As students make their way through high school, it’s important to plan what they are doing after they graduate. There’s no right or wrong answer—only the one that is right for each individual.

There are four main destinations to be considered—apprenticeship, college, university and going directly to the workplace. Each provides valuable skills and experiences that are required in the job market.

It’s important for your teen to decide on his goals. A self-assessment of skills, interests, abilities and preferred learning style will help her decide the best path. Taking a co-operative education course can provide a wonderful opportunity to learn about the options available after high school graduation.

Students can meet with their school guidance counsellor to discuss their pathway plan. For more information about career/life planning, have your teen go to www.makingmyway.ca.

**Apprenticeship**

An apprenticeship program is on-the-job training that allows students to gain experience and earn money while they learn. This training provides access to well-paying jobs in the skilled trades that demand a high level of skill, judgment and creativity. Here are some things teens should do before leaving high school if they are planning to pursue an apprenticeship program:

- Apply for the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and register as an apprentice.
- Prepare a resume, cover letter, references and additional certification portfolio.
- Find an employer willing to sponsor her as an apprentice.
- Identify the local training consultant for the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities.
- Get trade-specific health and safety training for the skilled trade.
- Find out where the in-school component of the apprenticeship training is delivered.
- Find out about the Loans for Tools program at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/apprenticeship/loantool.html
- Register with Job Connect at www.jobconnectontario.org/newsite/html/job_seekers.html
**College**

College offers many different programs focused on specific occupations, including the following:

- Apprenticeship and certification.
- Certificate (one year or less)
- Diploma (two or three years)
- Programs that are concurrent with universities, that let your teen earn a university degree and a college diploma at the same time.
- Programs that lead to a bachelor degree.
- Skilled trades.

Here are some things to do to prepare for college:

- Investigate college and college-university combined programs related to career areas of interest.
- Attend information sessions hosted by the colleges.
- Find out the admission requirements for the college program you are interested in.
- Get familiar with the Ontario College Application Services. Go to http://www.ontariocolleges.ca/portal/page/portal/ONTCOL/Home
- Complete the college application.

**University**

Universities offer both general or career-specific undergraduate programs leading to bachelor degrees, graduate programs leading to master's and doctorate degrees and continuing education programs and certificates, including distance and part-time programs.

Here are some things your teen can do to prepare for university:

- Investigate university and college-university combined programs related to his career area of interest.
- Attend university information sessions.
- Find out the admission requirements and complete the university application.
- Become familiar with the Ontario University Application Centre Check out: http://www.ouac.on.ca/
- Complete the university application.

Your teen can learn about Ontario’s publicly funded universities and other educational institutions that grant degrees in Ontario at: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/postsec/univers.html

**Workplace**

The key to success is to graduate from high school. If your teen plans on going to work full-time after graduation, here are some things to do:

- Register with Job Connect at http://www.jobconnectontario.org/
- Prepare a resume, cover letter, references and additional certification portfolio.
- Become aware of workplace health and safety.