

Helping Children & Teens

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As summer arrives, many parents look forward to a time when their children can relax and not have to deal with school pressures. However, for some parents, it is a time when their children work a summer job. Perhaps it is their first job and parents wonder how to help them succeed and be safe. Maybe their child hasn't been able to find a summer job or hasn't tried very hard!

This month we will talk about how you can instill a work ethic in your child. It's never too early. We will talk about how to prepare your child for a new job and how to protect them once they start working.

Unfortunately, these are not skills that are taught in school. It is up to parents to do this!



Instilling a Work Ethic in Children

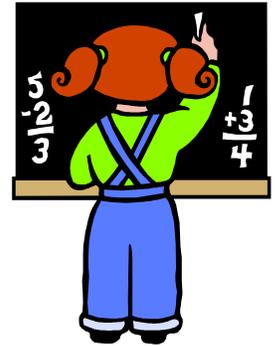
Raising children with a strong work ethic doesn't happen by chance. Parents/guardians need to teach their children work ethics by example. You need to look at the way you portray your job to your children. Does your child even know what you do at work? If possible, take them to work and see what you do. If that is not possible, tell them what you do at work. Express your pride in your job and the satisfaction you feel as a result of the work you do. At the same time, children must be taught that no job will be without its discouraging times. One has to learn that

you take the rough spots with the smooth ones.

Schoolwork is another great way to teach work ethics. A student's job is to learn.

This is an opportunity to teach them the rewards of receiving good grades from working hard. If children receive rewards without doing anything to earn them, they won't learn proper work ethics. There is also the valuable lesson of learning that there is not a reward for everything you do. Time management, an essential element of doing a job well, can be taught while doing schoolwork. Does your child wait until the last minute to do a school assignment? Do they know how to prioritize their workload and to have goals?

These are all things you can help them with. Don't forget they will be observing you on how you handle time management at home!



What about the issue of money? Sometimes we communicate to our children that we work just to make money. Work is about so much more than money. But how do we impart that message to our kids? How do we let them know that while money is important, so, too, are the psychic rewards we earn? Think about how you talk about work. In addition to letting your kids know that the money is crucial to paying the bills, make sure you talk about the rewards and satisfaction you receive from your job.

We are important role models for our children as we prepare them for the work world.

Keeping Our Children Safe at Work

If you have been successful at instilling a work ethic in your children, congratulations!

Unfortunately, that is only the first step. Now you need to keep them safe at work both physically and emotionally. A tall order? Yes, but information will help you. This week we will give you that.

Before your child takes her first official job, remember that, there are some restrictions set on the types of jobs she/he can do and the hours she /he can work depending on their age. Each state has a web site with this information. For Connecticut it is <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/youth/employment.htm> . This site will answer questions such as: Where can I work, how old do I have to be to get a job, what hours can I work and what forms do I need to start working?

Once you know these important basics, before he/she starts here are some guidelines for your child. For the purpose of easy reading, I will be referring to her/she but these guidelines are for male and female:

- Tell her to check out the atmosphere of the workplace
- Emphasize that she should tell you if someone makes her uncomfortable or she notices any practices going on that seem wrong
- Talk about harassment, what it is and how to prevent being a victim or accused of being a perpetrator
- After she starts working, ask if you can drop by
- Take your child's concerns seriously if she complains, and be suspicious if you hear something that seems inappropriate

Unfortunately you can do all these things and your child could still be harassed on the job. If that happens the following is recommended:



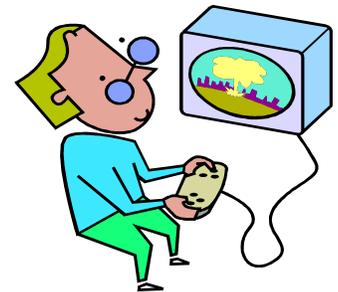
- Immediately talk to her manager. If that person doesn't respond, call the next higher up. Document all the steps you take, with names, dates and times.
 - Don't back down, even if your child is uncomfortable
 - If the situation is intolerable, consider letting her quit the job.
 - Have your child document what is going on
 - Have her talk to other employees to see what their experience is
 - Get support for yourself as this can be a difficult experience
- Your child will survive and learn from the experience with your support and guidance.

Children, Teens & Work

After my first etip went out I received an email from a mom who wanted some help on how to handle a teenager who would not work. I am sure there are many other parents for which this is a dilemma. I wish I could give you a quick, magical answer, but alas life is not that simple, especially with teens!

The first question I asked her and would pose to my audience is:

- What does he/she do all day?
- What can you take away that will motivate this teen?
- Do you give him/her allowance?
- Are you concerned about drug or alcohol abuse or depression?



Recommendations will vary depending if your child is a minor or not. If they are under 18, I recommend you assess what is holding your child back.

Counseling is important to deal with issues of low self esteem, depression or substance abuse which may be preventing your teen from getting a job. It is important you take away privileges, use of computer, T.V., car, allowance or anything else that enables your child to not work. Be clear about your expectations. Perhaps your child doesn't know where to start with looking. You can sit down with him/her and devise a plan and help find out what he/she likes and is good at.

If your child is over 18, you have the option to not allow him/her to continue to use your home as a hotel. By assuming no responsibility for his/her life, this is a recipe for dependence. You can sit down with him/her, lay out your expectations, set a time line for his/her showing you he/she can and will act responsibly, and have him/her sign the contract. Some parents may eventually need to ask their child to leave home if things do not change and they have warned them of this possibility. This is perhaps a harsh approach, but some parents have found it to be their only recourse. Make sure you receive support while going through this.

**Call Solutions EAP at 1 800-526-3485 for assistance for all of life's challenges.
It's free, confidential and open to family members.
Check us out on-line at www.solutions-eap.com**