

COACH YOUR TEEN TO FIND A SUMMER JOB—23 TIPS!

BY THE FACEBOOK FRIENDS AND STAFF OF
NEW JOBS FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Good news! Some employers are boosting teen hiring—and your teen needs work experience! Here's a step-by-step plan to coach your teen to find a job successfully.

1) Agree with your teen to be job-search buddies. You will play different roles but you'll work together. Almost everyone likes working with a buddy once they get used to it.



Keep your sense of humor handy.

2) Make your teen's job search a fun project. If make it a project, you can play it like a **game**. A project has a goal, a beginning and end, and it's easy to grasp. Plan to work *with* your teen, not *for* your teen.

3) Use a map to figure out the area he can cover on foot, by bike, car or public transportation (depending on access to these options) and call that your **search area**.



The two of you now own this “**territory**.”



It often helps younger teens to see their older sibling preparing to search for a job--since they're next.

4) Create a list of the businesses in your search area your teen could call on. You can buy a list of businesses from your town clerk for a couple bucks or pick up a free list from a realtor (moving-in spouses use them), or online at the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance (clunky to use but has excellent data). These companies are your “**market**.”

5) Identify businesses that employ the most teens. Large Massachusetts grocery stores like Market Basket hire teens as summer workers, including teens as young as 14. Grocery stores usually treat teen applicants politely. Start here; you might get lucky!



Laugh at events, but never laugh at your teen.

6) Next, identify businesses that few teens think of as employers. Aim for lower-profile businesses (not banks) that serve other businesses. Consider any companies that might have clutter, mechanical parts, material in disarray, or records or archives that need attention. Consumer services like gyms, YMCAs, salons, clinics, dance studios, churches, and rental real estate constantly need cleaning and organizing.



Working with your teen reassures her that she can take this step into the workforce.

7) Have your teen write down her skills and interests while the two of you look through your business names together. Use the business list to stimulate your conversation. Dig deep. **You should mention any activity you ever saw her do well.** Your teen should think of anything she did that she enjoyed or that made her proud, even projects in fourth grade, or on standardized tests. The skills and interests she lists are her **“product.”**

8) Draft in Word or similar a **3-1/2 x 11 push card** to leave behind, just like a politician. Not a resume, just a slim, lightweight paper push card. This card is your teen’s **“salesperson.”** It helps your teen get hired even when he’s not present.



9) The push card should include her **picture**, simple **contact information**, bullets of her **skills and interests** that might spark interest in a small businessperson’s heart, **kinds of work** she’d like to do, availability (right away, days of the week, until some date; willing to work weekends, evenings, anything special), church membership, subjects she’s good at in school, anything that will catch attention (“good grades in Spanish or physics”).

10) Print up two-dozen copies at home or have a quick-printer like Staples print them and call it your first draft. Use employers’ questions or feedback to improve it. The hidden value of this is that even getting a “no” might produce feedback on your card, so you two can make it better. Ask prospects who said “no” if they would refer you to another employer, then follow up promptly and thank the referrer!



Your teen might look nearly six feet tall, but apprehension will make him feel half that height!

11) Create a simple pitch and rehearse it 10 times. First, she should walk up to your doorway, with you well behind her, and practice saying her pitch. Praise her for everything she does well; never tease your teen. This is scary her first time, but she’ll do fine with practice. Does Steph Curry quit when he misses a basket? (No way! Curry’s already missed millions of practice shots!)



Curry , always improving.

12) Grab a clip-board or a tablet computer (“Never go anywhere at work without something in your hands”) with your list of companies and some push cards, and head out.

13) Special-needs teens sometimes prefer to

apply for work alongside their mentor. Talk with your teen. Ask if he or she would be more comfortable visiting employers accompanied by their coach, mentor or counselor rather than with you. Let your teen choose, then be proud of his choice. Applying for work helps teens become more self-reliant.

14) Before going to the first business, guess together how many calls you will have to make to get a summer-long or half-summer job (or two). Share your guesses and make it a game.

15) Visit the businesses. Your teen walks in, introduces himself, says his name and age, and that he’s is looking for summer work. He makes clear he is willing to work hard and do anything that needs doing, especially in his areas of strength (sorting, organizing, picking up, errands, etc.). Go with him for the first handful of calls and **let him do all the talking.**

16) Analyze what happened upon returning from your teen’s first applications. Discussing what happened makes projects successful. Apply, improve and repeat!

17) Encourage your teen to network, starting with family, friends and your co-workers. After your teen has begun applying, suggest she study your friends’ profiles and bios online, especially Facebook and LinkedIn. Coach your teen to look for your friends’ connections with businesses or employers for whom your teen might consider working. Gently help your teen understand how important **personal contacts** are in hiring decisions. She’ll see neighbors and family in a new light.

18) Let her apply by herself once she’s completed a few good visits. Then make sure to listen with interest when she gets home. Say that from here on you can only see what is happening through her words and descriptions, and you are looking forward to **hearing her reports.**

19) Include some dream-job



Your calm coaching will show your confidence in her.

applications. Think about what your teen likes most, and suggest they apply to jobs in that field. **Hockey?** Maybe there’s a rink in the next town. **Furry animals?** Seek out a shelter, a vet, pet shops. **Video production?** What if your teen applied at computer repair shops, marketing firms, political campaigns or website consultants? Dreams motivate us all!

20) Coach your teen that she needs to advocate for herself. Jobs cannot find teenagers! Teenagers, like adults, have to apply, demonstrate their value, show interest, thank their interviewer, and call back to ask about progress and express continued interest.

21) Reporting back to you as his or her buddy will protect against your teen



She secretly expects you to have all the answers; solve her frustrations by talking them over together.

becoming depressed or feeling lonely. Always stay in your role of coach, mentor, and *Biggest Fan*. **Express your confidence and support, and praise whatever your teen does well.** Reporting, discussing and encouragement are powerful buffers against discouragement.

While you and your teen spend time together as a team, your friendship will deepen and your teen will get feedback from real employers.

22) Applying for summer work will deepen your relationship. Simply walking, talking, meeting new people in your area, discussing work and workplaces and the people you meet broadens your shared experience. Applying for work as a team opens the door to your long-term rela-

tionship with your soon-to-be-adult teenager.



Your teen will always remember this job search.

23) Your teen will get useful feedback from real employers. Even this initial exposure to “no” answers is valuable training. If there is part-time or full-time summer work out there, by persisting your teen will find it!

Good luck! ###

These tips are free because others gave so you could benefit.

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