



Parents as Career Coaches

Student Workbook

Senior High

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Parents as
Career Coaches

Student
Workbook

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Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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Introduction

Now that you are in high school, you may be wondering, What do I do next? That is not an easy question for many students to answer. A combination of this workbook, other information, and help from people close to you might make the answer easier.

As you begin to answer that question, it might be good to keep the following points in mind:

- This is your life; you want to make decisions that will make you happy.
- Because you likely have much to learn about yourself and about careers, you will probably not decide overnight. It may take some time, and so it is good to start now.
- Do not worry if you change your mind as you learn more about yourself and about occupations. You may change your mind several times, but that is normal.
- Even though it is your life and decision, others can help you. Sometimes we call people who help us coaches.
- The best way to use this workbook is to talk things over with your mom, dad, or another adult who is important in your life. This person will be your coach.

Tips for Using This Workbook

- Take your time.
- Try an exercise and then take a break.
- Talk to your coach about the exercises you have completed or new ideas you have come up with.
- Review your answers in about six months or a year and change them if they don't fit anymore. With time, your answers may change.
- Use the Action Plan handout to set goals for what you need to do.
- Use the List of Occupations to Research handout to see all the information you have collected. This will help you to decide which careers might be best for you.

In this workbook, you will see the adjective **post-secondary**. Post-secondary institutions include university, community college, apprenticeship, or private career college.

Career Map

Where Are You on This Journey?

As with going on a trip, it takes time to get where you want to be on your career journey. There are many roads to travel and places to visit along the way. In thinking about your career journey, which of the boxes in the Career Map flow chart best describes where you are right now? Place an "X" in the box (or boxes) you feel best represents where you are. You may find you are in a few of the boxes. After you have marked where you are, talk about your findings with your coach.

Exploring Interests and Skills

What do I like?

What skills do I have?

What is important to me?



Identifying Career Possibilities

Find out what careers I might like that would make me happy.



The rest of this workbook will give you some information to help you to move along on this map. As you do, you might want to come back to this page and place an "X" at the new point you have reached in your career journey. Keep in mind that, as you discover more about yourself and the world of work, revisiting some of these areas may be helpful.

Researching Careers

What training is required?

Will there be jobs?

What do I like about certain careers?

Sample careers (e.g., volunteering, part-time or summer jobs, talking to others).



Taking Action

Take the right courses and get the marks required.

Apply for training.

Get the money for training (e.g., loans, savings, scholarships).

Land a job (securing the skills to create a resumé, applying for jobs, and developing interview skills).

Exploring Your Interests

The first step is to look at what you like. This is important to know, as you most likely want a career where you can do what you like or love. Begin exploring what you like by answering some questions about yourself.

Checklist of What I Like

Check off any of the following activities, subjects, and traits that you like:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> being a leader | <input type="checkbox"/> selling something |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being part of a team | <input type="checkbox"/> taking care of or helping children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being physically active | <input type="checkbox"/> helping seniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being creative | <input type="checkbox"/> using computers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> taking risks | <input type="checkbox"/> using technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> designing | <input type="checkbox"/> creating with technological devices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> organizing spaces or items | <input type="checkbox"/> fixing technological devices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doing research | <input type="checkbox"/> using tools or machinery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> math | <input type="checkbox"/> working by myself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> science | <input type="checkbox"/> working inside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> studying animals | <input type="checkbox"/> working outdoors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> earning my own money | <input type="checkbox"/> working with my hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working on or fixing equipment or vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping other people to solve their problems | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping others to learn something | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helping people who are sick | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> playing a musical instrument | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> playing sports | |

Another Way to Discover Your Interests

You can also find out more about yourself and your interests by looking at activities you do. Here is a way to do that.

Non-School-Life Interests

1. Make a list of three to five activities you like to do in your spare time.
Examples: dancing, playing video games, playing sports, building things, helping others.
2. Next to each activity, write down what you like about doing that activity. Examples: Maybe you like dancing because you like music and being physically active. Or maybe you like playing video games because you enjoy figuring out ways to win.

| Activity | What I Like about this Activity |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

School-Life Interests

1. Now list three to five subjects in school that you like the best.
2. Next to each school subject, write why you like it.

