

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. Parents, grandparents and other significant family and community members are our children's most important models for work. But our children don't always understand our jobs or why we do them. Work is a vital part of life. 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 using 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 Other Important Adults

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: www.bls.gov/k12

This government-run website has information and links about fun careers for kids: www.kids.gov/6_8/6_8_careers.shtml

The official website for the 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, take your child, and join 35 million other youth and adults at work this 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 www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/WomenInWWII.html

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 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 or taken risks and share what joy you take in doing your best at home and at work.
- 7 Limit distractions for studying (no television, computers or cell phone 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.
- 10 Encourage volunteerism as well as work. Let your children take small jobs they can manage and help them to be people on whom others can rely.
- 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 When you are away from home encourage your children to pay attention to all the different workers and businesses they see. Help them to be knowledgeable consumers, curious entrepreneurs, and respectful customers.

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

Please visit us again for Thanksgiving at www.freedomsfeast.us/thanksgiving



THANKSGIVING



PRESIDENTS' DAY



MLK DAY



MEMORIAL DAY



INDEPENDENCE DAY