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Where Will YOUR Kids Get A Job?

By Murdo Macleod

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Let's face it.

The job market is getting tougher every day.

Computerization is making many jobs redundant.

The Internet and modern telecommunications have allowed companies to outsource jobs to third-world countries where wage costs are much lower.

In fact thousands of jobs have already been shed in the United Kingdom as several major banks have outsourced their call center operations to the Indian subcontinent.

Other companies are following suit, sending their back-office and Information Technology jobs the same way.

This is a major trend that's only going to accelerate.

Have you ever wondered how your kids will get on when it's time to look for a job?

With the population increasing and with more people competing for fewer jobs, companies can now pick and choose from the very best applicants.

But wait a moment....

What do we mean by "the best"?

Whether you like it or not, "best" generally means the best qualified.

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Employers, of course, have always used academic qualifications to shortlist job applicants for the interview stage.

But what is emerging now is a reliance on exam results for even seemingly ordinary jobs.

For example, did you know that the average call center employee in India is educated to degree level?

Qualifications are becoming more important than ever before.

And while not everyone is a natural-born exam prodigy, there are steps parents can take to help their kids gain better exam passes.

Here are 5 tips to get you started:

#1. Make learning enjoyable

We all do things better when we enjoy them, so bring out the joy of learning for its own sake.

One way to achieve this is by having family discussions about exam-related topics. Try to inject some drama (or at least some interest!) into the topic.

Another way is to embrace different technologies outside of the classroom. The Internet, multimedia CD-ROMs, and TV services like The Discovery Channel all help to liven up learning.

#2. Develop problem-solving skills

Practicing mental activities like quizzes and crossword puzzles helps nurture the intellectual problem-solving part of the brain.

It also develops other important skills like concentration and creativity.

So get your kids into the habit of solving problems every day.

Their exam skills will develop naturally, plus they'll be able to solve problems more easily in the real world outside of the exam hall.

#3. Encourage the study habit

Who hasn't tried to cram themselves full of information the night before an important exam?

Unfortunately, that's doing it the hard way.

"A little, often" works much better.

Ensure your kids set aside at least 20 minutes a day for peaceful study. Every day.

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After a few sessions of enjoyable learning, you'll find they actually look forward to their study period.

#4. Learn exam technique

Studying for exams includes studying exams.

Get hold of some past examination papers – you can buy these cheaply in most bookstores – and have your kids study the questions.

Exams have a consistent formula, and once you know the formula, you're halfway to success.

Familiarity also instills confidence – an important quality when it comes to facing a real exam situation.

#5. Pay for performance

If all else fails, or your kids are having trouble getting motivated towards a forthcoming exam, try offering them an "incentive".

(Well they have to learn about "performance-related pay" someday.)

You'd be surprised how a little motivation can improve exam results!

Whichever way you do it, try to help your kids get the best grades they can.

"Qualifications doth not a person make."

But they certainly help when it's time to earn a living.

'Fun With Figures' shows anyone how to gain an unfair advantage in math. Visit the website today and find out what they didn't teach you in school.

Murdo Macleod is a software developer and co-author of the 'Fun With Figures' mental math course.

Updating Your "Plum" Job

By Norma Schmidt, Coach, LLC

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It's startling to discover how having kids changes the way you see the world. Just compare your "before kids" vs. "after kids" views on what counts as:

* A good place to live.

* A desirable car.

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- * An excellent restaurant.
- * A great evening.
- * Your ideal or "plum" job.

Give that "plum" job a closer look. Back in school, you may have dreamed of a job that offered intellectual challenge, travel, or a chance to use your talents to make a difference in the world.

Once you start a family, your "plum" job can look more like a lemon!

Life is infinitely more complex now. Family demands can magnify drawbacks that used to be inconsequential. Challenges that seemed thrilling at an earlier stage of your life may be daunting now.

It may be time to update your vision of your "plum." You can start by asking:

1. What talents do you want to offer the world through your job?
2. What do you enjoy?
3. How much income do you need to feel you are being fairly compensated?
4. How much flexibility do you want in your schedule?
5. How much mental and emotional energy do you want to have left after your paid work is done?
6. How often and for how long do you want to travel out of town?
7. How far are you willing to commute?
8. Is there an upper limit to how many hours you are willing to work per day? Per week?
9. How often are you willing to relocate?
10. How much of the time do you want to work from home?

Are you already holding your "plum"? If not, keep your new vision in front of you. What steps can you take today to put your updated "plum" within reach?

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Norma Schmidt, Coach, LLC specializes in helping women who are both professionals and parents to find work that works. She edits "The Balance Point," a free bi-weekly e-zine. Visit <http://www.NormaSchmidt.com>.

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