

Career-readiness starts at home: 3 tips for parents

Although school does a great job of helping your children to begin uncovering their interests, skills and aptitudes, your input in exposing your children to different work styles, possibilities and attitudes is invaluable. The attitude you have toward work, the jobs you perform, the friends you invite over and the reactions you have to people in different jobs and careers all play a part in your children's understanding of the world of work. Even the movies and television shows you watch have influence on your children's careers. So, what can you do to help your children prepare for their career?

1. Protect Their Digital Footprints

Digital footprints shape your children's reputation – online and offline. They are created by online activities and communications. They can include things your children say, send or post about themselves and others on the Internet, websites they visit and in text, pictures and videos they post. It's important that their footprint, and yours, is safe.

Google your children. Use their full name, their nicknames and their name with and without their middle names to make sure you get a full picture.

Help to enhance digital footprints. Encourage your children to post articles, achievements and other information about themselves that reflect their education and demonstrate their skills.

Discuss personal and family privacy. As a family, determine both individual and family privacy policies, allowing all members of your family to contribute to the conversation.

Share footprint cleaning resources. Several free and fee-based resources are available to scrub information from the Internet. It's important to note that cleaning a footprint after information has been posted can be very difficult.

2. Instill Workplace Readiness and Etiquette

Workplace readiness and etiquette are the basic behaviors and attitudes that most employers seek in their new hires. Some of the most commonly cited etiquette qualities include arriving on time daily, respecting and upholding policies and procedures, contributing to team success and asking for help when needed. Readiness skills include items such as the ability to distinguish right from wrong, listen to others, work on diverse teams and communicate both written and orally.



Recognize etiquette skills. Encourage your children to use etiquette skills at home by arriving on time and showing motivation to complete tasks. Reduce texting language and increase the practice of leaving written notes. Acknowledge when their etiquette skills help you, the household, their schoolwork and their performance in extracurricular activities.

Encourage readiness skills. Your family is an ideal place in which to practice teamwork and communications skills. Invite your children to plan a trip, navigate to your home from an extracurricular activity, or write personal letters, journals or privacy guidelines. Have them resolve a family conflict by being a mediator or encourage them to mediate among friends.

3. Provide Opportunities for Independence and Leadership

Independence and leadership skills are a part of many careers and are critical in higher education. Your children experiment with and use both skills frequently at home and at school. Helping them to examine their relationship with leadership and independence skills can foster greater success in their lives.

Encourage involvement in extracurricular activities. Help your children learn more about themselves when they select activities of interest. Ask them what each activity provides

physically or mentally. Talk about the skills involved and the uniqueness they bring to the activity. Recognize that all activities provide outlets for your children to expand their ability to work with others, set goals, take on leadership roles and demonstrate independence.

Examine and establish good places to study. Is your child's ideal spot to study a quiet room with the door closed, or in the center of activity at the kitchen table? Assist your children in creating learning environments that fit their style and will

benefit their schoolwork. Talk about ways they can increase their independent learning.

Promote jobs, internships and volunteering. Help your children find both paid and unpaid jobs. Working gives them an outlet for developing and using leadership and independence skills. Feedback from employers helps them refine both their skills and career interests.

Excerpted from an article by Rhonda Messinger, CareerMomentum.net

Explore hospitality careers with Hotel, Restaurant & Travel Management

Hotel, Restaurant & Travel Management (HRTM) is not a name that rolls off the tongue, but this class is well worth investigating if you're a high school junior or senior considering enrolling in EFE next year. Tammi Mallos runs this program, which is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of the hospitality industry and related careers. HRTM is one of America's fastest-growing industries and career opportunities abound.

“ One of the best classes I've taken!
It really helps you decide what you want to do
in life and prepares you for the real world! ”
— Marissa Quivey, Portage Central HighSchool

The HRTM class is fast-paced and interesting, plus students get to spend five days at Disneyworld in Orlando, arguably the hospitality capital of the world. Students participate in a “Behind the Scenes Leadership” program, including spending time in Chef Mickey's restaurant.

Representatives of the HRTM class also assist as hosts and hostesses at the EFE Job Fair held at Western Michigan University and the EFE/EFA Open House held at the Air Zoo.

Other valuable benefits of the HRTM program:

- 4th Related Math Credit
- College Credit (Articulation) through area post-secondary institutions
- ServSafe National Certification (valid five years)
- Hospitality & Tourism Management Certification (valid five years)
- Guest Service Gold National Certification
- Certified Tourism Ambassador



- First Aid and Adult CPR Certification
- Job Shadowing Experience
- PAID Work Experience

Enroll now and take advantage of this excellent opportunity to gain career skills *and* enjoy a memorable experience. Talk to your high school counselor today. Don't miss out!

