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## How to help your teenager get a job - that's not just a newspaper run

By Libby-Jane Charleston • 2 months ago



By the time kids hit the all-important teen years they're generally hungry for independence and the urge to get a job and make money of their own is usually very strong.

Let's face it, we can all remember being 15 and having to beg our parents for extra chores just to make \$5 when you're saving for the new skateboard/jewellery/outfit or whatever it was you were desperate for (I spent the best part of a year saving up for a pair of ice-skates that I still treasure).

If your teen is truly desperate to join the part time or casual workforce then it's a good idea to investigate the independent businesses in your local area.

International keynote speaker on motivation, leadership and culture, Rowdy McLean, believes teens need to write a long list of possible job opportunities.

"That can include the newsagent, ice cream shop, juice bar, coffee shop, service station, garden centre, or even the professional service firms, such as lawyers and accountants. Then be so good that they offer you more opportunities and they'd happily recommend you to someone else. Build that strong work ethic and attitude from day one," Rowdy says.

Parents will need to talk to their kids about the level of commitment required for a job and about the ways it'll impact their lifestyle: in good ways and bad.

It's a good idea to explore the real reasons behind the desire to get a job.

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"Also consider how that might impact on their studies, social interaction and recreational activities. It's important that parents ensure that their child will be working in a safe environment and make sure their child is being treated fairly," Rowdy explains.

"It's always good for the parent to build a relationship with the employer so they can participate in conversations about their child's work, their behaviour, attitude and skills. Parents should also ensure their teen approaches work in the right manner. Show up on time every time, be well presented, show a desire to learn."

Anna Wilkinson is the mother of four sons, including a 16 year old who started 'nagging' her for help in securing his first job.

"My son's friends were already doing shifts at the local supermarket and my son had dollar signs in his eyes when he heard they were making pretty good money – the ones that were saving and not spending! But when I applied for him, I was told there was a long backlog and it might be six months or more before he could get a shift," Anna says.

"So I started asking around at other local shops like Baker's Delight and Dominos but any vacancies they'd had were already filled by other local high school kids."

So Anna decided to take matters in her own hands and created a Facebook post in her local community Facebook page.

"All I wrote was that my 15 year old son is looking for work of any kind and he is happy to help out local tradies, babysit or do whatever it takes to enter the workforce. Within the hour we were inundated with people offering him work and now he's juggling three casual jobs, assisting a landscape gardener, tutoring a Grade 5 boy in maths and dog walking," Anna explains.

"The new responsibilities have really helped him mature and his next goal is to start working at a surf shop because he believes he'll be a great addition to a sales team being so passionate about surfing and trendy surf clothes!"

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Another tip for teens is to think about what they love and find a job related to something they're passionate about. For example if your child loves playing golf, he could apply for work as a caddy.

Author and futurist Michael McQueen suggests teenagers start looking at retail and hospitality but that parents need to recognise that the transition to work can be very challenging.

"Your teen may be stretched and even stressed by the demands of a workplace. Don't be surprised if there are tears or moments of anxiety. Be an encouraging voice but resist the parental urge to rescue or solve the problems," Michael says.

And while it would be fabulous if a teen manages to get a casual job in an industry that they're keen to explore in the future, it's a luxury very few kids will have in their first job.

"Be content to do work that you aren't passionate about because starting at the bottom builds character and can knock off some hard edges in ways that will serve you well later in life," Michael says.

"If you're one of the lucky few who can work in an area you're interested in and passionate about, be very grateful."

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