive self-image is another critical element for someone entering the world of work. Individuals with confidence can recognize their potential and promote themselves to employers.

Helping youth to discover the wonderful talents and gifts they have is one way to promote and build a positive self-image.

Suggestions

- Observe what your youth is good at and take the time to praise them. Some youth may not excel in school subjects, but they have developed many other valuable skills and qualities through informal learning. Recognizing those skills and qualities is valuable, and telling your youth what you have observed is very important for them to hear.
- Encourage your youth to complete both the My Skills and My Qualities exercises in the student workbook. As a supplement to this, begin a journal or portfolio that lists all the skills and qualities they have acquired, along with some evidence representing those skills. For example, this could include report cards, a sample of their work, or an account of how they used and demonstrated a skill or quality.
- When youth are encountering challenges in a certain area, it is important to provide them with constructive feedback. In other words, avoid criticizing them. Instead, point out what the challenge is and invite them to provide ideas on how to address the issue. You might also want to add some suggestions about how they can improve or correct the problem.
- Regardless of success or failure, ensure that you praise your youth if they have put effort into an activity. Helping them to deal with failure will be of great benefit in fostering a positive self-image.
- Coaches are not expected to have the solution for or skills required to address every challenge. They do, however, have a network of friends, relatives, co-workers (and more) that might be able to help. Such networks are essential in effectively supporting youth.

Pointers for Helping Youth

Basic Approaches to Help Youth with the Student Workbook

The student workbook has been designed for youth to complete exercises on their own or with your help. Even when they complete an exercise on their own, you ought to discuss it and assist them in processing or using the information.

Since you know the youth well, the approach you use will be up to you. Here are two possible basic approaches, with guidelines on when each could be used.

Independent Approach

This approach works well for youths who

- have good reading-comprehension skills
- are able to make decisions
- are good at following written instructions
- like working by themselves

This approach requires that you as a coach first discuss the purpose of the exercise with the youth, stressing that answers to questions in the workbook are neither right nor wrong. They then complete the exercise. Following this, they discuss and share their responses with you.

Co-work Approach

This approach works well for youth who have any one or more of the following:

- difficulties with understanding what they read
- a diagnosed or suspected learning challenge that could make the task difficult to complete independently
- challenges working by themselves
- a physical challenge that would make paper-and-pencil tasks difficult

Using this type of approach, you and the youth will read the instructions together.

To ensure the youth understands what to do, you may want to ask them some questions. If they do not understand a specific word or a statement, you should try to

explain it in words that make sense to them. After exercises are completed, you should discuss their answers with them.

It is critical, when using this approach, that you do not influence the youth's answers. For example, you should not give your opinion or make some type of remark about their answers.

Scheduling Career-Development Time

In this fast-paced world, both coaches and youths often have very hectic schedules. While helping the youth in the career journey is important, a number of other activities are of course also important in your lives. Ensuring that career development remains one of the important priorities is critical.

Career development is an ongoing process. In other words, simply completing the exercises in the workbook does not mean that the journey or task is complete. So, it is important to establish a plan and a pace that will work for all involved. Therefore, it is recommended that you and the youth set up a weekly or bi-weekly schedule to work on some of the activities and talk about careers. Time given to such a discussion could vary from one to two hours, depending on your schedules. The important point is for both you and the youth to schedule and agree upon a specific, regular time.

Note

Some young people will want to rush through the exercises. This may be because they like doing them or simply to finish them. As a coach, your role will be to encourage them to work at a reasonable pace and to always discuss each exercise before and after each has been completed.

Career Coaching and Using the Student Workbook

Career Coaching

Several goals can be achieved during the middle or junior high school years. These will ensure that the youth has a solid foundation in the early stages of the career journey. These goals may include

- assisting the youth in discovering their passions, skills, and personal qualities
- motivating the youth to keep the right academic options open as they move into high school
- setting the stage for career conversations
- expanding their knowledge of the world of work

Starting career discussions and working on the career journey at an early age is important. It will ensure that the youth has the information and resources required to make informed decisions as they move from school to work. The process is ongoing. You, as a career coach, will provide the encouragement and support required to help keep the youth focused.

