

# Career Success in Nova Scotia:

Planning with a  
Young Adult



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# The Success Process

Career Planning with young adults is important. Most of us want to help the youth in our lives become successful in tomorrow's world. The role we take often depends on our relationship - the closer we are, the more we feel compelled to help. Whether you are a parent, community leader, acquaintance, friend, or teacher, you have a role to play in the future success of the youth around you. It's an important one!

How do we best offer our support and knowledge to have a positive influence? This guide offers strategies for being a great parent, mentor, career coach, friend or ally to youth who are thinking about their futures.

## **This guide will help you:**

- Understand the career development process and how you can help.
- Identify resources you can use in working with a young adult.
- Help the young adult in your life make career and training decisions.

The steps to success include:

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# Step 1: Get involved

You don't need to be an expert in career development to help youth plan for the future. **You just need to be willing, interested, and resourceful.**

When thinking of their futures, youth want to know:

- How to start the process
- How to identify their skills and interests
- What courses they should take
- Information on education and training options
- How they can pay for education
- What jobs will be there when they graduate
- How much they will make when they start working

These questions are challenging, and many young adults are limited by what they know and observe in their daily lives. Some feel like there are too many options and don't have the personal experience to narrow their choices. Others might have a clear direction in mind but would still benefit from exploring around that direction to broaden their thinking. How can you help?

## Your role as a career coach

A coach is on your side and wants you to achieve the best you can. You

can adopt the role of "career coach" for the youth in your life to provide useful guidance without interfering in the overall process. You are a supporter, encourager, helper, and partner – not the boss!

There are three roles of a career coach: clarifier, co-researcher/connector, and supporter.

### In the role of CLARIFIER you:

- Talk to the youth about what makes them happy and what activities they are interested in.



- Help the youth identify their skills.
- Help the youth understand the career process and the world of work.

**In the role of CO-RESEARCHER/  
CONNECTOR you:**

- Help youth identify occupations that might interest them.
- Help expand their knowledge about what occupations exist.
- Encourage youth to keep their options open through course selection in high school.
- Help youth make decisions regarding training and careers.

**In the role of SUPPORTER you:**

- Help youth identify and secure financial support if they plan to attend college or university.
- Continue to provide them with encouragement and the necessities of life.

## Be a good role model

You can support young adults in their career development by setting a good example with your own work life. If you hate work and always have, that message will be absorbed by your youth. If you believe and demonstrate that doing a job well is the best approach, your youth is more likely to adopt a similar attitude. One of the most helpful ways to support the career development of your young adult is to provide a realistic view of the world of work and encourage the skills and attitudes that will make them employable.

Some ways you can help your young adult develop the skills they will need are:

- **Demonstrate positive choice-making** – show by example the choices you make and the consequences of those choices.

- **Think out loud** – when you have a tough choice to make allow your youth to see how you work through the problem.
- **Admit mistakes** – this will help youth understand that everyone makes mistakes, it is not the end of the world, you can recover from and fix most problems, and you can take responsibility to manage any damage. By being a role model for handling mistakes you will encourage youth to do the same.
- **Follow through** – demonstrate the ability to stick to your commitments and promises.
- **Show confidence in yourself** – be proud of the person you have become. For youth to celebrate who they are their role models need to show that they can celebrate themselves regardless of the ups and downs along their journey.

*The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development offers a coaching program for parents called “Let’s Talk Careers”*

(formerly known as Parents as Career Coaches). Visit **Let’s Talk Careers** for more information. <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/cbl/lets-talk-careers>

A self-directed version titled **Parents as Career Coaches** can be found on SkillsOnlineNS <https://www.coursepark.com/ns>



# Step 2: Get Informed

There is a lasting myth that the journey from high school to career to retirement should be a straight line. Few people ever follow that path – they take twists and turns along the way.

## Career development

Life often doesn't go the way we planned. Workplaces, economies, lifestyles and values all change – and so do jobs. Gone are the days of working for one employer from hire to retire. Today's youth can expect to have an average of 12 to 15 jobs over their working lifetime.