Example: Maybe you like biology because you are interested in how the human body works.

| Subject | What I Like about This Subject |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

Other ways to find out about your interests and what you like is by doing activities on a career website. Speak to your guidance counsellor to get access to some of these sites.

| Activity | What I Like about this Activity |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

Knowing what you like is one of the most important steps in your career journey.

My Interests List

Directions

- In the space below, please write down all the items (interest words or phrases) you checked off in the first exercise, "Checklist of What I Like" (p. 4).
- Then write down your answers to what I like (non-school & school).

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These are my two strongest interests:

1.

2.

Exploring Your Skills

Before you begin researching occupations that you might like, it is important to learn even more about yourself. One area important to understand concerns your skills. Skills are critical, as you need specific types of skills to be a success in your career. The many types of skills include the following:

Personal-Management Skills

These are qualities or attitudes you have developed important to success in life, work, and school. Employers hire people with good personal-management skills.

Transferable Skills

These are skills required in most jobs.

Job-Specific Skills

These are skills required for a specific job (e.g., being able to use a specific tool or computer program).

Personal-Management Skills

Rating Your Personal-Management Skills

Personal-management skills are developed over time. Some skills you may already have, some you are beginning to develop, and others you will develop later. Think about how you act at home, at school, and with your friends. Then rate your present personal-management skills by placing a check mark in the box below that best matches your present skills.

Rating Hints

Good: Give yourself this rating if you show this skill almost all of the time, in different situations.

Starting to Develop This Skill: Give yourself this rating if you sometimes show this skill but don't show it most of the time (e.g., you are always on time for a movie but often late for school).

Have Not Yet Developed This Skill: Give yourself this rating if most of the time you do not show this skill (e.g., you find it very hard to deal with small matters when they change; you get very upset when your schedule changes or friends move away).

| Skill | Good | Starting to Develop this Skill | Have Not Yet Developed this Skill |
|--|------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Being on time | | | |
| Being organized | | | |
| Being Honest with yourself | | | |
| Self-confidence | | | |
| Setting goals for yourself (e.g., in schoolwork, personal life) | | | |
| Taking care of your personal health | | | |
| Working hard at a task | | | |
| Ability to work on your own | | | |
| Ability to work with others | | | |
| Accepting criticism | | | |
| Accepting responsibility | | | |
| Being willing to learn | | | |
| Coping when something changes | | | |
| Learning from mistakes | | | |

Transferable Skills

Rating Your Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are very important. They help you to get a job and move into new jobs over time. Think about activities you do at home and in school. Then rate your present transferable skills by placing a check mark in the box below that best matches your present skills.

Rating Hints

Good: Give yourself this rating if you show this skill almost all of the time, in different situations.

Starting to Develop This Skill: Give yourself this rating if you sometimes show this skill but do not show it all of the time.

Have Not Yet Developed This Skill: Give yourself this rating if most of the time you do not show this skill.

You have already developed some transferable skills both in school and in your daily life that will help when you get a job.

| Skill | Good | Starting to Develop this Skill | Have Not Yet Developed this Skill |
|---|------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Communication Writing and speaking well and clearly | | | |
| Computer competency Know how to use a computer to create documents, find information, etc. | | | |
| Creativity Use your imagination to come up with ideas | | | |
| Decision making Have the confidence and skills to make good judgments | | | |
| Managing information Know where to find information and how to use it to solve problems | | | |
| Mathematics competency Solve math problems using calculators or other resources (e.g., cash register) | | | |
| Multi-tasking Able to work on more than one thing at a time | | | |
| Problem solving Figure out what the problem is and the best way to fix it | | | |

We learn and develop skills in many ways. Would you like to find out your best ways to learn? You may already know of some websites on this subject. Visit websites provided by your school guidance counsellor to ensure that you have the most relevant sites.

