

- ✓ Staying on at school
- ✓ Going to college
- ✓ Starting an apprenticeship
- ✓ Getting a job

**PARENT
KNOW
HOW**

Your child's
**options
at 16**

11-16

department for
education and skills

AT A GLANCE



Your child at 16 – what are the options?

Continue in full-time education

- in the sixth form at school
- at a sixth form college
- at a Further Education (FE) college
- later, at university.

Get training in a particular field

- by doing training or work-based learning
- by doing an apprenticeship
- through Entry to Employment (e2e).

Get a job

Did you know?

Four out of five 16-year-olds stay in education.

Changing times for everyone

When your child reaches 16, they have to make some vital decisions about their future. Do they want to stay on and study? Are they ready for the world of work?

Up to now, you've probably made or helped with all the big decisions in your child's life. But when they reach 16, the responsibility starts to shift to them. This helps them prepare for the kinds of choices they'll have to make as independent adults.

Of course, you are still their first source of help and information. So the more you know about the different options, the better you will be able to help your child choose what's right for them.

Basically, your child has a number of choices: to stay in full-time education, to go into training or work-based learning or to go out to work. Whatever they choose, it is important that they continue learning. This booklet will help you:

- **know what choices are open to your child at the age of 16**
- **explain how they can continue their education**
- **explain how they can go into training or work-based learning**
- **give advice on how to find a job**
- **understand the different types of qualifications**
- **find out more information on all of the above.**

Time to start thinking about next steps?

The best time to start thinking about what your child will do at 16 is at least a year in advance, in the summer holiday between Year 10 and Year 11. Why?

Because:

- they will have done a year of their GCSE or GNVQ studies, and you'll know what they're good at and interested in
- if they plan to go to college at 16, some courses fill up by the end of November – although most applications and decisions will be made after Christmas in Year 11.

Staying on in full-time education

After years of school, your child may well think they've had enough of education. But whatever they want to do in life, learning will be a big part of it. Staying in education increases their skills, knowledge and options and can help them along the path to Higher Education (HE), with all the career advantages that will give them.

Where they can study

If your child decides to stay in full-time education at 16, they can go to:

- the sixth form at school
- a Further Education (FE) college, where they can study for A levels, AS levels and some vocational qualifications
- a specialist college that offers art and design, agriculture, or dance and drama.

Schools and FE colleges

If your child has a specific career in mind, work back from that to make sure they take the right courses in the right subjects. To get on some degree courses, for example, they'll need to have A levels in specific subjects. Then check out what options are available at school and college.

Your child's careers teacher, or Connexions Personal Adviser, will know about the different places to study in your area.

What is Connexions?

We'll mention the Connexions Centre a lot in this booklet. Connexions is a service to help every young person make the right choices about courses, training and careers. However, it is much more than that. Connexions can offer help with anything else that might stop young people from getting on with life, such as health, travel and transport, and money.

What is Connexions Direct?

Connexions Direct is a telephone helpline and web-based service for young people aged 13–19. It gives quick and easy access to information and advice on a wide range of issues. It is open seven days a week, from 8am to 2am. Phone an adviser on **080 800 13 2 19** or text on **07766 4 13 2 19**. For more information check out www.connexions-direct.com



Getting qualified

Today, many qualifications have a practical or work-based aspect. However, any qualification proves to employers that the holder can learn and apply themselves.

Qualifications are divided into eight Levels. Most 16-year-olds will be at Level 1 or 2, perhaps working towards Level 3. For information about Levels 4 and above, please see our booklet *Why go to university?*

Where can I get financial help?

Cost can be a factor when deciding whether your child should stay in education, but support is available for families and young people. Turn to the back page to find out where you can get more information.

Entry level

Certificate of (educational) achievement

These are for students who find GCSEs difficult.

- They can be a stepping stone to GCSEs or NVQ Level 1.
- They are available in a wide range of subjects, at three different levels.

