

WHAT CAN I DO WHILE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL?

Preparing for a career is not a one-time event; rather, it is a process over time. Now is the time to start.

Essential To Do's

1. Make good grades (this will make high school so much easier...like building blocks)
2. Complete projects on-time (shows you can get things done without supervision)
3. Develop good study habits (everyone must learn throughout their life, build those habits now)
4. Learn to work together as a team
5. Get involved in extracurricular activities (sports, music, and clubs help teach you things you won't learn in class: teamwork, leadership, responsibility; look for leadership roles...will be fun and challenging)
6. Avoid making bad life decisions that will affect your future (i.e. drugs, violence)

Take Career/Interest Inventories

You wouldn't choose the first mobile electronic device you saw or heard about, would you? You would likely research what each has to offer and how it would suit your needs and wants. The same goes for choosing a house, car or spouse. So why would choosing a career be any different? We are talking about the next 30-40 years of your life here. There are many resources available, free online career assessments and your guidance counselor who may have other resources. This information will help you narrow the thousands of choices down to those which match your interests and what you are passionate about.

Spend Time with People in Areas That Interest You

Regarding that same mobile electronic device, wouldn't you ask people who own one how they like theirs before you buy your own? The same holds true for career choices. Spend time with those who are already in the areas that you have identified as possible interest areas. Find out what they like most and least about the job. Ask them what opportunities exist to move up in this area, pay ranges, work/life balance, and if this is a growing area or one where opportunities are declining due to technology changes. Not sure where to find someone to talk to? Ask around your neighborhood, school, church or teachers at your school. This gives you a chance to 'test drive' a potential career.

Begin Your Career Training in Middle School

Once you have an area of interest, then see if your school has specific classes in that area (Engineering Academy, STEM pathway, etc.) that offers specific training. This is a great way to try something out and still allows you time to change if it isn't right for you.