Thinking about career options can provoke both anxiety and solace in young adults. Anxiety about not picking the "right" career, while

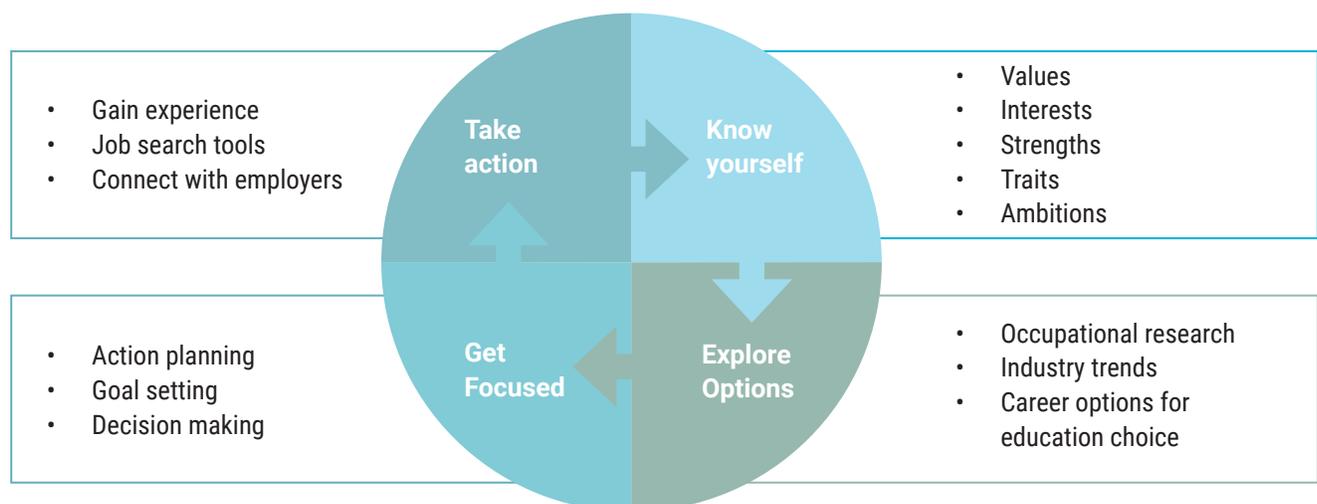
planning provides the feeling of doing something. Having a plan helps reduce anxiety and helps young people imagine their future.

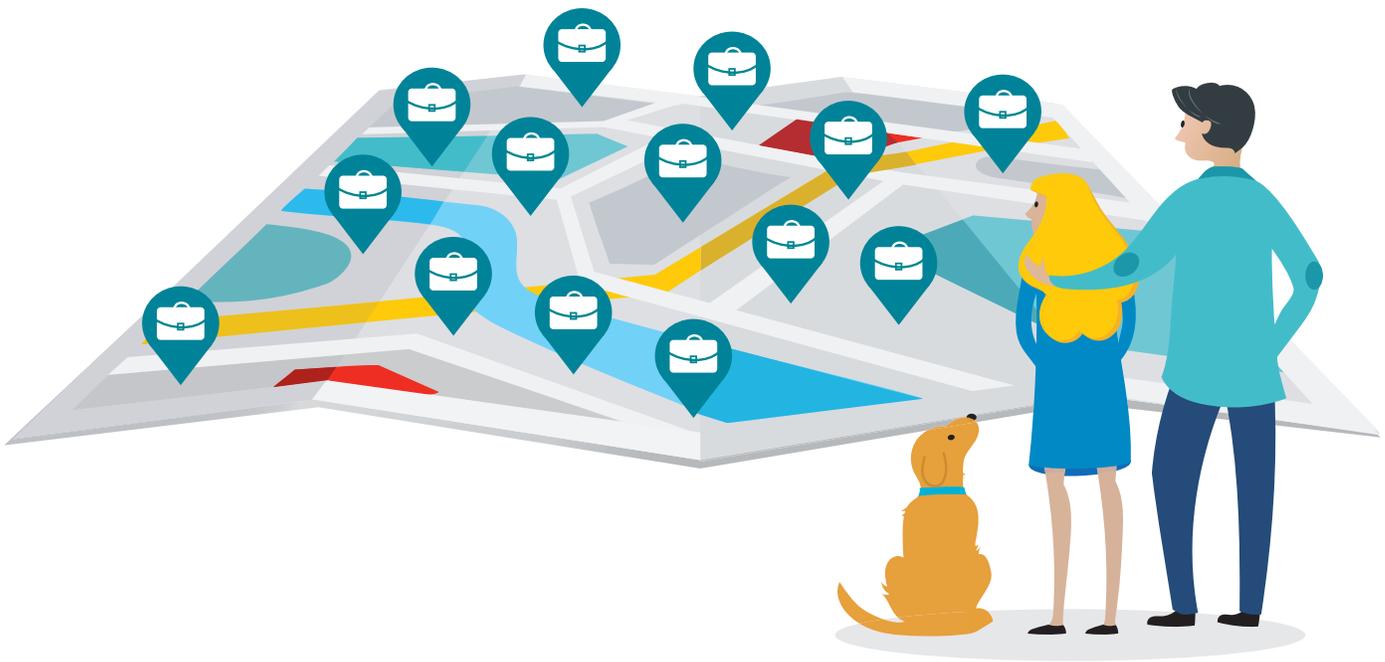
Career development is a process that involves understanding yourself, exploring your options, making decisions, and implementing those decisions. It is an ongoing process that lasts a lifetime. Rather than planning for a career, talk to youth about building a career that can weather changes and transformations.

