



**A Resource
for Parents**

Your Child Is Job #1

Preparing your child today,
for a better tomorrow.





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for a career.**

Youth face many of life's most important decisions during high school and college. Unfortunately, too many of these youth are unaware of the education and employment opportunities available or the connection between education and job opportunities. The information on which they base their early career decisions is often insufficient. Making informed career decisions requires reliable information about future opportunities. This brochure is designed to give parents and caregivers the information they need to help their children make informed and productive education and career choices.

Where do students get the information?

Surprisingly, parents play the leading role in directing their children to a career path. Seventy-eight (78%) percent of students report that parents are primarily responsible for helping them plan for a career. Parents and caregivers who provide guidance in developing career goals can play a critical role in the student's success by helping the child focus interests and skills.

Where do parents get the information?

Parents are often well-informed on the options in their career field but unfamiliar with other opportunities and career paths. After all, most parents have been out of the education arena for some time. That is where Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA) comes in. MEBA offers parents and caregivers information they need through a series of *Your Child Is Job #1* workshops.

Why *Your Child Is Job #1*?

Your Child Is Job #1, an employer-sponsored program offered at local worksites, presents parents and caregivers with up-to-date information on career planning and development through seminars such as understanding career clusters, the tests your child takes and communicating with your child's school. In addition, MEBA's *Your Child Is Job #1* program focuses on the whole child, also offering tips and resources related to childhood obesity, conflict resolution, Internet safety and more to encourage healthy, happy and successful students. The program gives business and industry an opportunity to inform parents so they can provide informed career direction to their children. The student, employer and community all benefit from *Your Child Is Job #1*.

For more information about *Your Child Is Job #1*, please contact Kay Barlow at (803) 790-7502 or kbarlow@mebasc.com, or visit MEBA's website at www.mebasc.com.

Fast Facts

- ▶ Students often cannot name anyone other than their parents who has been helpful in career counseling, with most students admitting that parental guidance has been limited to a few hours in the previous few months.
- ▶ Many people believe a four-year degree is the only way to achieve job success. However, there are a variety of paths to success—on the job training, technical college, four-year college, apprenticeships or the military.
- ▶ Students' decisions are often based on personal interest as opposed to career opportunity. Very few students pick jobs based on availability and salary. It is important for students to consider both—personal interests and workforce needs.
- ▶ 85% of twenty-first century jobs require postsecondary education.
- ▶ Technical colleges report that 25% of their students are four-year college graduates who are returning to the classroom to learn a skill.

SC Works

Whether you are an employer looking for qualified workers or an individual looking for work, *SC Works* can help you connect to the information and resources you need, such as:

- ▶ Computer Training
- ▶ Resume Writing
- ▶ Job Searches
- ▶ Job Application Assistance

To learn more about *SC Works* services or to contact your local *SC Works*, please call one of the following offices:

Columbia (803)737-5627 • Lexington (803)359-6131 • Winnsboro (803)635-2292

SC WORKS

www.scworks.org



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Tips For Parents

As parents, one of the most important things you can do for your child is to help him or her succeed academically and plan for a successful future career. *Your Child Is Job #1* provides parents like you with information and resources to walk through the career decision-making process and provide career guidance to their children. *Your Child Is Job #1* shares information with parents on topics such as understanding career clusters, the tests your child takes and what they mean, and communicating with your child's school. Presented in this brochure are a few tips you can use to provide positive and effective academic and career guidance for your child.

Helping Your Child Achieve Academic Success

- ▶ Have a positive attitude about education. Model an appreciation and respect for learning, schools and educators.
- ▶ Clearly outline your education expectations.
- ▶ Make sure your child is ready to learn by providing a scheduled bedtime and healthy breakfast.
- ▶ Have a designated learning area in your home for homework. Make sure the area is well-lit and is free from distractions. Keep a box of homework supplies, such as pencils, paper and a calculator, handy.
- ▶ Help your child learn good time management and planning skills. Use a calendar to keep track of upcoming tests and assignments. Encourage your child to study and prepare ahead of time, rather than waiting until the last minute.

Helping Your Child Achieve Test Success

- ▶ Make sure your child is well prepared, well rested and well fed.
- ▶ Maintain a calm, positive environment in the home.
- ▶ Make sure your child understands the location and expectations of the test.
- ▶ Be certain your child has all required materials for the test such as pencils and forms.
- ▶ Encourage your child to do his or her best, but make sure your child knows your love and approval do not depend on his or her test scores.

Connecting with Your Child's School

- ▶ Get to know the people at your child's school. It's important to not only establish a positive relationship with your child's teachers, but also the school administrators, nurse and other staff members.
- ▶ Review the school calendar with your child. Post it in a visible place in your home and refer to it frequently.
- ▶ Attend school functions.
- ▶ Communicate with your child's teachers. Use E-mails, phone calls, notes and schedule visits to stay informed about your child's progress.
- ▶ Become a volunteer. Call your child's school and find out how you can become involved with school activities, events and committees.
- ▶ Do your part to make certain your child is always prepared. Return forms on time, review your child's homework assignments and make sure your child has appropriate school supplies.