“ Words aren't enough to show the benefits of this class. I personally have become more outgoing. I find it a lot easier to greet strangers and introduce myself. I have learned the importance of professional dress, relationship building, networking and communication. ”
— Mataya Simmons Loy Norrix High School Senior

Project Lead the Way brings STEM to life with real-world learning

EFE has joined the crusade to revolutionize the teaching model used for science, technology, engineering and mathematics courses (STEM). This year, three Kalamazoo County schools are hosting a pilot of Project Lead The Way (PLTW), a rigorous STEM curriculum full of hands-on projects designed to advance the higher-level thinking skills of students. PLTW's Design and Modeling module is being taught in Schoolcraft Middle School's 7th grade and at Portage Central Middle School in one 6th grade and one section of 7th grade. Vicksburg High School is offering PLTW's Introduction to Engineering Design to juniors and seniors. Altogether, more than 200 students are engaged in a rigorous learning experience where the teachers are guides to exploration and learning instead of just dispensers of knowledge.



PLTW gives schools the tools to enhance the quality of teacher instruction, so they can provide a learning experience that is tied to current industry standards and trains students to be innovative problem-solvers. This will, in turn, help build a workforce that can provide the skilled manpower our local manufacturers and businesses currently need.



Members of the local manufacturing community have been recruited to volunteer in these classrooms. Students get face-time with professional engineers, inspiring them to explore engineering as a career. The engineers lend their expertise to eager learners – and witness the next generation's budding engineers.

Students gain hands-on business experience running Schoolcraft store

Teacher Lori Pelton runs an EFE program at Schoolcraft High School called "Business Operations," in which second-year business students operate the school's Eagle Spirit Store.



Business Operations provides practical applications of the principles students learn in the first year of business classes. Pelton firmly believes that in order to learn the ins and outs of operating a successful business enterprise, students must be actively engaged in the details. That's why the students run all aspects of the Eagle Spirit Store, including tracking inventory, paying monthly sales tax and developing a work schedule. Students rotate through each job, gaining valuable experience.

The first step in starting a business, Pelton says, is securing funding. Money for the Eagle Spirit Store comes from a variety of sources: a \$1,000 donation from a student's video contest win; \$1,200 donated by the previous graduating class for structure modifications; the sale of an ad paid for bins, hangers, clothing racks and a cash register; and funding from the local PTO for start-up capital.



The store sells many items, including spirit wear for the PTO and non-clothing items such as phone cases, gum and holiday ornaments with the school logo.

All the best to Business Operations for continued success "minding the store"!

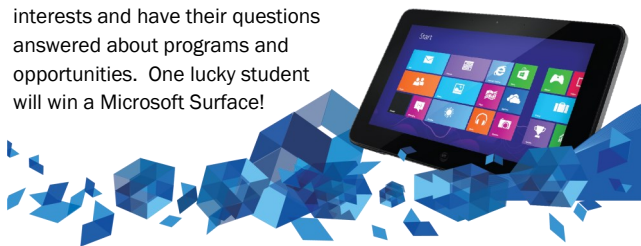
Did you Know ... ?

- Education for Employment enrolls approximately **4,000** students in **37** different Career and Tech Ed programs.
- Students enrolled in an EFE course have a **95.9%** graduation rate.
- EFE students who have completed their programs have a **98.1%** post-secondary/employment placement rate.
- In 2012-13, more than **745** EFE students earned the opportunity to receive college credit at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.
- Approximately **400** businesses in the community partner with EFE programs and EFE advisory committees.



Meet us at the Air Zoo! Open House is Feb. 4

Save the date! On Tuesday, Feb. 4, the Kalamazoo Air Zoo will host our annual Education for the Arts and Education for Employment Open House gala from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. During this event, students and parents will have the opportunity to interact with EFA/EFE teachers, learn about their programs, investigate their career interests and have their questions answered about programs and opportunities. One lucky student will win a Microsoft Surface!



In case of cancellation due to weather, the Open House will be re-scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 6 at the same time.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION: It is the policy of Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency that no discriminating practices based on gender/sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, height, weight, color, age, national origin, disability or any other status covered by federal, state or local law be allowed during any program, activity, service or in employment. The following positions at Kalamazoo RESA have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy: Human Resources Administrator, Tom Zahrt; Assistant Superintendents, Margaret McGlinchey & Laurie Montgomery. Contact information: 269-250-9200, 1819 E. Milham Ave, Portage, MI 49002.

CO-OP CORNER

Want paid training? Check out the co-op option!

EFE's Cooperative Education is a training program that offers students the opportunity to gain valuable paid work experience. Students are employed in a coordinator-approved work setting; work 10-15 hours per week average in class-related, legal employment; receive release time from school, school credit, on-the-job training and pay; and are evaluated every marking period by their employer.

The Co-op Program:

- Increases marketability for future employment after graduation
- Improves attendance and grades
- Creates more interest in additional education and training
- Develops better problem-solving skills and communication skills through interaction and collaboration with professionals
- Increases focus and purpose
- Improves time-management skills
- Helps to explore career options and narrow choices for what to study in college
- Opens doors for opportunities with businesses and industries
- Builds a professional network at a younger age
- Provides a smoother transition from student to professional

Interested? Check with your guidance counselor for more information.