

Is your teenager in Year 11?

Do you feel confident in offering support about the choices that are available to them? Do you know all you need to know about careers, apprenticeships, qualifications, college/sixth form courses, volunteering and student finance? If not, read on...

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Information • Advice • Guidance

YOU'RE not alone, 89 per cent of parents worry about being able to provide the right advice to their children during exam results time and more than one in four parents are not aware of the options and services available to their teenagers once they leave statutory education.

You play an important part in planning your teenagers' career and the time to start doing that is the beginning of Year 11. Making career choices has never been easy and the world of work is now so complex that you both need to do careful research and planning. Here are some tips to help you:

Remain positive

No matter how complex and daunting career planning and job searching may be, most young people do find a place in work or training.

Help to build a positive self-image for them

Build on their achievements, both in and out of school. Believe in them.

Allow for a change in direction

Few young people choose a career from an early age and never waiver in their choice. Be prepared for your teenager to change direction, encourage them to explore other options and, most importantly, to have back-up plans.

Encourage them to learn from their mistakes

Discovering that a previous career interest is not for them is a positive step in the decision-making process. It helps them focus on a career that will suit them better.

Encourage them to research industry sectors that interest them

When your teenager expresses an interest in a particular career, help them to establish links in that career or industry, encourage them to volunteer or do work experience.

Share your experiences

Remembering that education and opportunities are different now, talk to your teenager about your own experiences of work and study. It is helpful for them to understand the problems you have faced and how you dealt with them.

