



Talking with kids about

JOB ORIENTATION



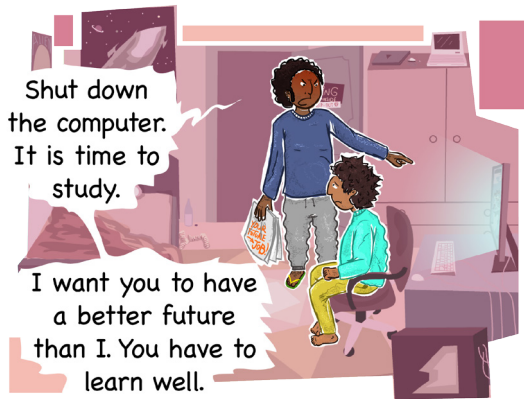


JOB ORIENTATION

The goal of a career choice for young people is to find a profession that best fits their interests and skills. Young persons who have found a suitable job are more satisfied and productive, they have a lesser risk of unemployment, are more stable and less inclined to change professions. These are important preconditions for one's personal growth and developing of an independent personality. Autonomous citizens, such as these, are critically important for vibrant democracies. Only those who are informed and engaged can make independent and responsible decisions for living together in democratic coexistence.

Jadon, your 15-year old son, is beginning his last year of compulsory education. At the parents' information meeting, the teacher emphasizes the importance of the students' upcoming career choice, including the parents' support for their children. He encourages everyone to discuss the topic at home and within the family as well. You observe that Jadon does not talk about the subject of career choice on his own. So you decide to engage him in a conversation about it. But, how will such a talk succeed?

Choose from the following options and go on reading on the indicated page:



Go to [page 3!](#)



Go to [page 4!](#)



Go to [page 5!](#)

“A few simple rules:

Be involved, but not in control

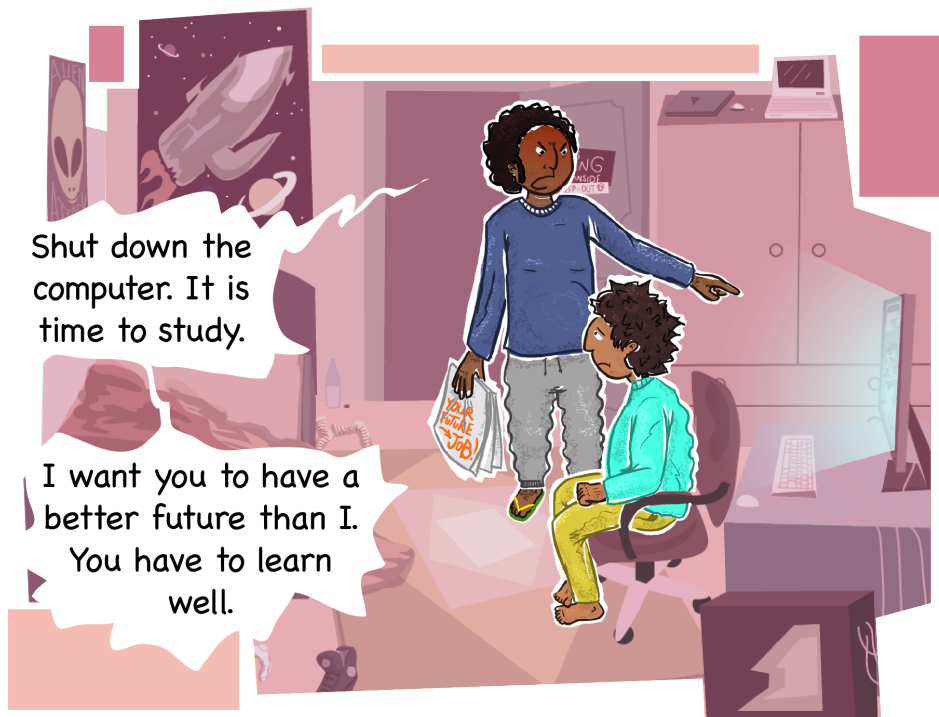
Advise, but do not decide

Support, but do not dominate.”¹

Further information/ materials/ videos can be found here:

QualifaX: Database for further and higher education in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, Ireland)

http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=207



All parents want only the best for their children. With respect to their offspring's anticipated profession, many parents associate the career choice with a high status, secure employment and a good income. And many believe that this can only be attained with a university degree.

However, threats and patronizing behavior are probably not helpful to convince Jadon of the need to graduate from school with good grades. It is therefore important to establish and maintain a good climate for discussions. This also provides your son with an opportunity to practice his democratic competence. In so doing, you must refrain from so-called destructive messages. For hints and pertinent suggestions please go on reading on [page 6](#).

Try to find out about Jadon's interests and vocational aspirations in an open conversation. Then, you can jointly undertake the search for appropriate jobs that match these expectations.

On [page 7](#) you can find some important tips and suggestions for parents who wish to support Jadon in his search for a suitable occupation.



Among the most important adolescent development challenges is the process of becoming independent from family and parents. The choice of careers is thereby a critical, if not the most important step in the life of a young person toward an independent and self-determined existence.

Since you, as an adult person and parent, are fully aware of the magnitude of this decision, it is quite understandable that you want to support and advise your son as much as possible. Nevertheless, keep in mind that it is ultimately Jadon who will have to live with and bear the consequences of his decision. He will pursue his career aspiration more sustainably, and consequently work and learn more intensively toward it, if he himself is the one who has actively decided on the career choice.