## Stay current: Get labour market information (LMI)

Naturally, adults will be tempted to provide youth with career advice based on their own experience. While experience is important, this should not be our only approach. The world of work is constantly changing and some of the jobs awaiting today's youth haven't even been created yet!

### Career development





Labour market information (LMI) research is a great way to gather details about jobs and people who do them in Nova Scotia.

LMI can tell you what jobs are available now, and help you predict what to expect in the future. It can clarify what skills, education or training is needed to be successful, and include information about wages, job duties and work environments.

High school students need to understand the post-secondary options available and how those relate to potential careers. They need to understand that their level of education can influence:

- Whether they can find a job
- The types of jobs they qualify for
- The chances of finding a job they enjoy
- How much money they could make

Once you are comfortable using LMI, it will be easier to help a young adult use it to make informed career decisions.

### Where can you find this information?

The [explorecareers.novascotia.ca](https://explorecareers.novascotia.ca) website should be your first stop for Nova Scotia LMI.

- In the **Discover a job you'll love** section you can explore jobs you find interesting and learn about the work, wages, employment potential, related jobs, and what level of education is needed and where you can study.
- Under the **Education & Training** section you can search or browse for Nova Scotia College and University programs. Find where they are offered in Nova Scotia, explore related programs, and get an idea of the

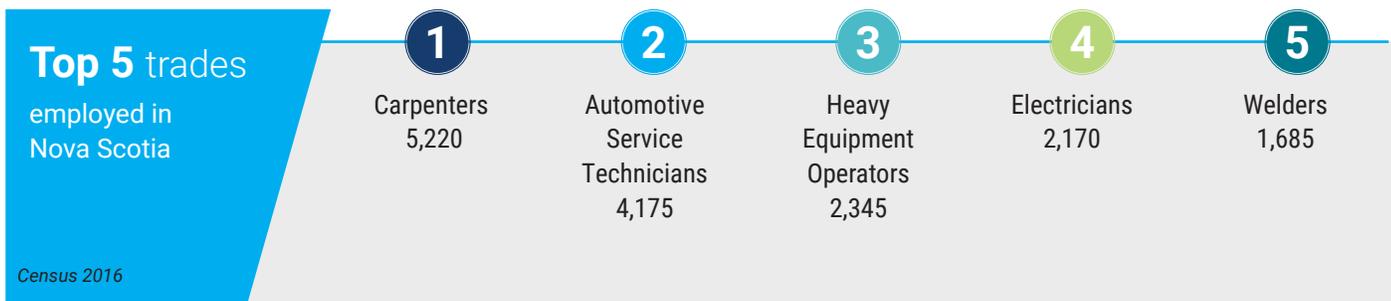
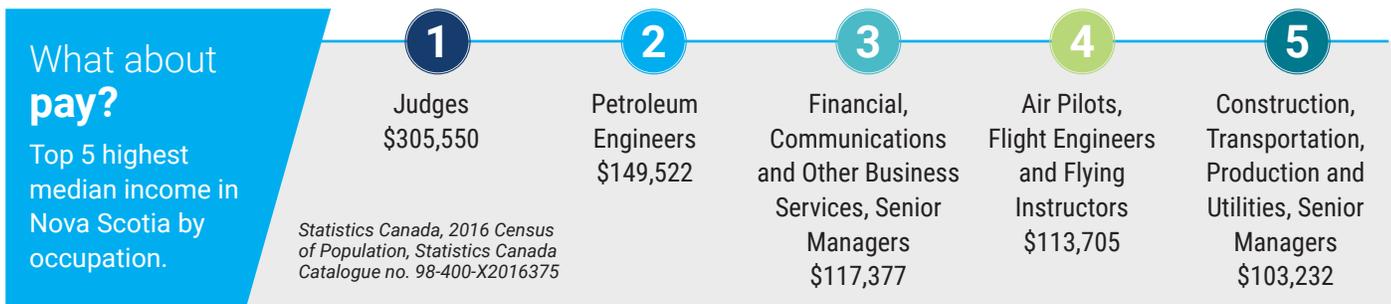
types of jobs related to that training.

