

Tips on prepping your teenager for their first job

By SUZANNE KENNEDY

Do you remember your first job? I don't mean babysitting or lawn mowing; I mean the first one with a real paycheck and a W-9 form and everything. I remember mine. I was really nervous, but so proud to bring home my first real paycheck. I was in heaven.

The legal age to start working in Oregon is 14. That seems young to me, but it didn't stop my daughter from getting her first summer job.

Preparing a person to enter the workforce starts when they are young. Parents who give their children age-appropriate responsibilities and chores are giving them a head start on future job success. The other thing to consider is not to tie privileges to age, but to maturity and dependability. For example, instead of telling them they can stay home alone when they are ten, you say that they can stay home alone when they are responsible and make safe choices. Finally, help them understand that work comes before play. Homework and chores must be done before playing with friends, just like working at a job



will take priority over hanging out with friends.

You can tell that your teen is ready for a job when they can listen and follow directions, and then stay on task until the job is completed. Do they complete jobs in a timely manner? Does your teen perform quality work or just go fast to get the job done? This last item can be taught with chores. I have one friend who has her kids

do the same chore for weeks until they do it thoroughly and correctly each time, like dishes or laundry. In my house, we switch out every week, but they are called back to complete or redo chores not done correctly the first time.

When your teen is old enough and ready to get a job, the next step is to decide where to apply. You might think about logistics. Is there someplace close enough for your child to walk to or ride her bike? Perhaps it is appropriate for them to start where Mom or Dad works. Is there a business nearby whose focus interests them? If your daughter wants to be a vet when she grows up, look at getting a job at a vet's office or with a groomer. If they are athletic and love the outdoors, have them check with the parks and recreation department to see if something might be available. Ask your son to think about his personality. Jobs that are

active and involve lots of personal interaction are great for extroverts. An office job might be perfect for someone who is a bit on the shy side. If they end up not finding what they think is the best job ever, don't worry. It'll make them stretch and build character. Remind them that it could always be worse.

Finally, it's time to think about putting together a beginner's resume. Education will be listed first, with extracurriculars and GPA, then clubs and sports. Paid work comes next. Have your teen include anything they've

been paid for: bucking hay bales, babysitting, mowing lawns, dog walking, etc. The third section is for volunteer work. Have they volunteered at a church camp or helped a neighbor pull weeds? All of these items show your teen's work ethic and character. Don't forget to include references. Ask two of the people for whom they've worked if they would be willing to have their name and number listed as a reference on the resume.

There you have it. All that's left is to hit the pavement and let your teen work his or charm on some unsuspecting employer. And that means fewer times you'll have to hear the dreaded "I'm bored" this summer!

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