

Choosing a path

PARENTING

Kamahl Cogdon

WHAT do you want to do when you leave school? It's a common question teenagers get as their secondary school days draw to a close.

And for many it's a question with no clear answer.

Parents can play an important role in helping their teenagers find a career path, says careers expert Rebecca Fraser.

But the career consultant and author of *How to Write a Winning Resume — A Proven Method* says "coaching" your child through such decisions is a much better approach than trying to tell them what they should do.

"No one wants to be told what to do, most of all by their parents," she warns. "A coaching communication style focuses more on asking questions rather than giving answers and guiding rather than directing."

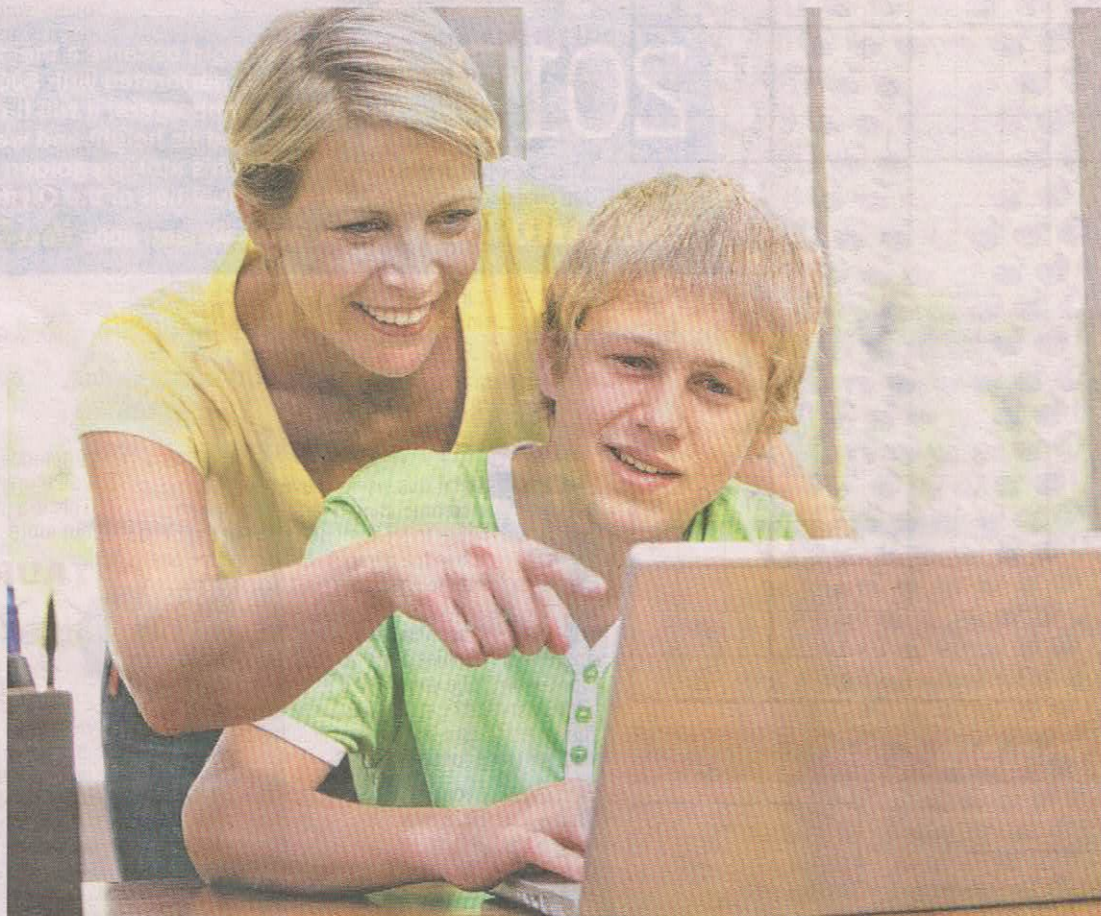
Fraser says asking questions, including about your child's career goals and interests, will empower them and boost their confidence to make choices.

She also recommends talking to your child about your own career decisions and making it clear that there's no such thing as failure when choosing their own path.

Parents also can help their child research different careers through websites like the government-run myfuture.edu.au and by visiting careers expos and training institute open days together.

Be your child's careers coach

Try asking these five questions when they're not sure what they want to do:



1. What would you like to achieve out of a career?

Understanding your teenager's goals is the most important starting point. If they don't yet have a goal, they might need help to keep looking for a career or looking more deeply into one they have in mind. Encourage them to consider what they want to achieve, what their interests are and what their long-term goals are to ensure their chosen career will meet their goals.

2. Are you more comfortable learning by doing or reading?

If your son or daughter is more comfortable learning by doing they might be more suited to an apprenticeship or traineeship. This would allow them to complete industry qualifications while developing practical skills. If they enjoy learning by reading, then further education is a definite option.

3. Would you like to try some work experience?

Volunteer work experience is an ideal way for a student to gain some real understanding of a career they're interested in.

There might be options for your child to get practical work experience in a role through friends, family or community and social groups.

This could be very helpful if they don't know exactly what the role includes or if they're still not sure about which career to pursue.

4. Do you need to take a gap year before making a career decision?

Perhaps your son or daughter would benefit from some new experiences before making a career choice.

Their gap year might include a job or travel. It also could give them more time to think about their career options.

5. Would you like to do some more research?

There are many good career profiling tools and accredited career consultants to help your student look into industries and roles that suit their specific interests.

Kid's tale

Helen Mullins,
Altona

When we were at the National Gallery on the school holidays, Sunniva, 3, decided she needed to vote on the design strategy of the 2030 concept car of the future. With hands around her mouth, she yelled: "Has anyone got a pen?"



Send your Kid's tales and photos to yourtime@heraldsun.com.au

The Herald Sun Melbourne Career Expo is on at Melbourne Exhibition Centre, Southbank, from Friday to Sunday. See careerexpo.com.au and melbtradeexpo.com.au

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