- Explore the **Labour Market Information** section for more detailed statistics on work in Nova Scotia.

The [jobbank.gc.ca](https://jobbank.gc.ca) website also has extensive Canada-wide LMI resources.

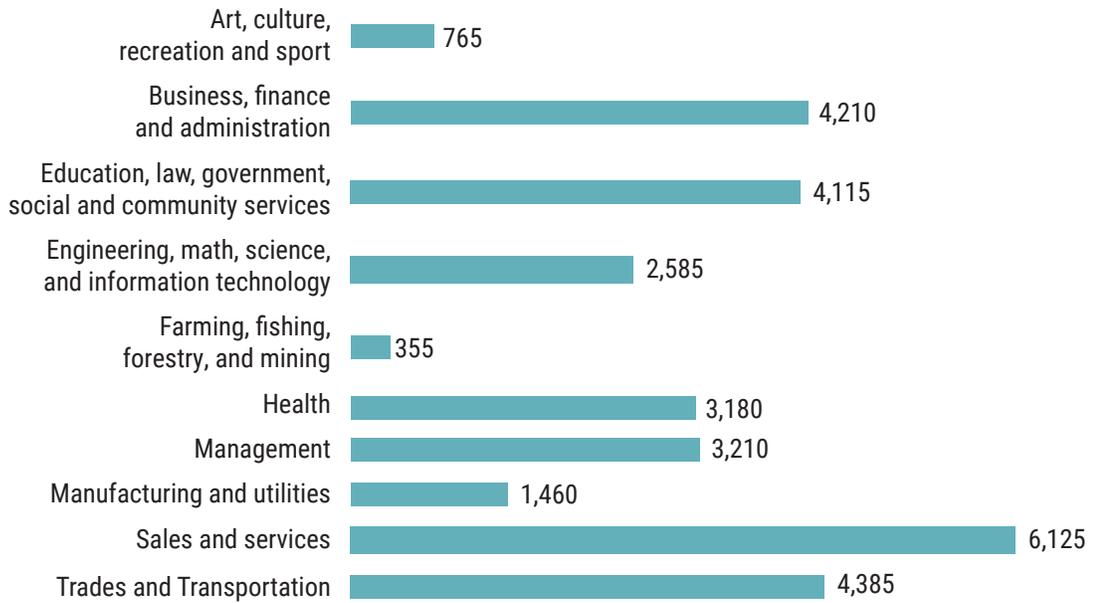
- The **Explore the Market** feature is useful to explore occupations in your region by their employment potential.
- In the **Career Planning** section, you can search by field of study and have a look whether people with that area of study find jobs, what graduates earn, the types of jobs they have, and whether they would take that program again.

## Some Nova Scotia trends:

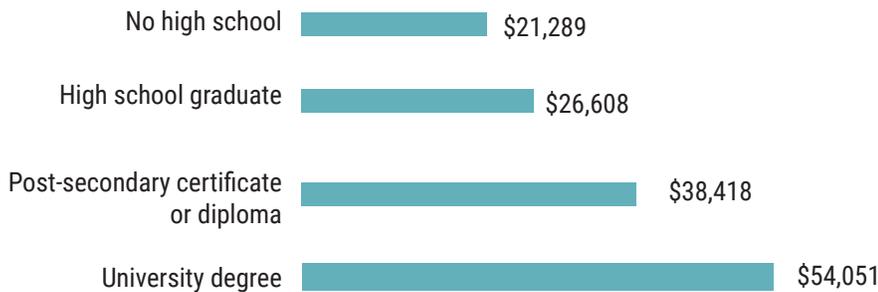


For more details on pay search for a specific occupation at [explorecareers.novascotia.ca/job\\_search](https://explorecareers.novascotia.ca/job_search).