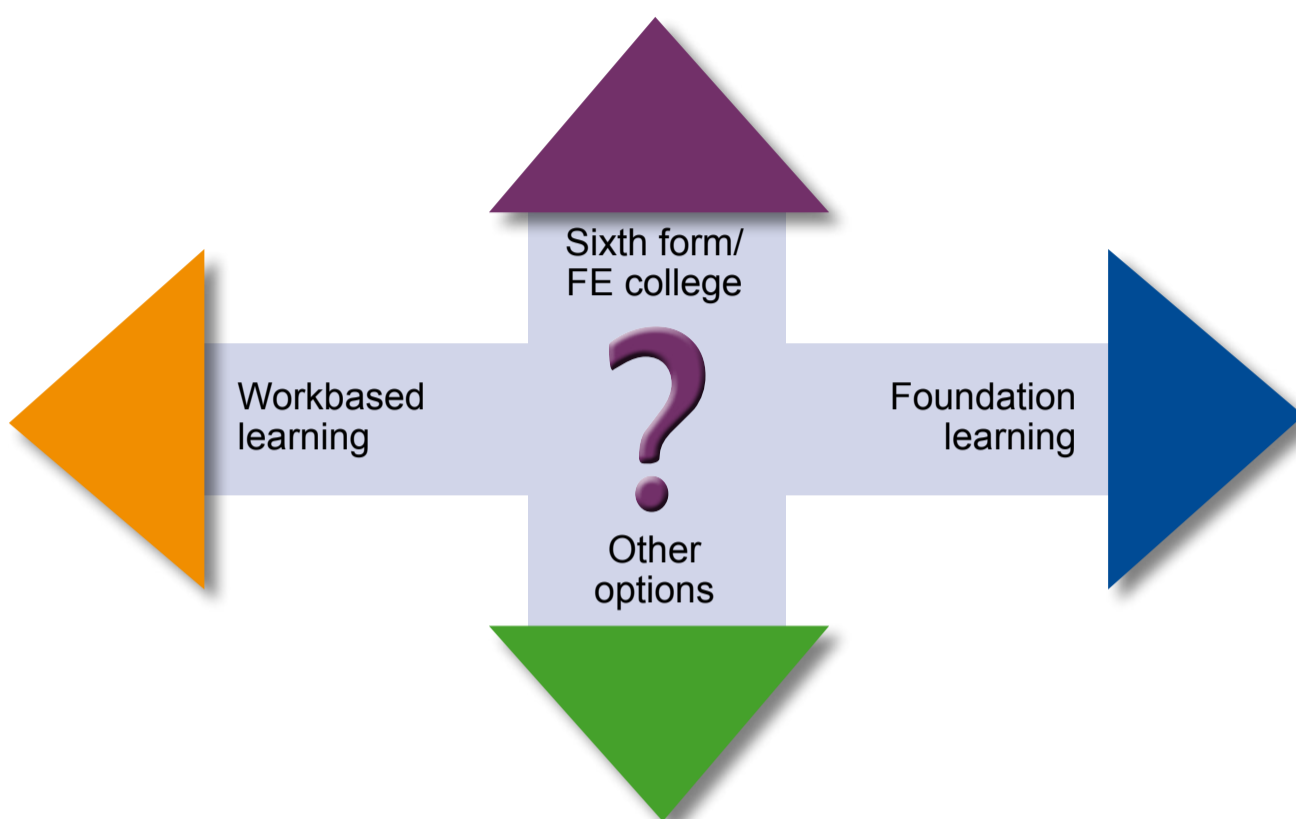
Respect their feelings and privacy

Is there someone else they can trust and confide in? A relative, family friend or professional. No matter how strongly you may feel about what your children are doing, there are times when you need to be able to step back from the situation.

Try to avoid asking them questions such as 'What are you going to be when you grow up?'

These questions are very confronting, instead take the opportunity to talk about career choices whenever they come up, for example, when you are passing a building site or hospital.

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How else can you support your teenager's decision making?

You know them better than anyone, so you can help by:

- discussing what suits them best, to help them work out which option to choose;
- talking to teachers to find out how well they are doing;
- thinking about ways they like to learn;
- finding out as much as possible yourself about what's on offer – new courses, the types of careers and jobs available and financial support.

Remember - help is at hand

Take advantage of the support and advice on offer from school or college tutors as well as Connexions careers advisers, who also operate within North Yorkshire schools and colleges and provide impartial advice and guidance for young people aged 11 to 19 (up to age 25 for young people with learning disabilities).

Connexions careers advisers usually attend parents' events held in schools and colleges and events in local areas, for example, careers and progression events. Discussions remain confidential.

Key options at Year 11

- Sixth form (either at their own school, another school or a sixth form college).
- Further education college.
- An apprenticeship.
- A job with training.

Key steps

In the autumn term, Year 11 students will be:

- exploring the options open to them, www.futures4menorthyorks.com lists all learning opportunities across North Yorkshire;
- attending talks and events at local schools and colleges that interest them;
- finding out about the local job market and apprenticeships (possibly applying for apprenticeships with national companies);
- making decisions about what career path to choose; and
- starting to apply for entry to schools or colleges.

In the spring term of Year 11 students will be:

- continuing with applications to schools or colleges;
- completing applications for apprenticeships and jobs (if this is their chosen route, go to www.apprenticeships.org.uk for more information);
- Finding out about eligibility for the education maintenance allowance (EMA) and applying, if eligible.

The North Yorkshire information, advice and guidance website www.getconnectednow.co.uk gives you access to essential information such as:

- qualifications, all the pathways explained and what the different levels mean - foundation learning, functional skills, key skills, skills for life, diplomas, international baccalaureate, BTECs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications, AS and A levels, foundation degrees, bachelors degrees, HNCS and HNDS and postgraduate qualifications;
- financial support - education maintenance allowance, care to learn and benefits;
- careers - all the options available, career planning, CVs and application forms;
- courses in your area and nationally - the area-wide prospectus, Aim Higher;
- apprenticeships – over 190 types across 10 sectors;
- labour market information - about the local and national job market;
- other support services – transport, substance misuse, sexual health, housing; and
- contacts.

To speak to a Connexions careers adviser contact the school or call 01609 781344. If your teenager has left school and still requires help call 0845 0349577 to talk to an adviser at your local Integrated Youth Support hub.