

Career Planning



It's never too early to begin planning and preparing for a career—and for your future. Here are some ways that you can start planning and preparing for a career now.

Think about your interests and abilities

Thinking about your interests and abilities when choosing a career will help ensure that you spend your life doing something you love and are good at.

Consider the following questions:

- ▶ What are your favorite school subjects?
- ▶ What activities/hobbies do you enjoy?
- ▶ What skills or talents do you have?
- ▶ Which subjects do you do the best in?
- ▶ Is there anything you feel passionate about?
- ▶ What careers fields sound interesting to you?

Consider what's important to you

It's important to like what you do—but it's also important to choose a career that fits your lifestyle and personality. Which of the following might be important to you in a career?

- ▶ helping people
- ▶ high income
- ▶ adventure
- ▶ challenge
- ▶ job security
- ▶ physical activity
- ▶ making a difference
- ▶ travel
- ▶ working outside
- ▶ creative work
- ▶ plenty of time off
- ▶ regular hours
- ▶ being in charge
- ▶ independence

Learn about careers

Once you've thought about what you're looking for in a career, do some research to learn about what's out there. When researching a career, look for and think about the following:

- ▶ **Tasks and responsibilities** – What does someone with this career actually do? Is this something you think you would enjoy doing every day?
- ▶ **Amount of education needed** – What kind of education/training does this career require? Are you willing to complete these requirements? *For example, if you want to be a veterinarian, you will need to go to college for 7–9 years.*
- ▶ **Pay** – What is the average starting pay? Will this pay meet your needs?
- ▶ **Outlook** – Is this a growing career? Will it be easy to find a job in this field?

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is a great place to research careers. Visit www.bls.gov/ooh.

Consider your education options

Most careers require education or training after high school. Which option might be right for you?

- ▶ **Two-year colleges** are an affordable way to prepare for a career in two years or less. They are also a good place to begin your college education.
- ▶ **Four-year colleges** grant bachelor's degrees and prepare students for a wide variety of career fields.
- ▶ **Career and trade schools** offer short-term training and prepare students for a specific career.
- ▶ **Apprenticeships** offer hands-on training in the skilled trades.

For a quick review of your education options, check out this short video.