Both you and the youth should approach this journey with minds open to a variety of possibilities. Some young people are able to identify a career goal early in the process. Most young people will probably change their goals over time. This is because they will be exposed to a variety of experiences and knowledge as they mature. Certainly, as a coach, you should not be concerned if the youth alters career plans throughout the junior and senior high years. This might indicate that they are considering and analyzing information in order to reach an informed career decision.

Task 1: Identifying Interests

The first task a career coach will work on is helping youth discover interests.

Two exercises in the student workbook (**What I Really, Really, Really Like**, Parts 1 and 2) can help identify interests. The first exercise involves reading statements and indicating whether the activity identified is something the youth likes.

Depending on your assessment of the youth's ability to complete each exercise, you will use either an independent or co-work approach.

At the end of the exercise, the youth will write down the two (or, in the case of a tie, three) cluster areas (Arts and Recreation; Business, Management, and Office; Hands On; Law and Government; Medicine and Health; People; Science and Technology) that interest them most.

Identifying Sample Occupations

For the second exercise, youth are asked to go to the **Sample Occupations** lists and circle occupations that fall under the cluster areas they identified in the first task. They should circle an occupation they like or want to explore further. The youth is also asked to circle any occupation they are unfamiliar with. The circling of unfamiliar occupations is important, as the youth should not rule out any occupation until they understand what it is.

Important

Your youth should circle a minimum of 10 occupations. If they circle fewer than 10, they should be encouraged to look at all the other clusters. By looking at other clusters, they may identify other occupations of potential interest.

Some youth, even when they have 10 or more occupations, see appealing occupations in some of the other cluster lists. Encourage them to circle those occupations too. **There is no limit on the number of occupations circled.**

There is also a section in the student workbook for them to list occupations that do not appear in the cluster list. In addition, they can add lists of occupations generated by any online assessments they complete.

It is critical for the parent or other adult involved as a coach not to make negative comments about the occupations that are circled. This stage is about exploring and not ruling out options.

Alternate Approaches

Several other approaches can be used to assist youth in identifying their interests. Sometimes a youth prefers other approaches, such as discussion or online surveys. It is always helpful to use a variety of approaches when exploring interests. As a career coach, you can then help identify strong interests that seem to consistently appear. For example, the youth might consistently demonstrate that they enjoy working with people.

Remember, the more approaches used, the greater the chances of identifying strong interests.

Here are examples of other approaches.

Observe and chat: You may have noted that the youth enjoys a number of hobbies and activities. These can provide additional information about their interests. They can also confirm interests. The more times the youth responds with the same “like” (e.g., expressing interest in working with their hands), the more likely it is that this is a strong interest, which you can use to identify potential occupations to explore.

This approach uses a simple technique. First, as a career coach, through observation, you can identify activities the youth seems to enjoy (e.g., sports, a school subject, computer work). Next, confirm that it is an activity they enjoy. Finally, ask an open-ended question, such as “*What is it you like about this activity?*”

Some youth will readily be able to identify what they like about the activity. This information is then used to identify new interests or to confirm interests previously identified.

Other youth do not readily respond to this type of open-ended question. They may simply respond, “*I just like it*” or “*I don’t know.*” When this happens, it may be helpful to ask more specific or closed-end questions. For example, “*is it learning new ways to win playing a video game?*” or “*is it because you like helping others?*”

Quizzes: Another way to explore interests is to use online quizzes. **It is important to note that quizzes or tests should only be used to begin discussion and exploration or to confirm observations and to further discussions that you have had with the youth.** See your Web Resources handout for website addresses on these and other sites.

Now the two of you are ready to brainstorm. The youth can create a list of all the occupations they think relate to a specific interest. For example, if the outdoors is an interest, brainstorm ideas about occupations that relate to working in an outdoor environment.

Task 2: Researching Occupations

The second task is to work with the youth to find out more about occupations that seem to support their interests.

