



## Deciding If Teens Should Work

Encouraging teenage family members to find jobs is one way a family can increase their income during a period of unemployment. Many part-time jobs are available that fit into student schedules.

Pay is usually minimum wage, but can make a significant contribution to the family income and help defray some expenses. Parents and teenagers need to discuss and determine the number of hours that can be handled, how the money will be used, transportation and other issues.

### Finding Employment

Jobs are frequently available for teenagers at restaurants, grocery stores and other retail businesses. Contacting the business directly to fill out an application can often lead to a job.

Job Service, newspapers, schools, community bulletin boards and friends can help direct you to other jobs. Teens can create their own employment by advertising their availability for babysitting, mowing lawns, shoveling sidewalks or cutting hay.

Federal Job Partnership Training Administration funds jobs for teenagers as part of summer youth programs and youth in school programs. School counselors or principals have information on these programs.

Work permits are required by young people under age 18. To secure a work permit contact your local high school superintendent's office.

### Evaluating Employment Options

Research on individuals who grew up during the depression and worked to help their families. They found work had a positive affect: As adults they were healthier psychologically and were better off for the experience.

Teens who have goals for the use of their earned income fare better, according to recent studies. Students who work more than 15 hours per week tend to lose interest in school and their grades drop.

Youth who have no clear goals for use of earnings spend more on luxuries and develop extravagant spending habits that lead to financial problems as adults. Also, these young people are more likely to spend earnings on alcohol and drugs, according to the studies.

Responsibility, work skills and self-confidence can be other dividends of teen employment.

Here's a list of ways teens' income can be managed. Use it to guide a discussion with your teen on how his or her pay check will be spent.

- Use a portion for expenses routinely incurred by the teen such as school lunches, clothes, dues and recreation. Save the remainder for a future education fund.
- Contribute a portion to household budget and keep a portion for the teenager's personal expenses.
- Contribute the entire wages to total family budget and teen receives an allowance.

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Contact your local county UW-Extension office for copies of other publications in this series.

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