



Parents' Guide to Supporting Your Student

The services offered through the Career Development Center empower students to set and achieve their post-graduate goals. We realize the impact that parents have on the lives of their children, particularly with regard to initiative in planning for a career, and we aim to partner with you in support of your student's future.

Students who do not feel ready to address career/life planning decisions probably will not initiate contact with us and may lack the motivation to work on planning. With that in mind, here are a few tips that you as a parent can use to help get your student ready to move through the career development process:

Start early. Familiarize yourself with the [services](#) (link to Home Page) we offer and encourage your student to begin working with us during their first year at Saint Joseph's University.

Emphasize internships. [Internships](#) (link to Gain Experience: internships page) provide excellent opportunities for students to test out career interests, gain valuable experience, and connect with employers who may later hire them upon graduation.

Listen. Encourage your student to talk about their ideas and listen with empathy and without judgment. Have an open mind to careers and majors that may not be in keeping with your original expectations. Try to see the situation from your student's perspective.

Initiate conversation. Talk to your student about career plans, life goals, interests, and abilities. Be patient and offer encouragement, as this can facilitate their desire to explore these issues earlier on instead of waiting until the last minute. Ask open-ended questions, and help your student clarify ideas, priorities, and concerns.

Be supportive. Support your student as they explore different activities and interests. Give feedback on what you see as their strengths and abilities to help them develop a solid sense of self. Encourage them to remain true to their values, interests, and talents. It is not unusual for students to change their minds as they take in new and interesting career information and is important to the exploration process. Help them sort the information they're presenting by pointing out common threads among the various paths being considered.

Let your student decide. While your supportive input is valuable, remember that the decision must ultimately be your student's. Gradually reduce your role in their decision-making as they begin to develop a sense of independence.

Know the process. The more you know about the steps that facilitate good life planning, the better you will be able to assess just where your student is in the process. Suggest steps that move them along gently, and begin where they are.

Expose your student to different jobs. Students make better career decisions when they learn about a wide range of occupations and get past the stereotypes about different careers. Take your student to your workplace, talk about the nature of your job and your friends' jobs, and have your student "shadow" someone on the job.

Help network. Help your student develop contacts for information, advice, and assistance in career planning and job search. Refer them to colleagues, friends, neighbors, parishioners, family members, and community members with related experience. If your student is reluctant to approach people to ask for this kind of information, encourage them.

Click [here](#) (direct to Ask the Experts page) to view a webinar about Supporting Your Student's Career & Professional Development.