

Talking Opportunities

A Pathways to Opportunity
RESOURCE KIT

For York Region Schools

2005

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Acknowledgements

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PARENT COMMUNICATION KIT ON PATHWAYS

YRDSB parents have indicated, through parent surveys administered in the spring of 2004, that they would like more information on possible pathways for their children early in grade eight. This information would provide parents with a base of knowledge that would allow for further discussion at home before the course selection process begins later in the year. This kit provides schools with ready-to-use tools to communicate with parents about different pathways. Although parents have expressed that they would like this information in grade eight, elementary and secondary schools may chose to use this kit with parents of students in other grades.

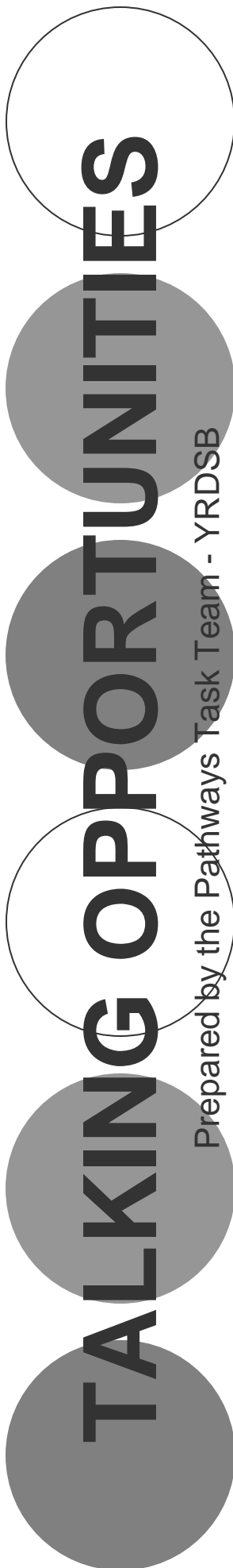
Support materials included in this kit:

- ✓ *A power-point presentation, including speaking notes, that examines possible pathways for students,*
- ✓ *A suggested framework for the presentation,*
- ✓ *Handouts that can be given to parents and students, and,*
- ✓ *Career Cruising login passwords for each school.*

GETTING STARTED

Schools have chosen different forums to communicate *Pathways* to parents. It is therefore important that a planning committee meets ahead of time to design a plan that both recognizes past initiatives and makes the most of the resources provided. This planning team might wish to consider:

- presentation date(s), avoiding conflicts with other major events,
- possible scheduling conflicts with secondary school presentations,
- staff members who could be involved in the presentation,
- guest speakers from the local community who may be able to contribute to the discussion,
- format of the presentation,
- additional resources that could complement the presentation, and,
- location and equipment required.



TALKING OPPORTUNITIES

Prepared by the Pathways Task Team - YRDSB

SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRESENTATION

- 6:30
 - Students greet parents at door and direct them to the presentation room
 - Snacks and drinks available
 - Consider a babysitting service for those with younger children
 - Ensure doors and directions are well-labeled
- 7:00
 - Welcome from the Principal
 - Discuss agenda for the evening
 - Encourage questions to be held until the end of the presentation
- 7:15
 - Begin PowerPoint presentation
- 7:45
 - Question and Answers
- 8:00
 - Share resources
 - Thank Parents for coming

HANDOUTS

Several handouts have been included in this kit. Although the handouts are well-suited for distribution during the presentation, schools may wish to consider which venue reaches the largest audience. Schools may also choose to distribute student-related handouts as it fits into existing programming and discussions. The following handouts have been provided to distribute to parents and students during the presentation:

- Tips for Parents
- Tips for Students
- Great Resources

In addition, teachers may wish to lead their students through an exploration of the YRDSB guidance web site using the following handouts:

- About Grade 9 (see attachment)
- Possible Destinations After High School (see attachment)

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Help your teen understand who they are:

- Take time to help your teenager understand what makes him/her tick.
- What are their interests? What are their strengths? What do they enjoy doing during their spare time?
- Praise them on their achievements and help them identify their skill sets.



Honour your teen's decisions:

- Teens should explore a variety of courses and experiences during high school.
- Be open-minded and support them in their decisions.
- Help them investigate opportunities that match their interests, abilities and passions.
- It's better to "try something on for size" now and avoid costly mistakes later.

Help your teen explore a variety of careers:

- Check out the YRDSB guidance web site at www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/guidance.services.
- Investigate career resources with your teenager.
- Surf the internet career exploration pages.
- Visit a youth employment centre.
- Introduce them to friends, neighbours and business contacts who have jobs that might be of interest.

Encourage your teen to apply for a Co-op Education Program:

Every secondary school in YRDSB offers a variety of Cooperative Education programs that allow students in all destinations to try out placements that interest them, while they earn related school credits. They can explore a wide variety of workplaces, develop valuable workplace skills, and showcase their experiences on their résumé and portfolio. 1

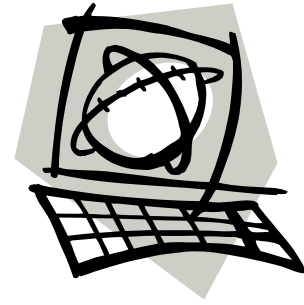


TALKING OPPORTUNITIES

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Help your teen develop good work habits:

- Develop maturity, responsibility, a positive attitude and good work ethics in your children.
- Encourage them to do their best on homework assignments, class attendance, and participation in school activities.