The student workbook contains a section entitled **My Research**. This section can be used to help the youth begin finding out more about the occupations they circled or listed. Initially, career websites or the youth's school or guidance counsellor may assist in providing access to current websites used to explore specific occupations. These websites provide a variety of information, such as descriptions of occupations, salaries, educational or training paths, job prospects, etc. Some occupations may be accompanied by short videos. Several other websites in the **Web Resources** handout may be used to support this investigation.

Suggestion

Coaches are strongly advised to visit these websites before working with youth on the research activities. Once you feel comfortable using these websites, it will be easier for you to help.

The next step is to gather information so the youth can decide if they are still interested in the occupations they circled. An exercise, entitled **Questions**, found in the student workbook was developed to help in this process. This exercise contains questions the youth should answer for each of the occupations they circled. The questions are

- What did you like about this occupation?
- What did you not like about this occupation?
- What level of education and training (e.g., high school, community college, apprenticeship, university, postgraduate university) would you need to work in this field?

The youth is then asked to check one of the following three statements:

- I think this is a career I might like.
- I'm not sure whether I would like to work in this type of occupation, but I would like to find out more about it.
- I definitely do not feel this is the type of career I would want.

If the youth has checked either the first or second box, they are asked to write down that occupation on the **Possibilities List** in the student workbook. If the third box has been checked, they do not add that occupation to the **Possibilities List**.

This process is continued until questions have been answered on all the occupations that were circled.

Since researching occupations can be challenging, working with the youth on this task would be beneficial. Some youth, however, can conduct their own research. After the completion of each occupation researched, you should

- review the youth's answers with them
- discuss the pros and cons of the occupation

Suggestions

- Researching occupations can take quite a bit of time. Youth should not rush through the research and the answering of questions. You may want to suggest that they look up only one or two occupations per session.
- Only occupations that your youth has identified as ones they like or want to know more about should be added to the Possibilities List. At this point we are only exploring, not identifying, a final career choice.
- Many youth may need to obtain more information about specific occupations. Some youth can gain a better understanding of an occupation by talking to people who work in that field. Another way to gather more information is through volunteer work.
- Youth at the junior and senior high levels can benefit from having discussions with their teachers about the connection between their courses and the world of work. In high school, youth may wish to consider a Co-operative Education course or the Options and Opportunities Program to enhance their career exploration. Ask about courses and programs that may be available at your schools.

Task 3: Identifying Skills and Personal Qualities

Once interests and possible occupations have been identified, career-seeking youth need to begin exploring their skills and personal qualities. Each occupation requires both common and unique sets of skills and qualities. Your role as a coach now is to help the youth reflect on the skills and personal qualities they may need to pursue occupations on their **Possibilities List**. Plans may also have to be made to assist the youth in developing or enhancing these skills and personal qualities.

The student workbook provides exercises to assist you in helping youth examine each of these areas. These exercises will help youth to

- understand the types of skills and personal qualities they will need to be successful in a particular job
- verify the skills and personal qualities they have now
- identify the skills and personal qualities they may need to enhance as they progress through middle or junior and senior high

These exercises, just like the earlier interest activities, require that you, as a coach, use either an independent or co-work approach. Regardless of the approach, it is important to review the results with the youth. You may also need to provide support to find ways to improve specific skills or personal qualities.

My Skills Exercise

The **My Skills** exercise requires youth to review several statements regarding skills. They are then asked to rate themselves in relation to the skills. This exercise is designed to help youth to identify what is referred to as the essential skills. These are a set of skills required in almost all occupations throughout Canada. They include communication, computer competency, writing, reading, mathematics, and problem solving.

You should be careful not to comment on the youth's answers. The goal, at this point, is to gain insight into the youth's perception of their skills. After the exercise has been completed, some of the responses may be revisited. For example, the youth may have underestimated their skills. You, as a coach, could then provide examples of how they have demonstrated that skill.

