

Embedding careers at induction

Background

Parents, carers and guardians play an important part in career and education choices of young people. The Gatsby Foundation is undertaking a programme of research and piloting in order to find out how to support your setting*, to help parents** have these discussions with their children. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Gatsby and the Careers and Enterprise Company have worked together with Careers Leaders to explore ideas and good practice in working with parents in these challenging times. This guidance is part of a suite of resources developed over this academic year, to share what practitioners say is working in their settings right now. Looking ahead to the upcoming transition period Careers Leaders have reflected on parental engagement approaches that have worked well and how these could be applied to involving parents when their child starts in a new setting.

*The word 'setting' is used to refer to school, special school, college, Alternative Provision (AP), Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

**The word 'parent' is used to refer to parents, carers and guardians

Overview

When an academic year comes to an end Careers Leaders must consider how to capture the interest of families and young people who will transition to their setting in the new term. It is more important than ever to have strategies in place to enhance the visibility of your setting's careers programme and careers team from the point of transition. Our Careers Leaders recognise this and have shared insight as to why embedding careers into your setting's induction period is vital for engaging new parents.

Quick wins to enhance your careers induction process and engage new parents

Delivering a presentation at a welcome evening



Whether your setting has an entirely careers-focused parent and young person event for new starters, or your setting will hold a mixed welcome evening for all departments – a presentation is a quick way to engage parents and showcase what is on offer from your programme.

Benefits include:

- Opportunity to introduce a broad range of education and careers options
- Parents' awareness of careers can be broadened and myths dispelled
- Sets a precedent for your settings' relationship with parents for years to come
- Raises the visibility of the careers team so young people and parents know where to go
- Manages parent expectations by offering an overview of careers programme and how they can help

"I think a presentation early on about opportunities and pathways would help to improve understanding of the options available, and dispel some preconceptions about pathways which can persist throughout secondary. This term I think any events would have to be blended - the presentation online, perhaps some sort of careers game as part of the induction programme - with an essential skills-based task as the focus, not specific jobs"

Lucy Kendall, Careers Leader, Idsall School, West Midlands

Creating and disseminating a welcome pack



Induction can prove to be a challenging time to plan in careers activity with parents because many departments want the attention of parents, and opportunities to speak to parents can be limited. Welcome materials can be used alongside or instead of a careers presentation if that is not feasible, and as with the presentation they can be solely careers focused or created in collaboration with other departments.

Benefits of a welcome pack include:

- Putting careers on parents' radars before their children transition to their new setting
- Sharing insightful local labour market information and showcasing a broad range of education and careers options
- The opportunity to promote your parent volunteer list and encourage people to sign up
- Signposting your setting's social media channels (and those dedicated to careers)
- Can be provided both physically and digitally to ensure careers information is accessible to all of the parent community (it could also be shared in different languages)

Running an informal activity



Including an informal activity (e.g. quiz) during a careers induction is an effective way to break the ice amongst parents and young people while encouraging those with low-confidence to participate. Make the activity focused on both essential and transferable skills, rather than focused on jobs and specialist skills. This will ensure the activity is accessible and no parents should feel excluded. Activities can be

virtual or in person where possible. Benefits of this activity include:

- Communication styles between parents and children are highlighted
- Parents can reflect on what they've learned from their children during this session
 - Which skills are transferable? Which could be specialist?
- Cultivates space to safely challenge, mindsets, myths and stereotypes
- Creates an informal conversation in the room (in the case of a quiz) rather than rigid speaker/audience format

An invitation to get involved



An idea which could reap long-term benefits is to build a parent volunteer list by capturing the details of eager parents during this point of transition. Building this list from the start can significantly boost your pool of available volunteers for careers talks, employer panels and work experience hosts. At the end of your careers programme presentation, consider extending an invitation to your

audience to join your setting's parent volunteer list. Remember to make it clear the contribution can be flexible to suit their availability and include examples of what they could get involved with.

This list of parents who are keen to help with your careers offering could be key to broadening your setting's career links into a local and representative workforce. Your parent community will include people who represent a diverse cross-section of your local labour market including those with SEND and EAL, and may range from small business owners to senior staff in large companies. Additional benefits include:

- Through involvement in activities with multiple volunteers, parents and young people gain exposure to a range of different jobs, alongside the range of pathways to those jobs
- Conversations at home between parent and child become richer and parents are seen as valid role models with essential, transferable and relatable skill sets

To help build your parent volunteer list try using the [Parent Pledge Campaign](#) resources.

"In four years, I've had approximately 200 parents sign up from every possible industry. Parents are then able to be contacted by any department to come in and talk about their jobs. Having someone who is invested in the school is hugely positive and avoids the hassles of having to reach out to companies and hope for them to do you a favour."

Mike Holding, Careers Leader, The Woodroffe School, South West

Further resources

You can find other resources about engaging parents in careers guidance on the [CEC Resource Directory](#).