

**Certificate Programs.** Many programs at community colleges, technical schools, and private career schools offer six-month to one-year training that provides a certificate of completion to show that your child is certified to do specialized work. Careers that might require a certificate training program include: pharmacy technician, dental assistant, paralegal, computer equipment repairer, floral designer, and medical assistant.

**Associate Degree Programs.** Two-year degree programs are available through community colleges. Your child can either get a transfer degree, which will count as the first two years of a four-year college degree and will transfer to a four-year college or university, or your child can get a two-year degree in a specific career field. Careers for which a two-year degree will prepare your child include: office manager, nurse, respiratory therapist, forestry technician, and interior designer.

**Bachelor Degree Programs.** Four-year degree programs are available through state and private colleges and universities. Your child may want to go directly to a four-year college or university, or your child may choose to start his or her education at a community college and then transfer to a four-year college. Either way, it is important for your child to have a plan for what he or she wants to study in college in order to increase the chances that this degree will be completed successfully. A bachelor's degree will prepare your child for an array of careers that include: dietitian, forester, graphic designer, social worker, and technical writer.

**Education beyond a bachelor's degree.** There are many careers in which your child may be interested that require education beyond a bachelor's degree. Careers that require five years include: architect, lawyer, and doctor. With a plan for post-high school education, you and your child will be better prepared for the time and money that will be required for your child to reach his or her career goal.

Parents and their children  
often **make the mistake**  
of focusing on a degree  
rather than a **career.**

Remember that a degree  
is **not the ticket** to a **career.**  
Planning **is key.**

**For more information:**

Alabama Career and Technical Education at:  
<http://www.alcareertech.org>

Free Application For Federal Student Aid:  
<http://www.FAFSA.gov>

The U.S. Department of Education's website for students at: <http://www.ed.gov/students/>

Students.gov, a website, that provides information about education, careers, government and more at: <http://www.students.gov/>

The College Preparation Checklist provides a list of activities that should happen at each grade level of high school education to prepare for college. Print the checklist from:  
<http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>

Alabama Career Information Network at:  
<http://www.alcareerinfo.org>



Alabama Department of Education  
Joseph B. Morton, State Superintendent of Education  
Sherry A. Key, Director, Career and Technical Education

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No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age or genetics. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008: Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8165.



What Should  
my Child do  
after High School?

Planning for your Child's Future  
in Middle or High School





## *Why does my Child need a Post-High School Plan?*

### **Did you know that:**

- 48 of the 50 fastest growing jobs in the United States require some type of post-high school education?
- People who do not participate in post-high school training are three times more likely to be unemployed than people who have some post-high school training?
- People who have some post-high school training make more money over their lifetimes and have better opportunities for advancement in their careers than most people who have only a high school diploma?
- Freshmen who enter college without a career goal or an academic major in mind have higher college dropout rates?
- If your child has a solid plan for life after high school, his or her chances for success in post-high school education increase?

### **Post-High School Planning Should Begin in Middle School.**

You and your child should start creating a post-high school plan while your child is in middle school. It is important to start early because the classes your child takes in high school will affect his or her ability to enter a post-high school training program.

Together, you and your child can create a career training plan that will enable your child to make a smooth transition from high school to post-high school education.



## *What Steps Should I Take to Help my Child Prepare for Life after High School?*

### **Help your child:**

- Identify the career or career field in which he or she would like to work.
- Discover the skills needed for his or her chosen career.
- Get as much education and experience related to his or her career interests as possible while still in high school. This can be accomplished in many ways, including high school elective classes, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, job shadowing, internships, and part-time jobs.
- Collect information about the post-high school training needed to fit his or her career plan.
- Find the schools or colleges that provide the best training for your child's chosen career.
- Look beyond just starting a training program; set a plan for how to finish the program.

### **What if my child does not have a career goal?**

Help your child choose a post-high school training program that offers study in a general area that relates to his or her interests.

Encourage your child to take challenging courses and to continue to think about how he or she may want to use education to pursue a rewarding career.

Remember that it is okay for your child to change career goals as he or she learns more about the world of work.

Also, keep in mind that it is better to have a plan that is modified as your child changes career goals, than to have no plan at all.



## *What are my Child's Options for Post-High School Training?*

There are many ways to get further training after high school. The training your child will need depends on his or her career goals. Here are some examples:

**On-the-job training.** Some careers require completion of a formal, on-the-job training program. For example, if your child would like to work as a flight attendant, bank teller, or emergency dispatcher, he or she must complete a formal training program provided by the employer.

**Apprenticeship training.** Other careers require apprenticeship training. An apprenticeship entails working with experienced workers and completing some classroom training for one year to five years, depending on the career. An apprentice earns wages, but the wages are less than he or she will make once the apprenticeship is completed. Examples of careers for which apprenticeship training is available include: dental laboratory technician, mechanic, heavy equipment operator, carpenter, welder, cabinetmaker, and electrician.

**Military training.** The military trains people in 140 occupations. Every recruit signs a legal contract for eight years of duty. Usually, two to six years are spent on active duty; the remaining years are spent in the reserve forces. Many military occupations involve skills that can be useful in civilian jobs. Service members receive basic pay, allowances, and benefits for serving in the military. Tuition assistance at colleges and universities is also available.