Similarly, after the exercise has been completed, you may want to ask the youth to provide a rationale for their skill rating. For example, the youth may have rated mathematics as strong but be struggling with math in school. A follow-up question asking why they feel this skill is strong is encouraged.

The next step will be to process this exercise with the youth. It will involve the youth's

- making a list of the skills (e.g., computer competency, problem solving) they think they are average or strong in
- adding skills not mentioned in the exercise (As a coach, you may be able to assist them in identifying skills they have acquired informally, such as being good at cooking or at following directions.)
- making a list of the skills they feel they are not strong in or are uncertain about
- developing plans to work on the skills they are not strong in (This can be challenging, and so you might want to talk to a teacher about ways to help strengthen certain skills.)

My Qualities Exercise

After completing the **My Skills** exercise, the youth will work on the **My Qualities** exercise. This exercise asks them to examine their personal qualities (confidence, ability to get along with others, attitude to change, aptitude for teamwork, and responsibility).

Once this exercise has been completed, you are encouraged to discuss the answers with the youth. Specifically, you are encouraged to

- discuss their strong qualities and identify ways they have demonstrated them in the past (This type of discussion is helpful in terms of assisting youth in developing the ability to prove or provide evidence to back up their claims. This is a very basic skill that is often required in job interviews.)
- identify areas for improvement (Once identified, discussing *how* to improve personal qualities is important.)

Examples:

What are some ways you can feel better about yourself?

- Some strategies might involve
 - taking time each day to talk about all the positives achieved
 - writing a letter to the youth describing all the wonderful gifts you have observed in them

How can you get along better with others?

- One strategy might involve
 - discussing some instances when the youth has had a problem getting along with others and talking about different approaches they might take in the future

What are some things you can do to better deal with change?

- Some strategies might involve
 - listing a number of changes that have taken place in the past (e.g., new teacher, new friends) and talking about the positive effects of those changes
 - offering some suggestions about how the youth might best deal with change

How can you be a better team member?

- One strategy might involve
 - discussing some instances when the youth had difficulty as a member of a team (e.g., sports team, school-project team) (Identify what the issues were and talk about other approaches that might be successful in the future.)

What are some ways you can take on more responsibility?

- One strategy might involve
 - identifying instances in the past when the youth did not act responsibly, such as in failing to feed a pet or do a chore (discuss the types of challenges encountered because of irresponsibility). Talk about ways they could keep themselves on track with their responsibilities, such as by keeping a chore chart that is filled out each day, or using messages on a cellphone or computer, etc.

The Ongoing Role of a Career Coach

After the creation of the initial **Possibilities List**, some things may not get done. The following are some activities to keep youth engaged in the process:

- Continue encouraging and providing opportunities for the youth to explore more about themselves. This can be accomplished by
 - using some of the alternative approaches listed above, such as the quizzes or chatting about observations you have made
 - encouraging the youth to keep a journal or develop a portfolio (This will help them to describe activities they like and new skills they have developed.)
 - recommending that the youth use the Tips and Ideas in the student workbook to further explore their skills and qualities
- Review the **Possibilities List** with the youth on a regular basis and discuss researching occupations on the list in more depth. You might, for example,
 - arrange for the youth to talk to a person in a job of interest to find out about it
 - visit websites that are dedicated to specific fields of work
 - encourage the youth to ask a guidance counsellor for information
 - discuss volunteering as a way to gain hands-on experience
- As the youth gathers more information, has discussions with you, and discovers more about themselves, they may want to delete some of the occupations from their list. They may also want to add new occupations to the list, by using the **Sample Occupations** or researching websites related to careers in Nova Scotia.
- Prior to high school, you and the youth can review the educational requirements for occupations that remain on the **Possibilities List**, identifying high school courses that may be required to pursue the career. For example, they may discover that specific science, mathematics, or language courses are required. They may also discover that, to work in a specific career, they would need to go to community college or university.

