

Helping your teenager during and after year 11

Year 11 marks the end of compulsory education, so it's another big decision-making time for your teenager. You're still a vital source of advice and information for them: the more you know about the different options available, the better you'll be able to help them.

Find out what's on offer from schools and colleges in your area, by obtaining their prospectuses and looking on their websites. But when they reach 16, the responsibility for making decisions increasingly shifts towards your son or daughter. This process helps them prepare for the sorts of choices they'll have to make as independent adults.

However, as in year 9, there's still a lot of help and support available from year tutors, subject teachers and Connexions Personal Advisers. Connexions also produces a leaflet, '*Post-16 options*', for year 11 students – make sure your teenager receives a copy from their school or local Connexions Centre/One Stop Shop.

You and your teenager can access www.stepon.org the online 14-19 prospectus. This is an easy to use website that will give your son or daughter all the information they need on local learning opportunities.

You can also access a publication called Work Matters through this website. This provides information on the local, regional and national job scene, and is a very valuable source of information for your teenager when they are considering their learning and career options.

The main choices available at the end of year 11 are to:

- Continue in full-time education
- Go on to a work based learning programme such as an Apprenticeship
- Start work or become self-employed

Whichever route they choose, it's important to support your son or daughter to continue learning and gaining qualifications. It's the best way to ensure a successful future in terms of career progression, salary and job security.

For information on different career options look at www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u and www.essexconnexions.co.uk/careers-library

September Guarantee

When your son or daughter leaves at the end of year 11 they are guaranteed an offer by the end of September of a place at school, college or with a training provider. The offer can be of:

- Full or part-time education in a school sixth form, sixth form college or further education college.
- An Apprenticeship
- Entry to Employment (e2e)
- Employment with training to NVQ Level 2

The offer must meet their needs, so it will have to take into account the qualifications they already have, be somewhere they can travel to, and the sort of learning they want to do. For more information, contact their Connexions Personal Adviser.

Continuing in full-time education

If your teenager chooses this option, they'll still have to decide where and what to study. In terms of where to study, the main choices are:

- The sixth form of their own or another school.
- A sixth form college.
- A further education college.

In terms of what to study, their main options are likely to be:

- GCE AS and A levels – this could mean continuing with GCSE subjects, or starting some new ones. AS (Advanced Subsidiary) is the first half of an A level and also a qualification in its own right and A2 is the second half.
- An optional Extended Project Qualification is also available, which is designed to help students develop the wider skills that higher education courses demand.
- The Diploma – see the information on page 10 of this booklet.
- Vocationally related qualifications – these may suit your teenager if they have a career in mind and want to pursue a work-related qualification. Courses could involve a mix of practical work and theory and could include work experience. A wide range of qualifications is available at different levels, such as the BTEC National Diploma (Level 3 is the equivalent of A levels), and NVQs at Levels 1-3.

Going into work based learning

For most young people this is likely to mean an **Apprenticeship**. Apprenticeships are high quality programmes that give your teenager the chance to work for an employer, learn on the job and earn money. They can choose from a wide range of job areas such as construction, business administration, retail, catering and many others, depending on local availability.

Apprenticeships are open to anyone aged 16 or over living in England and not taking part in full-time education. Their Connexions Personal Adviser will help your son or daughter decide which Apprenticeship is best for them. You can also look on the website www.apprenticeships.org.uk for more advice and information, or call 08000 150 600.

If you feel your teenager isn't yet ready for an Apprenticeship, further learning or a job, **Entry to Employment (e2e)** may be suitable for them. This is a flexible and tailored programme for 16-18 year olds, which will prepare them for their next step. They could develop their literacy, numeracy and IT skills and build their confidence and self-esteem. e2e also gives teenagers the chance to try out different jobs and gain qualifications in basic skills. Their Connexions Personal Adviser would support your son or daughter through the transition process.

Going into employment

Some teenagers can't wait to leave school and start earning money. The thought of never having to sit in a classroom again, or take another exam, is very appealing to some young people.

If this applies to your son or daughter, encourage them to think again. Going into an unskilled job with no training or the chance to study for further qualifications could mean low wages and no career progression.

The **Time Off for Study and Training (TfST)** scheme gives young people, aged 16 and 17 and in employment, the right to reasonable paid time off from work for study or training if they're not yet qualified to level 2. This means GCSEs at grades A*-C or NVQ level 2 or equivalent. If this applies to your teenager, a job with training is still a realistic goal to aim for. To find out more about the scheme look on www.connexions-direct.com, or speak to your teenager's Personal Adviser.