

GIVING YOUR CHILD A TASTE OF WORK IS ABOUT MUCH MORE THAN MONEY

A first job does not prepare your child for a lifetime of work or even lead to a dream career. What it does do, however, is provide practice in arriving on time, fulfilling expected work duties, answering to a supervisor and, oh yes, receiving a paycheck and spending it wisely.

For many children, their first job outside the home is the biggest step they take to independence. Don't be too concerned about how young our child is when they are asked to pet-sit, pick up a neighbors mail while they are on vacation, or weed a garden. Ultimately, the choice of jobs is up to your child. She might choose something you do not think is interesting, but it gives her a chance to explore her interests and show up for work on time. There are always ground rules for work that help provide for your child's safety and your own convenience as well as enforcing family moral and ethical values:

- You must agree to provide the transportation needed. No parent should be expected to drop their work and activities to provide transportation unless the time, place and schedule is pre-approved by you.
- You can restrict hours your child works even if she is driving herself to and from work. If she finds a job that requires her to walk to her car alone at 2:00 a.m., in a remote part of town, you can exercise your veto.



- She needs to learn and abide by responsible employee behavior. That includes punctuality, working hard, and giving proper notice when resigning from a job.
- There is a difference between a job that requires your daughter to ask customers if they wish to have fries with their order, and a job that requires her to wear a skimpy uniform. It might be that neither is your choice, but one of the two violates your morals and the other is just something that you wouldn't be willing to do.

As your child finishes high school and enters college, she is likely to start looking for jobs that give her a taste of a future career. This can be very positive and an exciting and productive time, reinforcing that working is about much more than simply earning a paycheck.

Linda Leitz, CFP, Pinnacle Financial Concepts, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado, is author of "The Ultimate Parenting Map to Money Smart Kids," as a book or as a CD. She specializes in helping families and individuals meet their long-term financial goals. She also helps those in the midst of divorce resolve financial issues through her company Divorce Solutions, Inc. She can be reached at 719-260-9800 or Linda@brightleitz.com.