Important

For a variety of reasons, not all youth will be able to cope with the academic demands of certain high school courses or with post-secondary education. While this may eventually eliminate the possibility of pursuing specific occupations, there will be related occupations the youth might eventually pursue. For example, a youth may wish to become a veterinarian but lack the skills to cope with the academic demands. However, occupations related to the field of interest, such as that of veterinary assistant or animal-care attendant, that might also be appealing. As a coach, your role will be to help the youth to identify related occupations or find someone who can, such as a guidance counsellor, or even a career counsellor.

Suggestion

To ensure that your youth realizes this is an ongoing process, it is important to set up some type of schedule to review and explore occupations on a regular basis. A review even only once a month will ensure that your youth remains focused on the future.

PACC Junior High Quick Reference

While the flow and order of activities and discussion will vary from youth to youth, the following reference table outlines one potential flow for career-development activities:

Step	Activity	Details
1	Review this parent guide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will provide you with an overall view of the career-development process and your role as a PACC junior high coach.
2	Visit the career websites that provide information related to Nova Scotia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become familiar with the content of these websites and where information is stored. This will assist you when the youth begins to research occupations
3	Introduce the youth to the student workbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the youth know that the workbook is designed to help them recognize their wonderful skills and qualities and the jobs they may want. Explain that your role is to help them with this and to discuss careers.
4	Determine interests from the What I Really, Really, Really Like exercises. Some optional methods for exploring interests may be found in this parent guide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce that one of the most important aspects when looking at careers is what makes us happy. The youth answers questions, recording the number of check marks in each section (e.g., Hands On) from Part 1. The youth will write the names of the top sections (e.g., People, Science, Technology, etc.) in the appropriate spaces at the end (Step 1 of Part 2).
5	Match occupations to interests from the Sample Occupations List .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth reviews occupations that fall under the two cluster areas where they had the highest number of check marks. The youth circles occupations they think interest them or want to find more information about.

Step	Activity	Details
6	Research occupations and create a Possibilities List .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupations are researched using a variety of career websites. • After reviewing information on different occupations, the youth will answer a series of questions. • At the end, the youth determines if this is an area that still interests them or if they want more information about it. If either is the case, the name of that occupation is placed on the Possibilities List. • If after reading about an occupation the youth wants to pursue it, this occupation is written on the Possibilities List.
7	Complete the My Skills and My Qualities exercises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the youth in identifying their strong skills and developing strategies to strengthen weak skills. • Discuss how the youth can use their strong personal qualities in a variety of situations. • Discuss how to improve personal qualities that are not strong.
8	Consider ongoing activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the Possibilities List on a regular basis and conduct more research into occupations (e.g., by talking to others or examining websites). • Update the Possibilities List by deleting occupations no longer of interest or by adding new occupations that the youth has researched. • Encourage the youth to engage in further activities and exercises to find out more about their interests, skills, and personal qualities.

Assets and Challenges

Everyone has assets that assist them in both life and work. At the same time, we all have challenges. These can include either temporary or ongoing physical, health, mental health, and learning challenges. The degree and impact of these challenges will vary depending upon the situation or task. This could result in the need to provide various types of support to assist youth in certain situations.

While these challenges may have an impact on some training or career choices, this does not mean the individual cannot be successful in their career and life journey. The key will be to ensure that the youth's individual needs are identified, appropriate resources researched, and supports put in place.

Here are a few suggestions that might be helpful:

Post-Secondary Education or Other Training: Both coach and youth should discuss the types of supports available with staff of various post-secondary institutions or training programs. Supports include technical devices, tutoring, note takers, physical assistance, reduced course load, etc.

Financial Support: Research any financial assistance that may be available through a variety of sources. This might include support groups, government funding, etc.

Provide the Personal Support: You have been and continue to be a source of motivation and encouragement for your child. While challenges do create twists in the career journey, your emotional support will guide them, as they navigate those twists and turns. Families are strongly urged to begin to discuss the options and supports with guidance counsellors, school staff, and other organizations. Numerous organizations provide programs and supports to help people make the transition to post-secondary education or work. It is a good idea to begin exploring options as soon as possible to ensure that the youth receives the supports they may require during their career and life journey.

