

CONVERSATION STARTERS AND TIPS: MIDDLE SCHOOL



“What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?”

- Actively listen to and question your mentee about their futures and their plans for after high school.
- Talk to your mentee about potential career paths and the steps it takes to get there.
 - Check out the “Explore Possible Careers” information in the Additional Resources section to help you and your mentee think about the intersections between personal interests, career paths, courses, and required education.

- If you have access to a computer with internet, here are some websites to explore with your mentee:



- Career alternatives website: www.bls.gov/k12/.
- Visit www.mappingyourfuture.org and click on “Middle/HS Students.”
- Visit www.knowhow2go.org. Click on “Middle School” and then “Explore Your Interests.”
- Go to www.michigan.gov/careers, and click on “Career Exploration” under “Students & Parents.”



Talk About Where You Went to College

If you attended college, or are familiar with a local institution, make sure to talk about your experience at or with this college. Fill out “Talking Points about Your College” in the Additional Resources section.



Discuss College Life

Review college newspapers, admission guides, brochures, etc. with your mentee and discuss college life, activities, and admission processes.



Extracurricular Encouragement

Encourage your mentee to participate in extracurricular activities through their middle school years; such as sports, band, drama, student government, community service, and other leadership opportunities. This will help him/her develop a strong pre-college portfolio.



College-Bound Behaviors

Talk with your mentee about developing the good habits and self-discipline they will need to be successful in middle school, high school, and college. This could include improving grades, study and homework habits, school attendance, test-taking skills, and time management. Talk with your mentee about these college-bound behaviors.



Discuss Educational Paths

Help your mentee think about the various forms of post-secondary education (community college, vocational school, 4-year university, etc). Check out the “Where can you learn job-related skills?” document in the Additional Resources section for more information on each path.



Discuss Advanced Classes

Encourage your mentee to take advanced classes whenever possible. They will have more education options, be better prepared for college entrance exams, and college classes. Have your mentee talk to their parent(s)/guardian(s) and counselors about enrolling in such courses and the support needed.