Helping Your Child Choose a Career Path

- ▶ Start young. Develop career awareness by discussing career opportunities when reading books and newspapers, watching television and observing worksites.
- ▶ Support your child's efforts to assess his or her own interests, aptitudes, values and work styles.
- ▶ Share your job experiences. A child delights in hearing about his or her parents' jobs.
- ▶ Encourage participation in job shadowing and internship opportunities. Check with your school's guidance personnel for more information.
- ▶ Help your child understand the value and importance of his or her academic courses for success in a future career.
- ▶ Advise your child that there is more than one educational pathway to a good job. More than 50% of the fastest growing jobs require an associate degree. There are a variety of routes to success: on the job training, technical college, four-year college, apprenticeships or the military.

Middle School Tips

It's a big deal. Your child is leaving the comfortable and safe haven of elementary school for new and uncharted territory – middle school. Not since starting kindergarten, has your child made such an important transition in his or her educational journey. Research shows that students transitioning from elementary to middle school often experience a decline in grades, motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence, making it crucial that parents stay involved.¹ Even as your child wants more space and personal freedom, he or she still needs your guidance, craves your approval and benefits from your involvement. Here are a few tips for a successful transition for your child and for you.

- ▶ Explain that middle school is different – increased homework, changing classes – but also an exciting time filled with new opportunities.
- ▶ On registration day, let your child be in charge by carrying his or her own books, reading directions and leading you in what to do next. This will give your student a feeling of ownership and accomplishment.
- ▶ Read the handbook with your student, making sure he or she understands the rules and procedures.
- ▶ Help your child get and stay organized. Use an assignment folder and calendar to keep track of important deadlines and have a specific place in your home for bookbags, school supplies and important papers.
- ▶ Help your child develop good study skills and learn to manage time wisely. Planning ahead will help your child not to feel stressed or overwhelmed.
- ▶ Give your student plenty of opportunities to practice good decision-making at home. Letting your child make decisions (and maybe even a few mistakes) at home and then talking with him or her about the outcome will develop wisdom and confidence.
- ▶ Middle school is a peak time for students to bully and be bullied, whether at school or online. Be aware of personality changes and mood swings. Ask questions and stay involved.
- ▶ They may be older, but middle school students still need lots of sleep, exercise and a balanced diet.
- ▶ Spend time with and enjoy your middle school student. Take time to be a parent, good role model and encourager. Treasure time together and love your child unconditionally.

1. Making the Transition to Middle School. Mentoring Resource Center Fact Sheet. *November 24, 2008.* US Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/207 Retrieved August 26, 2011.

**Parent involvement in school
directly impacts student success,
academically and personally.**



Personal Pathways to Success



Personal Pathways to Success is an innovative initiative designed to better prepare students for the workforce by making their education more relevant to their future careers. *Personal Pathways* programs provide all public school students the resources they need to identify and then achieve their career goals. The initiative spans all grade levels and outlines ways for all students to become

exposed to various careers and to better understand how their interests and education directly impacts their future.

In elementary school...

Students will learn about a variety of professions through career awareness activities.

In middle school...

Students will explore careers to identify clusters of study relevant to their aspirations and abilities. Beginning in the 8th grade, students will develop and annually update a flexible electronic Individual Graduation Plan (eIGP) with help from guidance counselors and career specialists as well as parents or parental designees. These eIGPs encourage students to begin planning for their futures now, making them more aware of what it takes to achieve their goals.

In high school...

Students will experience a variety of professional opportunities through job shadowing, apprenticeships or internships. In the 10th grade, students will declare a major based on their chosen cluster of study. School districts will offer courses organized around these clusters of study.

How parents can do their part...

- ▶ Help students choose a cluster of study.
- ▶ Offer input when students develop their eIGP.
- ▶ Help students prepare for postsecondary study, specialized training or employment after graduation.
- ▶ Find out how to make continuing your student's education more affordable by helping to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Get more information and complete forms online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- ▶ Encourage employers or businesses to get involved by offering internships, in-class speakers and other services to local schools and the community.

Regional Education Centers (REC) are established across South Carolina to help students connect with local employers and to help implement the *Personal Pathways to Success* initiative. For more information, please visit www.scpathways.org.

Clusters of Study

- ▶ Art, AV Technology and Communications
- ▶ Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- ▶ Architecture and Construction
- ▶ Business, Management and Administration
- ▶ Education and Training
- ▶ Finance
- ▶ Government and Public Administration
- ▶ Health Science
- ▶ Hospitality and Tourism
- ▶ Human Services
- ▶ Information Technology
- ▶ Law, Public Safety and Security
- ▶ Manufacturing
- ▶ Marketing, Sales and Service
- ▶ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- ▶ Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

Clusters of study differ among school districts. Check with your local school district or guidance personnel to learn more about the specific course offerings.

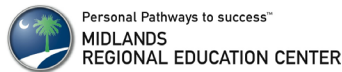
Resources

Career Websites

The Internet can be used to find useful information about careers, career guidance tips for parents and current statistics about local jobs and employment opportunities. Listed below are a few sites parents may find helpful:



Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA) connects students, parents and educators to career opportunities through business partnerships, training and resources.