Discussing Your Skills with Your Coach

- It often helps to get the thoughts and opinions of others. It might be helpful to discuss your ratings and answers with your coach.
- In chatting with your coach, give examples of how you could demonstrate the skills you rated as good.
- The two of you might also talk about some of the skills you rated as “Starting to Develop” or “Have Not Yet Developed.” You might discuss how you could develop or improve these skills.
- If you come up with some ideas, write them on the Action Plan handout.

What Do Employers Want?

Here are some of the skills many employers say they want when hiring someone. You will probably notice that many of them are skills you thought about in the earlier exercises.

Place a check mark next to the skills you already have. Then, as you develop more, check them off too.

- Accountability
- Adaptability (Cope with change)
- Ability to communicate
- Computer competency
- Ability to find and use information (research)
- Sociability (getting along with other people)
- Reliability
- Ability in mathematics
- Multi-tasking
- Organization
- Reading and writing
- Problem solving
- Willingness to learn
- Ability to work by yourself

You can also assess your employability skills by using online quizzes. Speak to your guidance counsellor or teacher for such quizzes.

Identifying Possible Careers

Using Interests to Identify Possible Careers

One of the obvious goals you should have is to find a career you will like. Finding occupations that support your interests is one way you can begin to identify possible careers. Here is how you can do that.

1. Determine the two strongest interests on your My Interests List (p. 7).
2. The next step is to write down any occupations that are connected to those interests on the List of Occupations to Research handout.
 - a. After you have written down as many occupations as you can think of, ask your coach, friends, teachers, and others to contribute ideas of occupations that are associated with your interests.
 - b. Include as many occupations as you can; do not rule any out just yet.

Example:

Helping people learn something

- Teacher
- Corporate Trainer
- Occupational Therapist
- Speech Therapist

Example:

Working with my hands

- Surgeon
- Mechanic
- Carpenter
- Gardener

Using Clusters to Find More Occupations You Might Like

It is important to consider as many occupations as possible. The reason is to make sure you don't skip over an occupation that might be the perfect one for you.

The cluster lists, which are located on the cluster list handout,

How to Use Cluster Lists

- Look at all the occupations you have put on your “List of Occupations to Research” handout.
- Pick one of the occupations you like most. For example, if you said crime-scene investigator, that is an occupation that falls in the Law and Government and Science and Engineering clusters.
- Look at all the other occupations in those cluster lists and circle those you might be interested in learning more about.
- If you do not know anything about an occupation in a chosen cluster list, circle it as well. The reason you will circle one of these is because you will need to know more about it to find out if it could be a possibility.
- Add the circled occupations to your “List of Occupations to Research” handout.

Researching Careers

Some Questions You Might Want to Consider about Occupations

While reading about occupations, you might ask yourself many questions that can help you decide whether this is the type of work you might want to do in the future.

The following are questions you might want to ask yourself about these occupations. Sometimes it is helpful to discuss these with someone (e.g., your coach).

- Based on what I said I was interested in, is this the kind of work I think I would enjoy?
- What educational level and training would I require (e.g., grade 12, community college, university, other)?
- Based on what I read, what kinds of courses will I need to take in high school?
- Do I get fairly good marks in these subjects?
- Will there be jobs in this field?
- How much money could I make?

How to Get Answers

Speak to the guidance counsellor or a teacher at your school to find the latest career websites. These can open new possibilities and give you valuable local information about occupations.

Other Ways to Find Out about Occupations

The Internet is one place to find information, but there are many other resources.

Talk to other students who are taking the training you are thinking about.

This could be done with the help of your relatives, neighbours, teachers, or others who might know the name of a student you can talk to. You could also call or visit the student centre at a university or community college and ask to talk to someone there.

Do volunteer work.

Try to find volunteer work in the field you are interested in, and be sure to talk to people at the place you volunteer about the jobs they do.

Co-operative education

There is no better way to explore a career than to enroll in co-operative education courses. Inquire about these at your school.

Find part-time or summer work.

Just like volunteering, when you are looking for work, try to find jobs that would give you a chance to learn more about the type of work you are interested in. For example, if you are thinking of becoming a nurse or doctor, try to get employment in a hospital or somewhere else that nurses or doctors work.