Levels 1 and 2

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSEs)

- You can choose from a range of GCSEs including academic and work-based subjects.
- Courses generally last two years.
- GCSEs in vocational subjects are 'double awards', equivalent to two traditional GCSEs.
 - They are available in applied art and design, applied business, engineering, health and social care, applied ICT, leisure and tourism, manufacturing and applied science.
 - They offer a hands-on approach to learning for young people with different abilities.

Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs)

- VRQ courses are normally taken in a Further Education college.
- They include industry-based subjects, such as engineering, IT and business management.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)

- NVQs are work-related qualifications.
- They're awarded for a student's performance in the workplace, as well as their subject knowledge.
- They are available in Levels 1–5 (5 being the highest).

Apprenticeships

- An apprenticeship lasts at least 12 months.
- Apprentices are either employed and earn a wage, or not employed and receive a training allowance.
- You will find more information about apprenticeships on pages 8 and 9 of this booklet.

GCE A levels and New (Applied) A levels

- A levels are made up of two parts: **AS** (the first half of the A level) and **A2** (the second half).
- In Year 12, your child can do a number of AS levels, then specialise in three or four in Year 13 at A2.
- New A levels, available in a range of subjects, including art and design, business, ICT, science, engineering, health and social care, leisure studies, media communication and production, performing arts and travel and tourism, replace Vocational A levels (VCEs) in September 2005. These develop knowledge and skills needed in these broad vocational areas.

Finding a job

Work and learn

If your child decides that finding work is the right choice for them, it's a good idea to make sure that it includes a training element, as this will give them more choices in the future. The two main routes for young people going into work with training are:

- Apprenticeships
- Entry 2 Employment (e2e).

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are aimed at young people aged 16–24. They involve working and training with an employer, and studying for other qualifications. Apprenticeships are for young people who want to develop their career and improve the opportunities open to them.

An apprenticeship is a structured training programme that leads to a package of qualifications on completion – a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), a technical certificate such as a BTEC National Diploma or a City & Guilds Progression Award, and Key Skills qualifications.

Some of the most popular apprenticeships at present are in engineering, business administration, construction and hospitality – although there are over 150 types on offer.

Is it the right choice?

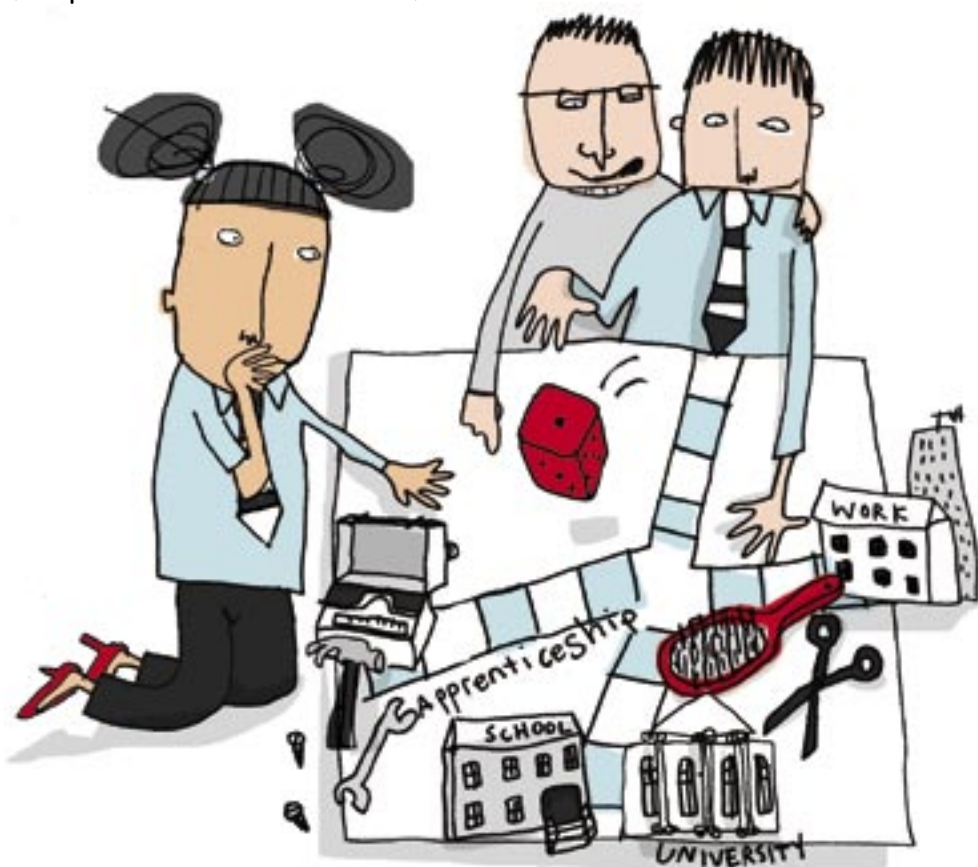
Apprenticeships give your child the chance to earn while they learn. But they are not for everyone. They take commitment, and a clear decision about what career suits best. You could help your child think about what it means to spend one, two or even five years juggling work, training and study, perhaps spending a day at college every week.