Closing Messages

The following are some key messages to help parents assist youth in the career journey:

The road to a career is not a straight line.

The PACC Junior High program recognizes that each youth, their family, their community, and their experiences are unique. Add to this the fact that life and the world of work are constantly changing, and it means that the youth's career journey will not be a straight line. It will be filled with mountains and valleys and twists and turns. Given that the youth still has many years to mature and grow, both of you should remain flexible in terms of approaching career choices.

Keep options open.

Given these twists and turns in the career journey, keeping options open with respect to school subjects, training programs, and work and life experiences is important. People with only one career goal may someday realize that their one choice is not possible (for a variety of reasons). Those who keep their options open are better able to navigate the road to a new career when a major obstacle suddenly appears. One way to keep options open is to select high school courses that will allow the youth to qualify for education beyond grade 12.

This is the youth's journey.

While your role as a coach is extremely important, your keeping in mind that this is not your journey and that the final career destination will be one the youth must live and cope with is critical. Because the youth is unique, some of the choices they make, along with the speed and direction travelled, will likely be different from those of your own experience. While every coach wants the best for their youth, the final decision must be made by the youth.

Keep happiness as the goal.

One goal that parents always have is for their youth to be happy. The PACC Junior High program starts with exercises to help youth discover what makes them happy. As they mature and discover more about themselves, this will become even more clear.

It is critical for them to look at lots of occupations. The Possibilities List should change as the youth discovers more about themselves. The key is always to go back to the question, "*Would this make you happy?*" Happiness in a career impacts our health and success in life. As a coach, if you keep bringing the youth back to this key point, you will assist them in making good choices. The youth perceives you as one of the key resources they have for career development. There may be times when motivating them or communicating with them is difficult. However, you have the skills and qualities required to overcome these challenges and be an effective career coach.

Glossary

Apprenticeship: a form of post-secondary education for both young and mature individuals who want to be certified to work in a skilled trade. It is mixture of onthejob and technical training in which skilled trades professionals (certified journeypersons) pass on knowledge and skills to learners (apprentices).

Career: the sum of all work (both paid and unpaid), learning, and leisure activities during a person's life.

Career Path: the route taken by people through their jobs, occupations, education, and volunteer and work experiences. This is not always intentional or does not always happen as planned.

Co-op Education: provides real-world work experience for students as they explore careers. In Nova Scotia, students can earn a high school credit for placements, which require that students complete in-school as well as workplace learning experiences.

Demographics: the factors that identify or distinguish the population of an area. This may include age, gender, marital status, education, occupation, location, etc.

Essential Skills: basic abilities, as defined by the Government of Canada, required for learning all other more complex skills. More information can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills.html>

Formal Learning: structured education, training, or certification that takes place in a recognized program or certified institution.

Informal Learning: skills gained through experience, self-directed learning, travelling, volunteering, etc. This type of learning usually does not give the person any certification.

Job: a specific position in which a person is employed. This can be full- or part-time and short- or long-term. An emergency room nurse at a hospital has a particular type of job, while nursing is an occupation.

Job Shadow: a one-day career exploration in which a student can observe and learn about a job.

Lifelong Learning: the process of continually developing and learning new skills and knowledge throughout a person's career. This can be organized by the individual and may be supported by the employer.

Occupation: a group of similar jobs that exist across industries and occupations (e.g., a carpenter may work as a framer, cabinetmaker, furniture maker, boat builder, form worker, restorer, etc.).

Post-Secondary Education: formal programs offered through apprenticeship, community college, university, and private training institutes and colleges.

Red Seal: the Canadian standard of excellence for skilled trades. Having a red seal provides mobility for certified journey people to work interprovincially.

Skills: aptitudes and abilities developed at any time and through a variety of ways, including formal education, informal learning, hobbies, etc.

Soft Skills: abilities required for success in the modern workplace. These include skills related to social interaction, communication, attitudes, work ethic, problem solving, critical thinking, and more.

Junior High
Parent Guide

**Parents as
Career Coaches**

