

Make Apprenticeship and Technical Education part of the conversation:

Conversation Toolkit

As a member of staff, there will be several opportunities to start conversations about Apprenticeship and Technical Education with parents or carers and their child. Often time is limited but short conversations that deliver positive messages about Apprenticeship and Technical Education, or that spark interest, can be all that is needed to begin removing barriers to considering these pathways. The aim of these conversations is simply to 'put Apprenticeships and Technical Education on the table'. It should form part of a conversation about self-reflection on their child's skills, interests and learning strengths.

Hints and tips

- Avoid starting conversations that directly compare higher education with Apprenticeship and Technical pathways as this can create or reinforce misconceptions and negative perceptions. Try to frame the conversation around their child's skills, aspirations and learning preferences.
- Your conversation about Apprenticeship and Technical Education is likely to be more positive if it is drawn from a personalised approach about what might suit their child and is worth them exploring.
- Ensure the Apprenticeship and Technical Education conversation aligns with the strengths and interests of their child. Try not to force a conversation that doesn't fit this.
- Follow up the conversation with signposts to additional information and resources if an interest is sparked. You will find a number of useful links in the [FAQs and signposting resource](#).
- Try not to worry about questions you cannot answer. Remember the aim of the conversation – to spark their interest. Signpost to careers guidance or online careers information at your institution.

Conversation ideas

These question ideas can be used to frame, start or provide some ideas for a conversation. They are divided into two categories based on the conversation focus or context.



Subject focused conversation starters

These are great to slip into subject progress conversation opportunities such as parents' evenings or subject choice events.

Here is an example of a skills-based conversation sequence:

1. What skills do you enjoy using in [subject]? You seem to enjoy using X skill in [subject].
2. What skills do you think you will be using in [subject]/at/beyond GCSE level?
3. Are these the kinds of skills you would like to be using in a future career?
4. Have you thought about what sort of work might utilise these skills?
5. Is this something you have discussed together at home?
6. Have you considered a range of routes into this kind of work, including apprenticeships/T-levels?
7. Would you like to find out more? I can send you XYZ/let's look at X as an example.

Use the [FAQ/signposting guide](#) to direct parents and carers to further information or to answer any questions they have.

Or, some conversation starters could be:

1. You are showing real strength in [skill]/practical learning/applying your skills in [subject]. Is this something you are particularly enjoying?
2. Is this something you [parent/carer] have seen in [child] outside school too?
3. Have you thought about how you might be able to learn in this way to get into [career]/higher qualifications? Have you thought about vocational courses like apprenticeships/T-levels?
4. Would you like to find out more (about apprenticeships/T-levels/higher technical qualifications)?/Do you have any questions or anything you are unsure about?

Use the [FAQ/signposting guide](#) to direct parents and carers to further information or to answer any questions they have.



Careers focused conversation starters

These questions might work best for non-subject specific conversation opportunities led by teachers, teaching assistants or form tutors.

Here is an example of a conversation sequence:

1. Have you discussed careers with X?
2. It sounds like they are really enjoying practical learning in...
3. Have you explored opportunities for this beyond GCSE such as apprenticeships/T-levels/higher technical qualifications?
4. If [child] is also interested in X, you could look at Y.

Use the [FAQ/signposting guide](#) to direct parents and carers to further information or to answer any questions they have.

Some conversation starters about exploring different pathways could be:

1. Is there anything about this route which you think would appeal to you/[child]?
2. Does [child]/do you enjoy learning through doing?
3. What are your [parent/carer] thoughts on this?
4. Have you explored routes into X?
5. Did you know that you can become a X via doing Y [ATE example]?

The parent and carer [FAQ resource](#) accompanying this pack will support you to manage any questions that may arise from conversations with parents and carers, including general information about all options post 16 and 18. The resource also includes sources of information for parents and carers about Apprenticeship and Technical Education. A helpful resource for parents and carers about continuing the conversation with their child about careers can be found at [Talking Futures](#).