Therefore, it is advisable to endure your son's inaction, even though it may be hard for you, rather than fill the gap with your own activism. If you advocate too much for Jadon, it could even result in a strong counter-reaction on his part. It is quite possible that, henceforth, he may no longer pay attention to you at all concerning this topic.

For suggestions and hints about how to quietly support your son go on reading on [page 7](#).



It looks like you have found the right approach to engage your son in a conversation about his future. Congratulations!

Make it clear to Jadon that the choice of profession is his alone, just as he must bear the consequences thereof all by himself. Nevertheless, as parents and appropriate reference persons with a wealth of life experience and knowledge, you must always be available to him for help with any questions and problems.

For further suggestions and specific actions, go on reading on [page 7](#).

Destructive messages²

Messages and statements which may provoke negative feelings and reactions in a child are called destructive messages. Parents who resort to destructive messages are not respecting and tolerating their children's feelings and thoughts. Respect and tolerance are basic democratic attitudes, and you fail to communicate that to your children with your destructive messages. As a result, your child will probably respond with short, defensive answers, feeling misunderstood and degraded. These kinds of messages lead to conflicts and, sometimes, stop the communication process altogether.

Destructive messages can hinder the psychosocial development of children. The children are unable to develop their full potential and strong personalities if they only hear negative, degrading messages. However, strong personalities, respectful attitudes and tolerance towards others are the basic requirements for vibrant democratic societies.

Training

To render your communication skills more democratic, you should first be aware of your present communication habits.

In the following you will find different destructive messages. Observe your communicative behavior daily for one week. Every time you use one of the referenced sentences when communicating with your child, draw a line behind this sentence.

Destructive messages

Commanding, ordering

- You have to...
- Come on, get ready...
- Say hello...
- Do behave...

Scolding, admonishing, threatening

- You always do...
- You never do...
- If you don't... then...
- When do you finally...
- How often do I have to tell you that...

Moralizing

- We would have been so proud of you, but now we are disappointed, because you didn't...
- Mummy is really sad because you have been so nasty.
- There are thousands of hungry children who would like to eat this.
- Once a liar, always a liar...

Giving advice and comparing

- If I were you, I would...
- The parents of other kids would...
- Your sister always tidies up her room.
- Everybody agrees to this. But you...

How do I successfully support my child in the career choice?

- **The early bird...** To avoid time pressure, try to address the subject of career choices at an early stage. Thus, if you are undecided, there is sufficient time for internships in various professional groups.
- **Career aspiration:** Talk with your son about his wishes, ideas and expectations.
- **Extremely important:** Openness. Listen calmly to your son. Although many of his ideas may seem unrealistic or unattainable to you, do not try to impress your own view of things upon him.
- **I have no idea...** If Jadon has virtually no idea at all about which vocational direction to pursue, it is advisable to ponder the following questions:
 1. What is it that you particularly enjoy doing? What are you passionate about? What are your hobbies?
 2. In which occupational endeavors can you apply these skills, in which vocational areas are your particular strengths and abilities needed? Which professional categories deal with issues that you care about?
- **Pro and contra:** If your son's career aspiration is somewhat clear, try to establish a list with him about its potential advantages and disadvantages. It may show relatively quickly if the anticipated occupation is suitable or perhaps not such a good fit.
- **Becoming active:** Support Jadon in searching for information about specific professions and the relevant training courses. But let him do the work himself, such as making phone inquiries, arranging appointments with career advisors, compiling application materials...
- **Practice, practice, practice:** For many young people, specific hands-on experiences are far more helpful in their career search than written job descriptions. Thus, encourage Jadon to get a taste of relevant jobs with on-site visits, or obtain first-hand information based on pertinent conversations with acquaintances and relatives about their occupations.
- **Setbacks:** Setbacks may occur if another profession must be contemplated, or when an internship or practical training is not possible. In such cases, you assume the important function of encouraging your son to continue his search and not to bury his head in the sand.
- **Do-it-yourself:** As difficult as it may be for you to accept: the ultimate decision must be your son's alone. A decision is easiest to implement if one is entirely behind it. Likewise, it must be clear to your son that he alone will have to bear the consequences for his decision. This means that he assumes the responsibility for his action. The process of initiating decisions and living with the consequences is a life-long experience. Moreover, one's obligation to make informed decisions and assuming the responsibility for them is equally important for our democratic way of life and coexistence. Thus, it can hardly be practiced early enough.

„Talking with kids about job orientation” is based on the following references:

¹ Qualifax, the national learners` database. *The Parent’s Role in Career Selection: How important is the role of the parent in the career guidance process?* Database for further and higher education in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, Ireland) retrieved 19.03.2019. http://www.qualifax.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=179&Itemid=207

² Heueck-Mauss, Doris. 2016. *So rede ich richtig mit meinem Kind: Wie Worte wirken: Konflikte fair lösen: Stressfreier erziehen*. Hannover: Humboldt, 74 ff

Heueck-Mauss, Doris. 2016. *So rede ich richtig mit meinem Kind: Wie Worte wirken: Konflikte fair lösen: Stressfreier erziehen*. Hannover: Humboldt.

Kurz, Susanne. 2014. «Unterstützen- nicht besser wissen!» *Das Schweizer Elternmagazin Fritz und Fränzi*, Mai, 76-77.

Qualifax, the national learners` database. *The Parent’s Role in Career Selection: How important is the role of the parent in the career guidance process?* Database for further and higher education in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, Ireland) retrieved 19.03.2019.

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