

# TALK CAREERS WITH KIDS

Manufacturing careers offer meaningful and rewarding careers that you can attain with a high school diploma to a 1 - 4 year degree.

Spend some time together researching different careers!



Welder/Fabricator



Quality System Engineer



Sr. Manufacturing Engineer

A great way to explore careers is to hear from people who are already established in the industry. The NEW Manufacturing Alliance brings you the All Stars magazine that features star employees from Alliance member companies right here in Northeast Wisconsin. Find the online magazine with three-minute video of each winner discussing their job and company at <https://newmfgalliance.org/go/all-stars-magazine>.



Process Technician



CNC Production Operator



Field Service Technician

# How to Talk to Kids About Careers

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## Elementary Age

- ◆ **Introduce the concept of careers early.** Take young children to work and explain how you spend your time and why. Get children activity books that talk about different careers. Instead of asking what they want to be when they grow up, ask children what kind of problems they like to solve. Then talk about jobs that involve similar challenges.
  - ◆ **Ask questions to inspire critical thinking and imagination.** For example: How do you think the waitress learned to balance so many dishes at once? How do you think the vegetables get from the farmer's field to the store? What do you think is in the plumber's toolbox?
  - ◆ **Choose your words wisely and respectfully.** Be aware of judgmental language or tone that may indicate you don't respect a particular career and stick to the facts about what different workers do.
  - ◆ **Pay attention.** How do your kids play, work, interact with others? What do they like, or dislike. What you learn will aid your children's career search and help you start the conversation.
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## Middle School Age

- ◆ **Make sure your children understand the connection between work and education.** It's important that your kids appreciate the value of education and the importance it has in choosing a career path.
  - ◆ **Look beyond the familiar.** While visiting a retailer, consider all the roles that are not seen. Like digital jobs, HR, marketing, finance, buyers, designers. This can lead into discuss other jobs in industries like farming, construction, manufacturing, and logistics.
  - ◆ **Consider the hidden messages you are giving.** Do you talk about your day in a positive way? Do you share any exciting news with the family? Or does the family see you stress, un-satisfied and non-communitive about work? If kids think work is a burden, they will avoid dealing with it. Positive conversations about your work will make conversations about careers easier in the long run.
  - ◆ **Ask open ended questions.** What courses do you most enjoy in school? I wonder what people who enjoy those courses can do professionally? When you think about jobs, what careers come to mind? The goal is to simply get them thinking about their possibilities.
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## High School Age and Beyond

- ◆ **Share information about the world of work.** Discuss labor market trends, good work ethic, job hunting, and more when kids can understand it. Talk about it regularly!
- ◆ **Be open minded to all their ideas.** When your teenager expresses interest in something, be careful about saying no. Shooting down their ideas can limit their curiosity and honestly sharing with you. It is good to talk about challenges of obtaining a career, but match that with encouragement to use their problem-solving skills to overcome obstacles.
- ◆ **Provide support and encouragement.** Let them know sometimes the only way to figure life out is to try many different things. Ask them what you can do to help them think through the process.
- ◆ **Don't pressure kids to decide on a career.** Teenagers can be uncommunicative. That doesn't mean they are not listening. If you push too hard, they may tell you what you want to hear or do nothing.
- ◆ **Stay positive.** Don't make the future sound bleak and the past sound perfect. Instead, focus on your children's opportunities and help them adopt a can-do attitude.
- ◆ **Make use of college career office.** There are services available like career assessment and advising, interview preparation, and career events. Networking here is great for gathering information and an occasional reality check.