

KIDS

Want your child to get and keep a job? Here's how

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April 10, 2017








Four key ways to help your child 'win' their first job

Preparing your child for the new world of work should begin early, says people management specialist Karen Gately. According to her, parents play an integral role in readying their child for success. The most important thing is to teach their child to understand and respect their strengths, pursue their passions and behave in ways that enable both them and the people around them to thrive.

Armed with these attitudes and behaviours, any child is more likely to win not only their first job, but build a happy and prosperous career. Here she identifies four ways you can help your child win their first job.

1. Understand strengths and experience

Ask your child to list the things they are good at. Guide them to reflect on their intelligence (e.g. ability to learn, understand new things), relationships skills, organisational skills and personal characteristics. Focus on the things they are good at and what types of jobs they are likely to enjoy. Most kids are unlikely to have any real experience to bring to the roles they are applying for. What matters is their ability to point to what they have learned through school and extracurricular activities, that demonstrate their ability to succeed in the job the employer needs done. Examples may include sport, drama, music or any other area of interest your child is invested in.

2. Find the right opportunities

Help your child to find job opportunities by thinking broadly about the people you or those in your network know. While some jobs can be found online, friends, colleagues and family can be a valuable source of opportunities. Reflect on the people in your community that they or you have developed such as retail or small business owners. Guide your child to make smart decisions about the people they choose to work for. Far too often young people are taken advantage of. Cash in hand jobs well below award wages is an alarmingly common practice that impacts a lot of kids starting out in their working lives.

3. Nail the application process

Encourage your child to take every opportunity to showcase the behaviours the employer can expect from them. Most employers are looking for young people who are reliable, hardworking, trustworthy and able to communicate well. Just as important are initiative, confidence and a degree of ambition to be good at the job. Success begins with the basics. Turn up on time for every interview. Conduct themselves courteously, be well groomed and appropriately dressed. Submit well-written application letters and CVs, there are plenty of templates available online.

4. Be the best candidate

Going for a first interview is a daunting experience for most young people. Build your child's confidence by helping them to understand why they would be a good person to hire. Give them insight to what to expect by practicing talking to employers and going for interviews.

Spend time reflecting on the questions they might be asked and how they can respond. Encourage your child to focus on being themselves and having confidence in their ability to speak clearly and let the employer know who they are and what they can do. If you have more than one child, they are likely to be different and will suit better jobs and working in environments. They are also likely to need different types of support and approaches.