

What are career exploration activities?

Career exploration activities refer to fun programming that introduces kids to a wide variety of occupations. These programs are typically focused on children in elementary and middle school, as high school students usually explore careers through more in-depth work-based learning. Career exploration is an important step in helping students learn about multiple career options and these fun activities are designed to help students identify their unique interests, talents and skills.

Though career exploration activities usually take place in the classroom, students can also engage in them at home or in their community.

Benefits of career exploration activities

There are many benefits to helping students explore career opportunities through fun activities.

- Gives students broader exposure to the working world
- Increases the likelihood they will complete high school and pursue post-secondary education
- Improves the attitude of students about career opportunities, motivating them to aspire to their dream careers
- Helps students envision how they will fit into the world
- Better enables them to set realistic goals for themselves, knowing the preparation they will need for specific careers
- Helps them better plan their high school choices to gain the skills they need

Career exploration activities for elementary students

Career day activities

Teachers can invite guests to share their career experiences with their students on career days. Visitors, usually parents or community members, can present in front of the class or you can encourage them to make it more interactive. For example, setting up stations in the room where presenters show their daily activities and students move from station to station and ask questions.

Career posters activities

Brainstorm with students' different careers that sound interesting. Then ask students to think of one they would most enjoy and why and have them create posters about the career they choose then display the posters around the room or give them to the students to take home.

Career exploration activities for middle school students

ABC careers activity

Ask the students to come up with a career and skills that start with each letter of the alphabet. Then have them mark the skills they have and why those are important that could also have them choose skills they think they should develop if they're interested in a specific career.

Job description adjectives

With this career exploration activity, kids write adjectives describing their dream jobs on stickers and then place the adjectives on their clothes. Have the kids walk around the room and find others with similar adjectives. have them paired up with kids who have similar adjectives to discuss their dream jobs and what they like about them.

Career path activity

Discuss with students how to get the dream job after high school. Help them identify the steps they would take. For example, they first might want to research the skills they would need to gain to qualify. They should also find out what educational qualifications and specific coursework is required.

Youth job fair trip

Visit a career fair where the students can speak to employers first hand and ask questions about different occupations.

Job interview role play activity

Pair up students and have them interview one another for jobs. You can supply them with a list of generic questions about their skills, strengths and weaknesses and background to encourage them to consider how these attributes relate to specific careers.

Career terminology activity

Discuss career-related terminology with your students. You could do this in a variety of ways. You could have students work in groups and prepare crossword puzzles for the other groups, you could give them individual crossword puzzles to complete on their own or you could give the kids a list of terms and ask them to define them themselves.

Display poster

Have each student do in-depth research about a career, identifying the skills, education and the career path you could take. Encourage students to be as creative as possible in their design and presentation. Have them write a short paper to accompany their presentation. Display the presentations around your classrooms and invite other classes or parents to come in and learn about your students' dream careers. Although you may not hold a leadership title, you can still have leadership skills because of the opportunities your organization or management team has provided to you. In this case, leadership ability is a transferable skill.

Think beyond the skills you have to have in your everyday role and instead, make a note of those hard and soft skills you've built over time that you can use no matter what your job title is.