## What kind of work are people getting hired to do? Estimated total job opportunities, 2019-2021, Nova Scotia



## Median annual income by education level, 2016, Nova Scotia



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, Custom Data

*In Nova Scotia, people who take training beyond their high school diploma earn more and are more likely to be employed.*

For more details on education options check out **Career Success in Nova Scotia: Training and Education**



# Step 3: Get talking

Instead of “What do you want to do?” we should be asking, “Who do you want to be?”

## Conversation starters

Many adults wonder how to engage or get a young adult interested in talking about their career planning. Questions like, “what do you want to do with your life?” Or “what do you want to be when you grow up?” are common but can feel intimidating or overwhelming in conversation.

Today’s youth are plugged-in and always on in a rapidly evolving world.

They might have clear ideas of themselves and their values, but struggle to see how they will accomplish their goals. Some may feel paralyzed or insecure due to external factors like the economy, changing employment expectations or global changes. They may lack confidence or feel pressured into making big decisions without all the answers. By using the following tips, you can help bridge the gap and encourage their thinking:

**Recognize their strengths and challenges.** This is one of your main roles as an influential adult – to help youth recognize their own strengths.

*“I noticed you did a great job with organizing the bake sale last week. What did you enjoy most?”*

Reassure them about what they have to offer and that their value comes from their character, not just their experience (or lack thereof).



*“Help them identify the things they do know about their likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses,” she said. “This will show them they have some information, even if they don’t have it all,” and they can eventually translate that data into potential career pathways.*

**Tamar E. Chansky, a child-and-adolescent psychologist**

*“Among the 50 per cent of students who borrow money to finance their post-secondary education, the average debt on graduation is \$26,819, as noted in a 2015 survey of graduates by the Canadian University Survey Consortium.”*

**Talk about change, flexibility, and keeping your options open.**

Sometimes youth become interested in a potential career path based on expected pay levels or perceived status. Other times their decisions are based on experience – a part time job, community involvement, the media or a parent’s profession.

*“Have you considered what you might do if you start school and decide it isn’t the right fit? Do you have a back-up plan?”*

It can be helpful to offer a “big picture” perspective. For example, encouraging them to seek training that has several potential career paths associated with it, to remain open to opportunities and changes. Reassure them that changing your mind is normal, and to consider back-up plans that can help them stay agile and avoid costly or time-intensive transitions in the middle of their education and employment journey.

**Talk about money.** One major challenge for youth is managing money responsibly. Do they know how much their education will cost? Do they know what rent and groceries cost? Do they have a bank account? Many young people don’t have money to begin with and assume that loans are the only way to get through school or training.

Talk to youth about credit, budgeting, saving, income, and loan repayment. Share your own knowledge or introduce them to someone who can provide this type of advice. You might connect them to a financial advisor at their bank or use online resources.

*“I know that making good money is important to you. Have you considered how long it will take and how much you will need to spend on education before that salary becomes a reality?”*

Visit Nova Scotia’s Student Assistance website ([www.novascotia.ca/studentassistance/](http://www.novascotia.ca/studentassistance/)) for lots of additional information about funding education and training.

**Quick talking tips**

- Use quiet, uninterrupted dinner or driving time with youth to raise the topic of careers.
- Get involved in a new activity, group, or volunteer opportunity with your young adult.
- Take note and share articles or news stories related to interesting careers and experiences.
- Use TV, movies, music or YouTube personalities and their jobs as discussion points.
- Share information about your own career journey, what you would do differently and what you wished you had known during your own career decision making.



# Step 4: Get started

The mid-to-late teens is a period of career exploration for youth. They are developing work readiness skills, formatting more specific goals and plans, and starting to make career-relevant decisions. There are activities you can encourage them to undertake to support this process.

## Encourage exploration

There are many ways young people can grow their understanding about themselves and what might be a future direction. Encourage your youth to engage in a variety of experiences. This can teach them what they like and don't like, what they find interesting, and help expand their thinking about future possibilities.

