**An overview for SLT**

Good careers guidance doesn’t just happen in school or college – it also needs positive, constructive conversations between parents and young people.

Careers guidance is key to social mobility. It provides young people – whatever their background – with the skills and information they need to make good decisions about their future education and work options.

But it can’t be delivered in isolation. The greatest influence on young people comes from their family and social network. For school and college programmes to succeed, parents need to be engaged and involved.

However, parents often rely on their own experiences from when they left school or college to inform discussions. This means they may only have a partial understanding of the options available to young people today. Many parents need better information to have informed, constructive conversations.

**Why engaging parents matters**

The Gatsby Foundation carried out research into parents’ views on careers education and it showed that parents like to feel involved and informed and believe young people should take their views into account when making important decisions

**PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN CAREERS**

**Why parents matter**

* Conversations about careers start from Year 7.
* Even as young people grow older and parents believe their influence declines, conversations about important things continue.
* Some parents underestimate their influence on young people.
* Parental engagement about careers may also be a hook for other parental engagement across the school/college.

**Parental engagement is important for students’ development of:**

* Information-seeking and research behaviours.
* Self-efficacy, career decision-making and confidence.
* Planning, goal-setting and creating a sense of direction.
* (Career) adaptability, flexibility and employability skills (such as entrepreneurship and team working).

**Support for schools and colleges**

To help us provide tailored support, parents can be grouped based on their relationship with their children and their attitude to school and college careers provision. The percentages illustrate the relative sizes of these groups and can be used to plan effective resource targeting and differentiation.

**Parent group 3 (21%)**

* Lack confidence, knowledge and communication skills
* May have a distant relationship with their child
* **Personalise activities to increase confidence**

**Parent group 4 (10%)**

* Receptive to engagement but format of careers provision may not be suitable
* **Personalise events and offer small-group activities**

**What is Talking Futures?**

* Resources to help embed a new approach to parental engagement in our careers programme.
* Focused on helping parents to have constructive conversations with their children.
* Can be woven into our current activity and adapted to suit the needs of our students and parents.
* Based on recent research commissioned by the Gatsby Foundation.
* Activities to engage parents in person or remotely, plus students’ activities, a CPD session and a website with additional content for educators and for families to use together at home.

Talking Futures content has been developed by the Gatsby Foundation and provides a suite of resources, activities and practical guidance to help you engage parents in young people’s careers and education choices.

**Reaching different groups**

**Parent group 1 (38%)**

* Happy to be involved by school/college but content to take a back seat
* Strong parent-child relationships
* **Help them understand the importance of their role**

**Parent group 2 (30%)**

* Highly engaged in children’s decision-making
* Often educated to university or degree level
* Some misconceptions about options today
* **Engage fully and work to dispel myths**

Further resources to support you with engaging parents in careers can be found on the Careers & Enterprise Companies’ [Resource Directory](https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/engaging-parents-careers-guidance-innovations-practice).

**Our approach to parental engagement in careers**

[edit this section to suit your institution’s approach before sharing with SLT]

**Developing our approach to parental engagement**

* We will be drawing on the Talking Futures toolkit of activities to deliver events to parents and students.
* In combination with our existing provision we will focus on:
  + Taking a flexible approach: in person, virtually and blended.
  + Integrating evaluation.
  + Communicating to parents about careers and options activities in advance.
  + Making the activities and content highly visible (e.g. on the website) to maximise uptake.
* Some activities will need to be delivered by subject teachers as well as Careers Leaders.
* Embedding this approach will require some CPD, but the activities have been designed to minimise staff workload.

**Maximising parental engagement**

**As parents are one of the biggest influencers on students’ decisions, how can we work with them more and what are the gaps in our current provision?**

* When and how we do involve parents in careers and options decision-making?
* What is our current parental engagement strategy across the whole school/college? Who is responsible for it?
* Which of the four groups of parents do we need to pay particular attention to?
* Do we have any learnings from past evaluation of our careers and options provision?
* How many people play a part in driving forward our parental engagement in careers?
* Which of the 11 recommendations are we already delivering on and where do we need to focus?
* How visible is our careers programme to parents who want to engage?

**What SLT can do next**

* Consider where parental engagement in careers aligns with your whole institution’s policy on parental engagement and help your Careers Leader by providing any insight and information about the parent community
* Hold a longer SLT meeting to discuss in detail how you can maximise your parental engagement in careers and who will take responsibility for supporting the Careers Leader with this
* [Download the toolkit](https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/talking-futures-toolkit) to explore the research in more detail – it covers the four different groups of parents and how you can meet their needs, plus it includes recommendations for [good parental engagement](https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/talking-futures-good-parental-engagement-recommendations)
* Support your Careers Leader to run CPD training with all staff together or in departments to help colleagues understand the importance of parental engagement in careers and the role they can play. There is a [template presentation](https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/talking-futures-whole-staff-cpd-session) available for this and it includes guidance on how to run an activity with parents to get their input on the careers provision on offer

Remember engaging parents in your careers provision supports a number of the Gatsby Benchmarks and in particular planning a whole school/college approach can be part of developing a stable careers programme (GB1).