

What Did You Do at Work Today?

As we return to our fall schedules, we believe that Labor Day's original purpose can inspire memorable discussions about work. Parents, grandparents and other significant family and community members are our children's first and most significant models for work. But our children don't always understand our jobs or why we do them. Work is an ongoing part of life. We have daily chores, helpful routines and jobs that others count on us to do. When we do our work well, we get the satisfaction of achievement. When others appreciate our work, our sense of achievement deepens. How does work give meaning to our lives and contribute to the well-being of our families, communities and nation? We hope that the questions below will help your families to have a meaningful conversation about the work that your family does.

If you don't use the exercise during your Labor Day meal, consider helping your children to do it sometime in the next few weeks. Cars can be great places for these conversations. For grandparents and special relatives who live in other communities, set up an appointment so that your child can have this important conversation with an important person. We hope you also enjoy our dozen tips for developing good work habits in our children.

Questions for Children to Ask Their Parents and/or Relatives

What is your job? What do you do every day?

What do you like most and least about your job?

What is one thing you have done at your job that you are most proud of?

Did someone inspire or help you to do the job you are doing today?

Is this the job you thought you would have when you were my age?

Have you had other jobs that you would like to tell me about?

For instance, do you remember your first job?

What wisdom can you share that will help me find work that will be rewarding to me? What does it take to be successful?

How can I start using some of your advice now?

What kind of work did your parents do?

Useful websites:

Bureau of Labor and Statistics "What Do You Like?" lets you explore what careers might be best for you:

<http://www.bls.gov/k12/>

This government-run website has information and links about fun careers for kids:

<http://www.kids.gov/>

The official website for the 16-year-old national Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work program. Held on the fourth Thursday in April, the program encourages school and workplace cooperation to introduce children ages 8-18 to workplace environments and get them dreaming. Start the conversation with Labor Day. Get involved and take your child and others to work in April. <http://www.daughtersandsonstowork.org>

What Did You Do in the War, Grandma? An Oral History of Rhode Island Women during World War II Written by students in the Honors English Program at South Kingstown High School http://womenshistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&sdn=womenshistory&zu=http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html

Be part of the micro-enterprise movement; help an entrepreneur

in the US or another part of the world with your own loan. Kiva 415-358-7512 www.kiva.org

If you're 55 or older, become a reading tutor for an elementary school student in your community.

Experience Corps 202-478-6190 www.experiencecorps.org

Use your expertise to be a source of inspiration to the next generation of entrepreneurs, professionals and business leaders. Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship 800-367-6383: www.nfte.com . Citizen Schools 617-695-2300: www.citizenschools.org

A Dozen Parent and Grandparent Tips: Helping Children Develop Good Work Habits at Home, School and in the World

HOME

- 1 Have children choose specific small household chores that your family identifies together to practice being a contributing and responsible member of a community. Separate chores from allowance. Allowance teaches fiscal responsibility. Chores teach social responsibility.
- 2 Rotate tasks so that children can gain new skills and confidence.
- 3 Give older children more independent jobs to help build self-reliance and encourage them to develop their own way of solving problems. Respect their creativity when they come up with new solutions.
- 4 Always approach work as something positive. "This is what we do to take care of our family. We count on one another's contributions to make our family community strong."

SCHOOL

- 5 Encourage children to take pride in their assignments. Keep homework in order, backpacks neat, meet deadlines.
- 6 Praise children when they have clearly done their best and share what joy you take in doing your best in your own work (at home and at work).
- 7 Limit distractions for studying (no television, computers or cell phone on unless essential to assignments).
- 8 Demonstrate how important it is to be on time for school and consistent in attendance.

WORLD

- 9 Treat others with respect and remember that your children will learn their most important lessons from seeing how you behave. They are always watching.
- 10 Encourage volunteerism.
- 11 Expose children to different people and experiences. Help them to expand their sense of themselves and the world that they live in so that they will be creative, flexible and tolerant future members of the work place.
- 12 Have the family choose a special charity for the year and raise money for it or children can contribute a portion of their savings. Help children to develop the habit of generosity by having them set aside a portion of their allowance for charity each week. Model this trait by sharing the causes you support.

A Raising Citizens exercise developed by the Children's Museum of Manhattan and Freedom's Feast