

## Looking for and Finding a Part-time or Summer Job

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Are you a teen who is thinking about working in the summer or part-time during the school year? There are many advantages of working. From a monetary standpoint it may allow you to earn some extra spending money, help you to save for college, help you to contribute to your family household expenses or other family expenses, or to save for that something special that you want to buy. Working part-time may also help you in gaining valuable work skills and good work habits, and providing you with the practical experience that you can apply to your future career. It also can show that you are a well-rounded person who can balance your workload, indicating you are an organized person. That can be a good addition to applications for college entrance and scholarships and give you a good starting point for further and higher-level employment. But where do you start in your job search? And what are the “Do’s and Don’t’s” when seeking and applying for a job? Let’s take a look at the questions you might have.

### Are you ready to take on a summer job or part-time work?

Ask yourself, what is your first priority? For most of you that will be your school work, so you can position yourself for college entrance, for a military career, or for a full-time career. Are your academic grades acceptable to you and your parents? Or, should you be spending what free time you have studying or receiving extra academic help, rather than working? You also may have a priority to allow yourself enough time to take part in school extra-curricular activities, such as sports, student government, performing arts, and special interest clubs. These all have a value for your development into a productive adulthood, so you and your parents or guardians need to determine if any time you spend working will take too much time away from

these types of activities. Although you may gain some benefits from working, you do not want to lose the benefits that you will gain from involvement in extra-curricular activities.

How old are you? Because of age restrictions regarding employers hiring youth (other than close relatives) and restrictions on what type of work they can do and what hours they may work, it may be very difficult for you to obtain employment if you are younger than 14 years old, and in many cases under 16 years old. If you are under 16, it may not be appropriate for you to look for employment.

Lastly, do your parents or guardians support you in your effort to work in the summers or part-time during the school year? If you are uncertain of this, it may be time to sit down with your parents or guardians and decide together if this is something that you should do.

What type of job should you look for?

Although your first thought might be, "I'll take anything," you may want to first think about things you have an interest in doing. If you work at a job you like, you will probably enjoy the work more than if you worked at a job you do not like. If you work at a job in which you have a potential interest in that type of work for a career, you will get more out of the job and perhaps stay longer in the job than you would for a job in which you have no interest in the field of work. So, perhaps you can start with making a list of your interests and what you enjoy doing. Do you enjoy working with animals? Cultural activities? Office work? Sports? Or do you like working on your own as an entrepreneur? A good list will help you decide where to start looking.

How should you go about looking and preparing to apply for a job?

First, you should check your resources. Do you know any adults, such as neighbors, relatives, or people you know through your activities, who work in the areas indicated on your

interest list? If so, you may want to talk to them to see if they have any advice on your job search. Do your parents or guardians know anyone who works in your areas of interest? If so, your parents or guardians might be willing to introduce you to those individuals. Are there any locations, such as restaurants or retail outlets, where you live, that reflect an area of your interest? If so, inquiring directly with them may be a good place to start. Although searches of newspaper ads and Internet job sites that are done for traditional full-time career employment can be done, for part-time and summer work, usually personal contacts and direct contacts with employers will be the way to go.

If you are more of the entrepreneurial type, you may want to develop a list of skills and abilities you have, that you could sell directly to people, such as neighbors. If you are going to start your own business by working on your own, start with the lists of skills and talents you made, above. It is always best to start with something you know. If you have been mowing the lawn and performing yard work for your parents or guardians, then that might be something you can do for your neighbors. Do you baby sit your younger siblings or cousins? Maybe that is something you can do for the children of your neighbors. Have you made things as gifts for your friends or relatives? Perhaps others would be interested in paying for those same types of items. Do you have computer skills? If so, maybe some of your neighbors need help selling items on e-Bay, starting a Facebook page, creating a family webpage or developing PowerPoint or other types of presentations. Are you really good in certain subjects at school? Perhaps there are parents looking for a tutor in the same subject for their younger children?

Whichever direction you go, you will need to be outgoing and politely assertive to approach your neighbors and other people you know, to see if there is enough interest to help you launch your business.

Do I need a resume? Although you may not need a resume to apply for many part-time or summer jobs – perhaps the employer’s employment application is enough – a simple, straightforward resume will likely be a handy thing to have to present to potential employers. See our article on this web site, “Youth Employment Resumes”.

Do I need references? You should have several references. Be prepared with names and contact information of people for whom you have worked, or who have observed you applying your skills, abilities, and positive personal traits to other activities, such as volunteer work. You do not necessarily need to put this information on your resume, but you should have it handy, typed, on a separate sheet of paper so you can use it for your employment application or hand it to your potential employer. Always check ahead of the time with the individuals you would like to use as references, to be sure that doing so is alright with them.

#### How should you act and dress, and go about applying for a job?

First and foremost, when applying for a job or marketing your business, always be polite, alert, clean and well groomed, and respectful, and show that you are interested in working for the employer. If you are interested in applying somewhere, go there during business hours (but not during their peak customer periods) and ask about their hiring process. If they offer you an employment application you may want to take it home so you can spend an appropriate amount of time and effort completing the application. If you plan to fill the application out at the place of business then be sure you have brought all the information you might need for the application, including contact information for your prior employers, your social security number, and contact information for your references. Complete the application fully. If a section does not apply to you, simply write “N.A.” in that area, for not applicable. This will show the business that you thoroughly read the application. Also, be sure you have spelled every word correctly. Use the

five “C’s” of communication – Clear, Concise, Complete, Correct, and Coherent. You may be asked on the application or in an interview why you want to work for the employer. Be sure you develop a short paragraph or verbal response that indicates you have put some thought into this question. You might also be asked to describe your greatest strength, and describe your biggest weakness. Another common request is simply to tell the employer a little about you. In that case, mention a few things that the particular employer might be interested in, which are strengths for you. Perhaps mention your grade point average, your extracurricular activities, or things that you have done showing your leadership or other positive traits.

Although you may have friends who wish to apply for work at the same employer, you should go to the employer alone. You may have parents or other adults who are concerned for you, but you should not take them with you. You should dress professionally, at least as well as the employees dress who work at the business, if not a little better. Most of all, be positive, polite, upbeat, respectful, and outgoing when you interact with potential employers.

Is there anything else you should do before starting your job search?

You should always be concerned about the image of yourself that you present to the world. Once you have applied for a job, potential employers may do a little investigating to gain an impression of your public image and you want that image to be a positive one. What can you do to ensure your image is one that you are proud to present? You may want to think about the following things:

- Does your e-mail address present a professional image? If not, create a new one for your employment search that is professional, perhaps focusing simply on your name.
- Likewise, does your voicemail present a professional image? If not, create a new one, at least during your employment search that is simple and professional.

- What do your online profiles, such as Facebook look like? If they do not look like something you would be comfortable for your potential employer to see, then now, before you begin your search, is the time to make the appropriate changes.

Best wishes on your part-time or summer job search!

Related links:

[www.Teens4Hire.org](http://www.Teens4Hire.org)

[www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com)

[www.snagajob.com](http://www.snagajob.com)

[www.coolworks.com](http://www.coolworks.com)

[www.backdoorjobs.com](http://www.backdoorjobs.com)

[www.summerjobs.com](http://www.summerjobs.com)

[www.boyslife.org/links/hourlycareers](http://www.boyslife.org/links/hourlycareers)

(see information under “Get a Job”)

Companion articles on this web site

See article “Youth Employment Resume” in the Youth section of this web site.

See article “Legal Concerns Regarding Youth Employment” in the Policy section of this web site.

See article “Should Youth Work a Part-Time or Summer Job?” in the Parent and Practitioner section of this web site.