Help your child start career/life planning

A world of opportunity awaits your child as he begins to think about his career goals. That is exciting, but it can be a little overwhelming, too.

Believe it or not, grade 7 and 8 students have already started planning their career/life goals by discovering their interests and learning about the world in which they live. In high school, they further explore their opportunities, set goals and create plans.

As a parent, your role is to fully understand the career planning process and to assist your teen to work through it. Your role is not to provide the answers but to encourage your child to develop personally meaningful answers to some key questions. Now is the right time for her to start thinking about the answers to these four questions:

- Who am I?
- What are my opportunities?
- Who do I want to become?
- What are my plans to achieve my goals?

Encourage your teen to explore his own personal answers to these questions. There is no right or wrong answer—and answers may change—that is OK. What’s important is that she starts thinking about her future and learns how to apply the skills of career/life planning.

Getting ready to start high school is a big step. The Chart Your Course booklet has information about compulsory courses and specialized programs, like business, technology and the arts. It also describes academic, applied and locally developed programs and “real life” learning opportunities like co-operative education and the 40 hours of community volunteer involvement required for high school graduation.

Encourage your teen to consider these questions as a way to start his career/life planning:

Who am I?

- What are my interests and abilities?
- What are my traits and values?
- What am I passionate about and what inspires me?
What are my opportunities?

- What high school courses and extracurricular activities are available to me?
- What education and training opportunities are there after high school (apprenticeship, college, university and going straight into the workforce)?
- What fields of work exist and what occupations are within them?
- How can I find out more about these opportunities?
- What new things do I want to try?

Who do I want to become?

- What are my hopes and dreams for the future?
- What are some things that I want for myself after leaving high school?
- What are my goals?

What are my plans to achieve my goals?

- What steps should I take to help me achieve my goals?
- What resources can help me plan my own path?

For information on career/life planning, you can speak with your teen’s teachers, guidance counsellors or school principal. You can also encourage your teen to check out Peel’s virtual guidance and career education centre at www.makingmyway.ca.