How do we apply?

Apprenticeships are open to anyone living in England and not taking part in full-time education. There are a number of ways your child can find out about and apply for an apprenticeship.

- Go to the apprenticeships website: www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- Call the national apprenticeships helpline on **08000 150 600**, and ask for details of the area that interests them. They'll be put in touch with a learning provider, who has contacts with local employers (this process takes a few weeks).

- Get in touch with employers who are offering apprenticeships direct, and ask for information about the training. Some larger employers have information about apprenticeships on their websites.
- Talk to careers teachers or Connexions Personal Advisers.



Entry to Employment (e2e)

Entry to Employment, or e2e as it's also known, is designed for young people who have potential, but are not ready or able for an apprenticeship. The e2e learning programme offers an opportunity to develop all-round skills needed to move into the world of work.

The e2e programme is aimed at people aged 16–18 who are unemployed and not on any other training. It is an individual, flexible learning programme that will:

- help develop basic and key skills and information technology
- increase confidence
- offer work placement opportunities with a local employer.

It's extremely flexible and geared towards an individual's needs, with many different activities to help them learn and grow. The point is to support progression to an apprenticeship, employment or further learning, rather than to gain a qualification. Your child can work towards a qualification if that's right for them – NVQs and City & Guilds are the most popular.

Did you know?

If your child is aged 16 or 17, working, and doesn't have a 'Level 2' qualification (GCSE grades A*– C, or NVQ Level 2), they can take paid time off to study or train towards it.

Want to find out more?

Find out more about financial help for students

The booklet *Financial Help for Students* covers ages 16–19 and is available from your local authority, school, college, or Connexions centre, and DfES Publications

 **0845 602 22 60**, email dfes@prolog.uk.com, or download from www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp

Find out more about apprenticeships

Go to www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Find out more about Entry to Employment

Go to www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/EntrytoEmployment
www.lsc.gov.uk/programmes/e2e

Find out more about all options open to young people

Contact your local Connexions centre or Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Call the Connexions Direct helpline:

 **080 800 13219**

www.connexions-direct.com

www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u

Further information on your child's options at 16 is available at www.parentcentre.gov.uk/optionsat16plus

Can't get onto the internet at home?

Visit your local library which will have computers and internet access.

Copies of this publication can be obtained from: DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ.
Tel: 0845 60 222 60 Fax: 0845 60 333 60 Email: dfes@prolog.uk.com Please quote ref: PKHSM4

©Crown copyright 2005

Produced by the **Department for Education and Skills**. Extracts from this document may be reproduced for non-commercial or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged.

PPBEL/DESTEAM/0705/PKHSM4/120