Help your teen build a personal portfolio:

- Encourage your teens to save examples of their achievements in school, sports, community groups or at work. These resources could play an important role in future job or school interviews.

Provide advice on money management:

Set an example for your teens – allow them to earn money for jobs on the home front.

- Help them set up a bank account for savings and expenditures.
- Encourage them to save money for special purchases / events.



Recognize the importance of setting directions for the future by encouraging your teen to:

- Consider long-range planning options.
- Research job opportunities.
- Set aside time for reflection and discussion.

Remember – Pathways are changeable and flexible. As interests, skills and aptitudes develop and mature, there will be many opportunities to re-chart your journey.

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

Know yourself

Take time to identify your skills, interests, strengths, and make time for the activities that you love to do.

- Try some of the interest inventories on the web.
- Learn about the skills that employers are seeking in today's job market.

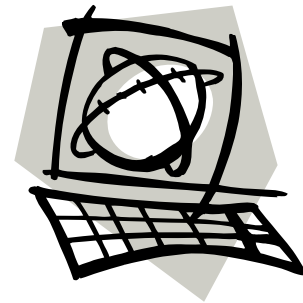
What would you like to try?



- Focus on “what you want to try” instead of “what you want to be.”
- Use your time in high school to explore a variety of career options.
- Develop new skills and interests by participating in a variety of extra-curricular activities.
- Ask family friends and neighbours what they do for a living.
- Check out the career exploration sites on the internet.
- Focus on jobs that match your strengths and passions.

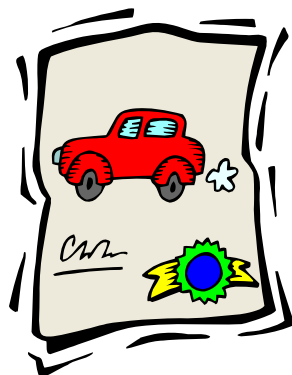
Check out career exploration web sites

- www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/guidance.services
- www.careercruising.com
- www.mazemaster.on.ca
- www.jobfutures.ca
- www.skillswork.com
- www.careermatters.tvo.org
- www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/career



Apply for the Co-op Education Program at your school

No matter what your post-secondary destination is, the opportunity to explore the world of work during high school will develop new employability skills, and provide potential networks for community service and job opportunities. These experiences may introduce you to the job of your life.

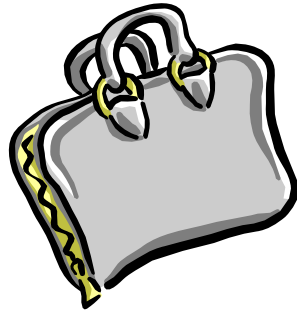


TALKING OPPORTUNITIES

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Build your skill sets

- Employers are seeking new employees that have the following skills: literacy, numeracy, positive attitude, team work, critical thinking skills.
- Enhance these skills through school and work experiences.



Build your portfolio

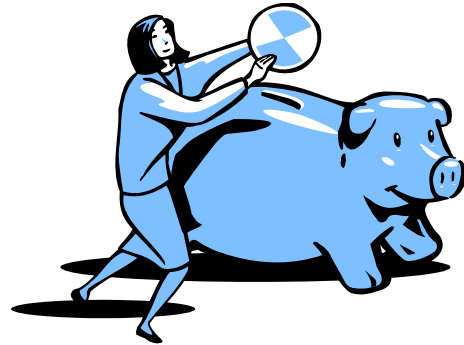
Develop a personal portfolio for the workplace, or for college/university applications.

- Include references from teachers, coaches, employers, and community leaders, and examples of your personal achievements.

Develop your money management skills

Learn how to manage your allowance or job earnings over time.

- Put a portion of your earnings aside for long-term savings.
- Shop for bargains, and only buy when you can afford it.



Focus on the journey

Remember that there can be many pathways to the same destination:

- Take time to explore and know yourself.
- Get involved in school activities that you enjoy.
- Test your capabilities.
- Discover your strengths and follow your heart.

Remember – Pathways are changeable and flexible. As interests, skills and aptitudes develop and mature, there will be many opportunities to re-chart your journey.

GREAT RESOURCES



The internet portal to Pathways information:

YRDSB Guidance Services website
www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/guidance.services

For excellent career exploration websites:

Go to www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/guidance.services
Click on Careers
Click on Career Databases
Click on Career Cruising (ask your teacher for your school's password)
Or
Click on CareerMatters

For self assessment interest inventories:

Go to www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/guidance.services
Click on Careers
Click on Personal Knowledge for links to many self assessment tools

Skills Inventory Activity (Grade 6 to 8):

www.careerccc.org/destination2020

Employment and the workplace information:

Go to www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/guidance.services
Click on Employment and the Workplace
Click on the following:
Possible Destinations after High School
Employability Skills
Essential Skills
Labour Market Information

Future focus:

Occupational Trends in the GTA (booklet from the Conference Board of Canada). To order, fax 416-973-6040.