



Thinking About 21st Century Career Readiness



Consider the following information shared at the 2016 World Economic Forum, “Of children entering school, 65% will eventually work at job types that don’t exist today!” Parents and educators share the responsibility to provide our youth with opportunities to participate in career exploration. The intent of this article is to:

1. Confirm the vital role career exploration plays in the academic, college/career, and social/emotional development of children
2. Identify four components of career exploration
3. Provide parents with career conversation starters

Career exploration supports academic, college/career, and social/emotional development

[Why Career Exploration Matters](http://bit.ly/whycareerexplorationmatters) (bit.ly/whycareerexplorationmatters)

Career exploration helps students “connect the dots” between school and career in ways that keep them motivated to graduate with the skills they will need for the future.

1. Career exploration experiences and opportunities can improve academic performance. They also increase the likelihood that these students will complete high school and pursue post-secondary education.
2. Career exploration opportunities improve the attitudes of young people about their career possibilities, motivating them to persevere.
3. Students who are involved in career exploration are more likely to plan their high school courses of study carefully to gain the skills they will need. Students participating in career exploration programs as middle-schoolers are more likely to enroll in higher level math courses in high school and have higher Self-esteem.

Three Essential Components to Career Exploration with Middle School Children

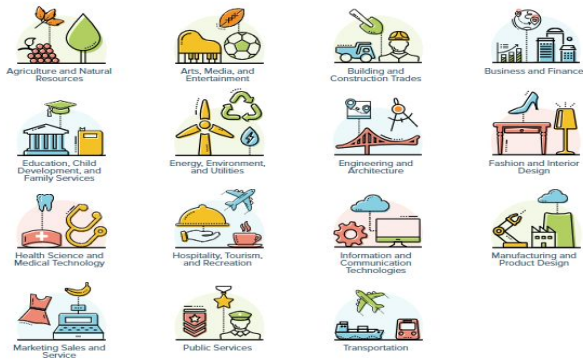
1. Discuss these terms that are associated with Work Values

Independence	Achievement	Recognition	Relationships
Support	Job Stability	Wages	Creativity
Working Conditions	Moral Fulfillment	Variety/Consistency	Indoors/Outdoors

2. Identify Career Interests in regard to California’s 15 Industry Sectors

www.cacareerzone.org

Students feel less confined to discussing their career when committing to an Industry Sector rather than a specific career.



3. Discuss Skill Development

What types of skills & talents have been developed through school, extracurricular activities, and hobbies?

Technological	Artistic	Communication	Research
Problem Solving	Leadership	Teamwork	Music
Dance	Ability to work with others	Public Speaking	Writing
Athletics	Acting	Creativity	Interpersonal

Intentional and Engaging Career Conversation Starters

Parents and educators can engage students in the career exploration process by asking them to identify their passion, or problems they want to fix (school, community, world), or what do they want to do. **We should not be asking, “What do you want to be when you grow up?”** This question puts a lot of pressure on the youngster and can make them see careers in a limited way. Listed below are suggested conversation starters for parents and educators.

1. Tell me about a time you felt proud of something you accomplished in the last few months.
2. What do you tell yourself when an assignment or activity is hard?
3. Describe a time you felt successful.
4. Describe your strengths.
5. What would other people say are your strengths?
6. What concerns or questions do you have about your education after high school?
7. To achieve your career goals, how long are you willing to pursue education or training?
8. What does success mean to you when it comes to a career?
9. What do you want your lifestyle to be like after high school?
10. When thinking of your future, are there any skills you would like to further develop?
11. If you could learn about anything, what topic would you want to learn about and why?
12. What are you currently doing that is helping you prepare for your life after high school?
13. I'd like you to set a goal that is specific and challenging but attainable related to your academics.
14. Given your plans after high school, what academic goal would make sense for you?
15. Given your plans after high school, what social goal would make sense for you?

Reach Higher Shasta encourages all students to pursue post-secondary education and training. For more information about career exploration please consider contacting the school counselor at your middle school or high school. Another excellent resource is the high school's Career Education Specialist or Career Tech. and most of our Shasta County high schools employ such a person.