Talk to people who work in jobs that you think you might be interested in.

Your parents or other relatives might know people you could talk to.

It is sometimes helpful if you have a list of questions written down before you meet with someone. Your coach can help you put together a list of questions.

Research Pointers

- It is a good idea to research only one occupation at a time. Take your time and find out as much as you can about the occupation.
- Make a list of what things are important to you, like wages, hours of work, skills you enjoy using, etc. As you learn about the occupation, you might find it either meets what you think is important, or it does not.
- If at any point during your research you decide that you do not like this occupation, just cross it off your “List of Occupations to Research” handout
- You can use the notes section to write down things you like and do not like about the occupation.

Potential Occupations List Handout

After researching occupations that you added to your “List of Occupations to Research,” you should add those you are still interested in to the “Potential Occupations List” handout. Remember, adding an occupation does not mean you cannot change your mind later and take it off.

FAQs

Money FAQs

Where can you find information about student loans?

Nova Scotia Student Assistance (<http://novascotia.ca/studentassistance/>)

- Get information on what is available and who qualifies.
- Apply online or download applications.
- Check on the status of an application.

How can you find out about bursaries and scholarships?

Bursaries and scholarships are funding that does not have to be repaid. They usually have to be applied for. So, it is important to try to find out who is offering them, how to apply, and when to apply. It is usually a good idea to apply for as many of these as you qualify for. Here are some ways you can find out about bursaries and scholarships.

Ask your guidance counsellor.

Your guidance counsellor will have a list of many local and national bursaries and scholarships available to students.

Conduct an Internet search for bursaries and scholarships.

Often, specific occupational groups and other organizations have online applications for their bursaries and scholarships.

Ask your parent if their workplace, union, or professional group offers bursaries and scholarships to children of employees.

If your parent belongs to a service organization or church group, there may be funds available from these groups.

Check out university and community college websites.

These contain information on the bursaries and scholarships offered.

Post-secondary FAQs

Where can you find information on universities, community colleges, and private career colleges?

Often, the websites for universities, community colleges, and private career colleges have plenty of information that can help you to determine what programs they offer, how to apply to the school, and what scholarships may be offered. Some even have specific information for new students.

Websites for local learning institutions:

Universities and Community Colleges

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Acadia University | www.acadiau.ca |
| Atlantic School of Theology | www.astheology.ns.ca |
| Cape Breton University | www.cbu.ca |
| Dalhousie University | www.dal.ca |
| Mount Saint Vincent University | www.msvu.ca |
| Nova Scotia Agricultural College | www.dal.ca |
| Nova Scotia College of Art & Design | www.nscad.ca |
| Nova Scotia Community College | www.nsccl.ca |
| Saint Mary's University | www.smu.ca |
| St. Francis Xavier University | www.stfx.ca |
| Université Sainte-Anne | www.usaintanne.ca |
| University of King's College | www.ukings.ca |

Private Career Colleges

Private career colleges offer a wide range of programs that are designed to provide training in many occupations. More information on these learning institutions can be found at www.pcc.ednet.ns.ca.

What if you decide against post-secondary education at this time?

Some people are still not exactly sure what they want to do after they graduate from high school. Some reasons for not going directly to university or community college go as follows:

- You have been struggling with some school subjects and need to take additional courses to improve your skills and marks.
- For various reasons, you do not have the money to attend at this time and decide to work first.
- You want more time to make up your mind and have decided to go to work first and maybe attend later.
- Your marks are not high enough to get into the program you want.
- Here are some labour-market facts to consider about attending post-secondary education:
 - In general, people with post-secondary education earn more money.
 - Job opportunities for people with post-secondary education are much greater.

Should you attend post-secondary programs on a part-time basis?

Many people decide to enter post-secondary programs on a part-time basis. Here are a few facts you should consider before making such a decision.