There are many different opportunities to try new things:

- Join school organizations and clubs
- Take a variety of elective courses to explore different subject areas
- Volunteer for sports, cultural, education, or social service programs in their community
- Look into school-based work experience programs that may be available (e.g. co-op)
- Get a part-time or summer job
- Play sports or participate in other extracurricular activities
- Ask for information interviews or job shadow people working in areas of interest
- Participate in youth entrepreneurship



## Understand skills and interests

While no one can predict the future, the skills that are thought to be important in the future of work include:

- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

**Essential skills** that are needed for work, learning, and life are:

- Reading
- Document use
- Using numbers

- Writing
- Oral communication
- Working with others
- Thinking
- Computer use
- Continuous learning

Once a young adult has some sense of their interests the next challenge is to relate those interests to potential careers.

**myBlueprint.ca** is available to all Nova Scotia students in grades 4-12. Your youth can access assessments that will help identify their interests, guide their planning, track their learning and achievement, and explore careers and post-secondary options.

*For information on essential skills visit:*

**<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills.html>**



*Talk to your youth about these skills and which ones they feel are strong or weak then discuss ways to improve any weak skills. When talking to your youth about their future, encourage them to consider whether their direction supports the development of these skills.*

## Goal setting with youth

Here are a few questions you can ask the young adult in your life, to get their head in the right space to set helpful and motivating goals.

- What would you want to do with your life if money was no object?
- Who are the people you most admire? What do they have, personally and professionally, that you want for yourself?
- What is your definition of career success? Is it material or emotional? Imagine yourself at the top of your career: what does your life look like?
- Do you feel as though you have a gift or calling? How can you share this gift or best answer the call in a way that will fulfill you?
- What's the one activity you most love? Is it part of your career? If not, how can you make it part of your career?
- Where would you like to be in your career in 5 years? In 10 years? In 15 years?

Start early by helping youth set goals based on the information you've gathered and conversations you've had. Focus on goals that build skills rather than goals that focus on a destination. Use **SMART** goal writing: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely.

Some tips to help you write SMART goals in a way that is most likely to lead you to success:



### Be Specific

Write goals down in a clear and detailed format.



### Make them Measurable

Use dates and quantities to make your goals measurable.



### Make them Achievable

Put your goals in order of most to least important and focus on one at a time to avoid feeling overwhelmed.



### Be Relevant

Break your goals into small, manageable tasks that are within your control, that you can more easily complete and use as motivation to keep moving forward.



### Timely Goals

Goals are tied to a time period and evaluated regularly for progress and necessary changes.

# Step 5: Get help

You don't need to do it all. A big part of your coach role is to help your young adult connect with available resources.

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

## Community resources and government programs

Visit a local Nova Scotia Works centre to find out about employment and career focused programs and services available to youth in your area. They offer programs on teaching youth about LMI, skill building, entrepreneurship, job search, resumes, grants for

education, subsidized employment and more! [www.novascotiaworks.ca](http://www.novascotiaworks.ca).

There are a lot of great websites out there to support youth in their career development and decision making. A more detailed list of resources is found in the appendix.

## Mentorship

Mentorship is a valuable guiding and information-sharing role that you or someone else may play in the life

of a young adult. As a parent, it can be hard to play both roles. Finding and connecting youth with a good mentor could be another way to offer support and guidance.

## Your network

Speak to trusted people within your network who may have unique or interesting perspectives, feedback, and guidance to offer the young adult in your life. Help them arrange the job shadowing or secure an informational interview.

## Schools and recruiters

Counsellors, teachers, courses, co-op education, job fairs and extracurricular programs within the school system can all help support the career planning of the young adult in your life. Find out what's available in your local school district and encourage participation.

Once a young adult has narrowed their focus to specific career paths, reach out to schools or institutions who train for those roles and let recruiters arrange a visit to learn about training and employment options.



# Step 6: Get behind them

Be a supportive sounding board. Acknowledgement of accomplishments big and small is a major confidence builder, and the most important thing you can do as part of a youth's support network.

Above all, let the young adult in your life lead their own career development journey. This is their time to stumble, try and shine. Point out the valuable lessons they may be learning, but not necessarily recognizing, along the way.

**Focus on change, learning, resilience and mental health.** Career and job change are a fact of life. Personal resilience in the face of challenges is becoming increasingly more

important for young Canadians in the world of work.

