

Summer transition activity

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

Transition points are a prime opportunity to engage parents in your setting's careers provision and encourage meaningful dialogue surrounding careers at home. Academic departments have often used summertime successfully to set introductory tasks during periods of transition. Our Careers Leaders recognised this and have shared ideas about how this approach could also be used to engage parents and young people in careers.

The following advice from Careers Leaders offers engagement and activity suggestions with a focus on Year 6-7. However, the principles can be applied at any point you are welcoming new young people to your setting, with age-appropriate tasks.

Activity outline



No matter which setting your prospective young people are transitioning from, a careers-focused summer activity can be an effective and informal way of raising the visibility of the careers team and encouraging conversations between young people and their families at important points in their education journey.

The task: the young person's task could consist of career-focused conversation prompts to use at home, which could be adapted depending on the age and setting of the young person. The prompts could cover sharing their career aspirations, skills and interests with their parents, and also encourage them to ask their parents questions about their career, aspirations or experience. There could also be a research element where families are prompted to explore a range of roles or sectors together on external websites or it can be used as an introduction to your setting's own careers website.

Task output: young people could be encouraged to present their work back in the new academic year. This could be a presentation to the class, a video or poster, or just in a discussion with a partner to help them get to know their peers.

Delivery: the activity could be briefed to young people on their transition day at their new setting before their first term and communicated directly to parents separately in the relevant materials about the day. The activity could be tied into existing summer 'homework' projects set by other departments to streamline communication and make the activity cross-curricular.

Considerations

It is important to ensure this activity is accessible to all, so young people don't feel they are at a disadvantage when they arrive in the new term.

- Some young people and their parents may be unsure how to complete the activity or there may be concerns that the parent does not have much employment experience to draw on, so the task could cover wider careers role models and useful sites such as [BBC Bitesize Careers](#) or [icould](#) for inspiration
- Some young people might have not been able to engage in any discussions about careers over the summer at home. When introducing the activity in class, make the point that whether or not progress was made over the summer – everyone will leave the session having explored and broadened their aspirations through learning from others
- Adapt the feedback approach depending on the young people. For example, a whole class presentation may be too much pressure for some young people. It could be effective to get everyone to submit their 'homework' first so those who need more support sharing their work can be identified. This will also highlight which young people have not been able to complete the work

Potential activity benefits

For young people

This activity gets young people familiar with discussing careers and pathways with their parents which they might have never done before. Following engaging in this activity over the summer, young people will arrive in their new setting empowered to break the ice with their peers over a new shared interest. When young people share their initial ideas and career interests with their cohort, they will raise the aspirations of their peers and increase each other's knowledge of the labour market.

If some young people haven't prepared as much as others for this activity or appear disengaged or unsure of the subject matter, this could identify those with low aspirations early-on who might need extra interventions and/or parental support.

"Practical, engaging and aspirational. It will also give them something to talk about to break the ice with new classmates when they come to 'big school' and it can be used to introduce the various sites which can be accessed such as icould and the BBC bitesize careers as well as our own Careers microsite on our school website."

Lucy Kendall, Careers Leader, Idsall School, West Midlands

For parents

Whenever a young person begins transition into a new setting, no matter the setting, this is when parental engagement is at its highest making it the ideal time to build relationships and encourage dialogue before engagement diminishes. Involving parents in this activity helps embed the value of engaging with both their child and their setting on the topic of careers, and sets the tone for the setting's careers provision to come.

If some young people weren't able to complete the activity prior to their start, this also could be used as an early flag to highlight parents who might need extra support.

"I think all careers programmes need to start from transition. Our careers programme has always started from year 7 onwards and the transition is really important. Many parents are actively engaged in primary and then this drops away in secondary."

Vicky Woodings, Head of Careers and Aspirations, The Bourne Academy, South West

For your setting

Promoting careers alongside curriculum subjects helps to give it visibility and status with parents who are interested to know more about the new setting their child is joining. Subject Leaders, Course Leaders or pastoral teams may already have planned activities so it could be an opportunity to align the careers-focused task with those from other departments, and increase collaborative working across careers and other staff.

Building a picture of new young people's interests, skills and aspirations can help enable you make your careers offer more tailored to the needs of your new cohort and will help with identifying parents most likely to disengage with careers, so early interventions can be put in place.

If the activity encourages parents to use your setting's careers tools, then this can raise awareness of what is on offer and set a precedent for families doing research together and having conversations about important topics, which has benefits wider than just for careers.

Further resources

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