- Although many programs do allow you to attend part-time, some require full-time attendance.
- If you can work and attend training programs part-time, you may be able to set aside some of your money to pay for courses. This might help to reduce your debt when you graduate.
- Part-time study requires that you organize your time to work on courses.
- If you work while studying part-time, you can gain valuable work experiences that will help to build your resumé and skill set.
- It obviously takes longer to complete a post-secondary program when you study part-time.

What is e-learning or distance education?

These are courses you can do from the comfort of your home. Here are a few facts to consider about e-learning.

- You need a computer and Internet access.
- These courses are identical to ones you would take on site.
- They require great self-discipline, as you are responsible for ensuring that you do all the readings, assignments, and tests.
- If you live away from the post-secondary institution, e-learning can allow you to take courses without the travelling.
- Sometimes it will not be possible for you to take all of the courses you require online.
- While you do not have the advantage of asking questions in class, support is provided to you through the online course instructor, and this may include virtual meetings through programs like Skype.

Should you attend university, community college, or private career college?

Each provides high-quality programs. Here are some things to consider:

- The best way to decide is to research the type of work you want to do and what the requirements are.
- By talking to people in the types of careers you are interested in, you can find out more about what training and qualifications are required.

What should you do while you are attending a post-secondary program to help you to get ready for or find a job?

Continue researching the job market to see how often the types of jobs you want are posted and who is hiring people for the type of work you want to do.

Arrange for an informational interview so you can talk directly with employers who hire people in the career you are interested in.

If you can do part-time or volunteer work, co-operative education placements, apprenticeships, etc., in the field you want to work in, this will also help.

Talk with the staff from the student services office. Often, they can give you help with interviewing skills, resumé writing, and potential employer contacts.

Career-decision and Other FAQs

What should you do if you are attending training and change your mind?

It is always difficult to make career decisions. However, if you spend time learning about yourself and researching occupations, you can increase your chances of making a good choice. However, as you learn more, you might change your mind.

- If you go to community college or university, try to take courses that you can transfer credit for to other programs. Credit for many courses during the first year may be transferred to other programs.
- Visit the student services office at the institution you are attending and talk to a counsellor about your options.

What is recognition of prior learning?

This is a process that is used to

- challenge for training credits, based on your life experiences and informal learning
- secure academic credit transfers (For example, if you move to another university or from community college to university, you can apply for credit for specific courses.)

You can find out more about recognition of prior learning by visiting the Prior Learning Centre website (www.priorlearning.ca).

What if you have a disability?

Just like high school, post-secondary institutions offer support to students with disabilities. It is a good idea to start researching before you apply to a post-secondary institution.

- Discuss with your high school guidance counsellor what support, if any, you would need. It will probably be very similar to what you require now.
- Talk to both your high school guidance counsellor and staff from the post-secondary institution about whether full- or part-time studies would be better for you.

What financial resources are available to students with disabilities?

Check out whether there may be any sources of funding you might qualify for to get financial support.

What if you do not have the marks or type of credits required for post-secondary education?

Post-secondary education is not for everyone. It is one way to prepare for a job, but there are others. Here are some things to think about before you leave high school:

- Talk with your parents and guidance counsellor about whether post-secondary education is best for you.
- With your coach, research occupations that will make you happy but do not require post-secondary education.
- In some cases, you may need a bit more education or help. Depending on the type of education you require, there are many options. You can visit Career Resources Centres or enroll in short-term courses, sheltered workshops, and work-experience placements that might be available to you.

High-Five Messages

As you complete junior high, move on to high school, possibly pursue further education or training, and eventually get a job, these five messages are important to keep in mind. They will help you to understand what is happening during your career journey.

Change is constant.

Keep changing with the times.

Learning is continuous.

We learn in many ways, and learning does not stop.

Focus on the journey.

The journey is filled with lots of nice surprises.
Stop along the way, reflect, and embrace the opportunities.

Team up with others.

We all have unique talents and gifts,
so maintain friendships and form new ones.
Friends will help you on your journey.

Follow your dreams.

Never lose sight of your dreams as they will help you
to find true happiness in both your work and your life.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

Senior High
Student Workbook

**Parents as
Career Coaches**