**Encouraging positivity, openness, and flexibility** in all areas of life will encourage similar career values.

Teaching youth to embrace mistakes and experiential learning is another way to encourage resilience.

Perfectionism is often an unhealthy habit, despite presenting as success in many cases.

**Being patient, supportive and optimistic** with youth, rather than

pushing or instilling fear about the future will give youth the confidence they need to manage inevitable challenges they will face throughout their education and employment.

Talk to youth and **normalize the importance of mental health** self-management. We are realizing that far greater numbers of youth (and adults) suffer from anxiety, depression, addiction, and other challenging conditions than was previously recognized. Encourage youth to acknowledge and deal with



*"We need to build resilient, persevering young people who are fluent in cultural diversity."*

**Paul Davidson,  
Universities Canada**

their mental health like they would any other illness or disease: **with regular support from professionals paired with respect for dignity and compassionate care.**

**Seek support and resources** within your community if you are unsure of how best to help the youth in your life. Most education institutions offer their own counselling and wellness services and programs, or you can locate specialized services for children and youth on the Nova Scotia Mental Health Services website. [www.novascotia.ca/dhw/mental-health](http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/mental-health)

**Recognize if your child is not ready for college or university.** For many young adults, going to college or university too soon can be a waste of time and money.

Some obvious signs include<sup>1</sup>:

- Poor grades
- Lack of career direction
- Not liking to read
- Requiring close supervision to complete homework
- Skipping classes
- Not graduating with their class
- Trouble with the law, drugs

Some other less obvious signs are:

- Evasive about plans after high school
- Never getting around to filing out post-secondary education applications

- Having parents fill out applications
- Applying only to schools where friends are going
- Showing no interest in visiting college or university campuses

It is normal to feel worried about your youth not enrolling in study right after high school. Many parents fear that if they don't go right away, they never will. Still, it could benefit your youth to take some time to work, volunteer, or take a gap year program before enrolling in education. The important part is that they find a worthwhile way to spend that time. This time can help them mature and give them space to think about their future.

**Set healthy boundaries and be proud.** It can be extremely difficult, especially for parents, to **take a step back** when a young persons' life-altering decisions are being made in front of them. Remind yourself that as strongly as you may feel, **this is not your life.** You should not be the one to make decisions or push for specific results, nor should you take responsibility for the results of their decisions.

Having boundaries around your involvement, and how much you take on in support of a youth's career development, is important for your own self-care. **By setting healthy boundaries you are modelling a healthy level of support that encourages confidence and self-esteem.**

You have likely put a lot of time, effort, and emotion into supporting a young person's growth and achievements. **Be proud of all you have done and how far they have come.**

*It's time to sit back a bit, cheer them on from the sidelines, and watch how far they can go.*

### Quick advice

Advice you can give the young adult in your life, about Career Development:

- Change is constant, plan with a pencil.
- Focus on the journey – not the destination.
- If you are learning, you are succeeding.
- Access your allies – friends, family, teachers, and neighbours can help you along your journey.



<sup>1</sup>Cathy Campbell, Michael Ungar, and Peggy Dutton, *The Decade After High School A Parent's Guide* (Toronto, ON: Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC), 2008), p. 27-28.

# Appendix: Change and growth resources

## Step 1: Get involved

<b>Career coaching</b>	<p>Lets Talk Careers – Education and Early Childhood Development’s career workshop for parents. <a href="http://www.ednet.ns.ca/cbl/lets-talk-careers">www.ednet.ns.ca/cbl/lets-talk-careers</a></p> <p>Parents as Career Coaches – Self-directed modules on SkillsOnlineNS <a href="http://www.coursepark.com/ns">www.coursepark.com/ns</a></p>
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## Step 2: Get informed