The Midlands Regional Education Center is part of the *Personal Pathways to Success* statewide initiative and serves as a resource to help you connect to the information and services you need to make important education, career and life decisions.

Useful Career Websites

www.careertrain.com	www.scois.net
www.careerbuilder.com	www.scworks.org
www.careeronestop.org	www.workreadysc.com
www.kuder.com	www.worksc.org
www.mappingyourfuture.org	www.yourchildscareer.org

Continuing Education

The Midlands community boasts a wide array of opportunities for students and parents to continue their education. From technical colleges to universities, you are sure to find the educational institution that best meets your career interests, needs, budget and schedule. Below is a partial list of institutes of higher learning located in the Midlands. For a complete list, please visit www.sciway.net/colleges.

Public Technical College

Midlands Technical College
Airport, Batesburg-Leesville,
Beltline, Fairfield, Fort Jackson
Center, Harbison and Northeast
Campuses
www.midlandstech.edu
(803) 738-8324
(800) 922-8038

Colleges and Universities

University of South Carolina
www.sc.edu
(803) 777-7000

Allen University
www.allenuniversity.edu
(803) 376-5700

Benedict College
www.benedict.edu
(803) 253-5000

Columbia College
www.columbiacollegesc.edu
(800) 277-1301

Columbia International University
www.ciu.edu
(800) 777-2227

Limestone College
Extended Campus
[www.limestone.edu/
extended-campus](http://www.limestone.edu/extended-campus)
(803) 691-3016

Southern Wesleyan University
www.swu.edu
(877) 644-5557

Webster University
www.webster.edu
(803) 699-0900

College Access

The majority of today's careers require more than just a high school degree. Whether a two- or four-year degree, postsecondary education can play an important role in your child's future. While today's students have more college options than ever before, the process of finding the right school, applying, enrolling and obtaining financial aid, can be confusing and overwhelming. The sites listed below provide information to help you and your child plan for his or her educational future.

Useful College Access Websites

www.epiconline.org/south_carolina
www.sccango.org

www.sccollegeaid.org
www.scstudentloan.org

www.sctrac.org

WorkKeys®

WorkKeys® is a job skills assessment system used in high schools and community and technical colleges across the country to measure real-world skills. Employers may use WorkKeys to determine qualified candidates for employment and to identify the training needs of their current employees. Taking WorkKeys assessments is an important first step to prepare for education, training and a career. WorkKeys scores help compare your skills to those needed in business and industry. WorkKeys assessments are designed to measure both Foundational and Personal Skills.

Foundational Skills assessments measure cognitive abilities such as:

- ▶ applied mathematics
- ▶ reading for information
- ▶ locating information

Personal Skills measure characteristics such as:

- ▶ cooperation
- ▶ discipline
- ▶ influence
- ▶ stability
- ▶ values

For more information, please contact Tina LaPoint at (803) 732-5337 or lapointl@midlandstech.edu, or Jeremy Catoe with the Midlands Workforce Development Board at (803) 737-0253 or jcatoe@mwdb.org.

Source: For more information, please visit www.act.org/workkeys.



Soft Skills

Strong academic preparation and experience are key to helping your child best choose and prepare for the career that is right for him or her. But that's not all. Today's employers need employees who have not only job-related or "hard skills," but also strong "soft skills."

Soft skills are those personality traits, communication, personal and social habits that characterize relationships with other people. Unlike skills specifically related to a particular job, soft skills are not always taught as part of a high school course, certification class or company training program. Rather, soft skills are best taught and encouraged at home and are most effectively instilled by the examples set by parents and caregivers.

Employers want employees with both personal and basic skills. In fact, many employers state that soft skills are as important, if not more important, than job-related skills and certifications. In February 2009 the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce published a survey in which local employers were asked to rank the soft skills they were most looking for in open job positions. According to the survey, the skills most in demand include:

- ▶ **TEAMWORK** – able to work well with and support others to accomplish tasks
- ▶ **LISTENING** – able to follow, understand and evaluate messages and directions
- ▶ **OBSERVATION** – able to focus and remember details in instructions, demonstrations and procedures
- ▶ **LOCATING INFORMATION** – able to find, understand and use information from sources such as diagrams, maps, graphs, charts and forms.

Source: Skills that Work V – Employer View. From the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, February 2009.

About MEBA

Midlands Education and Business Alliance (MEBA) is a dynamic organization with an eye on the future. The primary focus of MEBA is to build connections in the community to expose students and parents to a variety of careers and inform them of requirements for pursuing those career options. MEBA guides educators, students and parents through numerous activities and programs such as *Your Child Is Job #1*, field studies, resource guides, career development materials, job shadowing and internship opportunities.

MEBA works diligently to equip students with the knowledge and skills to continue in postsecondary education or training to transition effectively into the workforce. Parents, MEBA is here for you. Please visit our website at www.mebasc.com or call us to see how we can help.

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