

Firefighter or Physician? Workforce Preparation Starts Now

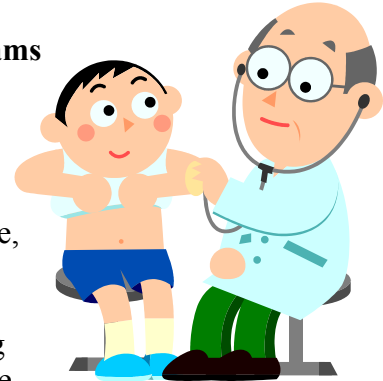
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A high performance workplace requires workers who have a solid foundation in basic literacy and technological skills, the thinking skills necessary to put knowledge to work, and the personal qualities that make them dedicated and trustworthy. From kindergarten into adulthood, educational institutions are responding to new learning needs.

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Preparing Children For The Workforce In After School Programs

After-school program staff can support a young persons' developing interest in the world around them, especially as it relates to their future jobs. The workforce young people will be moving into demands competencies in the areas of math and science, and expects them to apply technology in a variety of workplace settings. Being part of a team and sharing in the development and delivery of projects is a growing workplace expectation. Supporting workforce development trends requires programs that emphasize the development of skills, knowledge and competencies that lead to satisfying careers and self-sufficiency. Programs should stress the connection between learning and work. The following initiatives, developed by the Promising and Effective Practices Network of the National Youth Employment Coalition, offer some starting places:



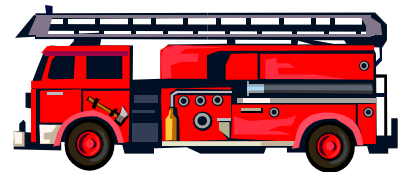
Tips In Getting Started

- ✓ **What? Career Awareness, Planning and Readiness:**
- ✓ **How?** Nurture career awareness and embed career planning and readiness throughout your program. Develop Work/Career theme weeks that help youth explore the world of work.
- ✓ **Why?** Youth who are exposed to a variety of educational and occupational options are more likely to focus on an initial career goal and make a positive connection to work and education to pursue that goal. Career awareness helps youth to identify their interest.
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- ✓ **What? Employer Engagement:**
- ✓ **How?** Ensure that employers are actively engaged in the workforce preparation program. Invite them as guests to your program. Ask them to talk about how they decided upon their career and how they prepared for their job. Give young people an opportunity to interview or talk directly with them.

- ✓ **Why?** The relevancy of youth meeting people connected to the actual workforce can have a potent and realistic impact.
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- ✓ **What? Work and Learning Connection:**
- ✓ **How?** Relate academic learning to real-life work issues and situations. Stress active learning. Help young people see the connection between classroom efforts and potential work life. Provide youth an opportunity for active learning and situations to develop problem-solving skills. Provide an emphasis during homework or study time to connect the required work with potential uses in a future career or job.
- ✓ **Why?** Promote the present reality that learning is life long and moves past the classroom.
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- ✓ **What? Competencies Emphasis:**
- ✓ **How?** Help youth understand the competencies they have gained and how to translate them to work readiness. Document and communicate competencies gained by young people.
- ✓ **Why?** Youth who are too young for formal employment can capture these competencies when they are helped to relate them to such things as caring for younger siblings (day care provider or nurse) or following through on home-based support tasks such as watering the yard (landscaper) or making their beds (hospitality industry)

Get Them Involved Now

Begin designing your workforce preparation program ideas with youth participants as partners in their own learning. Find out what they do and don't know about preparing for work and a career. Assess the impact of media on what young people believe are options they have for a future job and how they will prepare for it. Access computer sources for up to date information about what the world of work may expect from employees five to ten years in the future. Explore the resources available in your local communities that stress workforce preparation and career development. Whether firefighter or physician, the time to start career/workforce preparation is now.



References

Cisco Systems, Inc. www.cisco.com/
 Promising and Effective Practices Network www.nydic.org