<b>Education information</b>	<p>Career Success in Nova Scotia: Training and Education <a href="http://explorecareers.novascotia.ca/publications">explorecareers.novascotia.ca/publications</a></p> <p><a href="http://explorecareers.novascotia.ca/educationandtraining">explorecareers.novascotia.ca/educationandtraining</a> – learn about education programs and where to study in Nova Scotia.</p> <p><a href="http://www.jobbank.gc.ca">www.jobbank.gc.ca</a> “Career Planning” section search by field of study</p> <p><a href="http://www.mphec.ca/research">www.mphec.ca/research</a> - the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission collects data on post-secondary education. Research includes graduate outcomes and trends in higher education</p>
<b>Occupational information</b>	<p><a href="http://explorecareers.novascotia.ca">explorecareers.novascotia.ca</a> – your first online stop for local LMI. Learn about the work, wages, employment potential, related jobs, education required, and where to study</p> <p><a href="http://www.jobbank.gc.ca">www.jobbank.gc.ca</a> – has extensive Canada-wide LMI resources. If you are looking at opportunities across Canada this is the place to start</p>
<b>Trends and projections</b>	<p><a href="http://www.rbcupskills.ca">www.rbcupskills.ca</a> – provides insight into the most important skills employers are likely to be looking for in the future</p>

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### Step 3: Get talking

#### Talking about money

Nova Scotia's Student Assistance website has lots of information about funding education and training. [www.novascotia.ca/studentassistance](http://www.novascotia.ca/studentassistance)

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### Step 4: Get started

#### Exploration

[www.myblueprint.ca](http://www.myblueprint.ca) – is available to all Nova Scotia students in grades 4-12. Your youth can access assessments that will help identify their interests, guide their planning, track their learning and achievement, and explore careers and post-secondary options

[www.careersintrades.ca](http://www.careersintrades.ca) - discover and explore the trades

[www.skillsns.ca](http://www.skillsns.ca) - explore skilled trades and technologies through a range of programming

[www.nscsc.ca/teh.html](http://www.nscsc.ca/teh.html) - visit the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council's Trades Exhibition Hall to explore careers in the construction sector.

[www.techsporation.ca](http://www.techsporation.ca) - Empowering young women to explore careers in science, trades, engineering, & technology

[www.workitns.ca](http://www.workitns.ca) – become a youth apprentice

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#### Skills

[www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills/tools/what-aresential-skills.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills/tools/what-aresential-skills.html)

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#### Community based learning

[www.ednet.ns.ca/cbl](http://www.ednet.ns.ca/cbl) – there are several options available to junior high and high school students that encourage community based learning (Co-op, O2, personal development credits, skilled trades courses)

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#### Trades and apprenticeship

[www.careersintrades.ca](http://www.careersintrades.ca) - discover and explore the trades

[www.skillsns.ca](http://www.skillsns.ca) - explore skilled trades and technologies through a range of programming

[www.nscsc.ca/teh.html](http://www.nscsc.ca/teh.html) - visit the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council's Trades Exhibition Hall to explore careers in the construction sector

[www.workitns.ca](http://www.workitns.ca) – become a youth apprentice

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#### Entrepreneurship

[www.jacanada.org](http://www.jacanada.org) – Junior Achievement Canada

[www.ceed.ca/youth-programming](http://www.ceed.ca/youth-programming) - learn about entrepreneurship

[www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/business-assessments/pages/self-assessment-test-your-entrepreneurial-potential.aspx](http://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/business-assessments/pages/self-assessment-test-your-entrepreneurial-potential.aspx) - is entrepreneurship right for you?

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#### Community connections

[www.volunteers.ca](http://www.volunteers.ca) – search for volunteer opportunities across Nova Scotia

[www.volunteerhalifax.ca](http://www.volunteerhalifax.ca) – find volunteer opportunities in the Halifax area

[www.ns.211.ca](http://www.ns.211.ca) – search for volunteer opportunities in your area

[www.getlifefsmart.ca](http://www.getlifefsmart.ca) – LifeSmart: First Aid and WHMIS course

[www.novascotia.overdrive.com](http://www.novascotia.overdrive.com) - Nova Scotia Public Libraries – Locate training and coaching programs through your local branch

[www.finfestival.ca](http://www.finfestival.ca) - FIN Kids – Atlantic Filmmaking Festival and contest for aspiring young filmmakers

[www.katimavik.org](http://www.katimavik.org) – Engaging youth through volunteer work opportunities across Canada

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## Step 5: Get help

### **Nova Scotia Works**

[www.novascotiaworks.ca](http://www.novascotiaworks.ca) - Visit a local Nova Scotia Works centre to find out about employment and career focused programs and services available to youth in your area

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## Step 6: Get behind them

### **Mental health services**

[www.novascotia.ca/dhw/mental-health](http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/mental-health) - locate specialized services for children and youth

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