

## CONTENT MODULE: EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND CAREER

### WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT FOR BOTH A COACH AND A FAMILY?

Furthering education and finding stable, living-wage employment are critical to every family's economic stability, and a core of any family-centered work. As a coach, understanding how workforce and education services and programs tie together can help a parent move more efficiently in the direction of their goals. Given the diverse and siloed funding streams for education and employment, programs need to think about how best to leverage and braid funding to support parents in their family-centered goals by combining services that help parents to take advantage of job training and education if they decide this is a goal for themselves and their family. In some cases, this may mean connecting with or supporting families to connect with the local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partnerships to be able to access training vouchers, referrals or support services for parents. As a coach, it can also mean identifying targeted job training programs with parents receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits while also partnering beside the family to figure out how to access child care or after school supports. Knowing local adult education providers to assist parents in increasing their English proficiency or to enroll in a high school equivalency program can be key steps toward helping a parent and their family reach their goals. Community colleges offer certificates and associates degrees leading directly to in-demand jobs. In some cases, it may mean helping a parent determine the best way to combine work and education. It can also mean helping them identify education financial supports such as the Pell Grant and other financial aid opportunities.

The general steps for coaching on employment, education, and career are:

**(1) Help people to identify a work or a career goal.**

This includes encouraging people to move toward higher-paying jobs. Help parents identify what higher-paying jobs are available in their area, what they need to do to obtain those jobs, and what constitutes a "good fit" between their skills, interests, and values, and the job requirements. This conversation might be the focus of an initial coaching session. Do they have a job/career in mind, or would they like to explore options?

**(2) Help people map out a plan to get from where they are to where they want to go.**

Do they need more education and training? Where do they get it? How will they pay for it? How long will it take?

**(3) Identify the obstacles that might get in the way, and develop a plan for overcoming them.**

Develop an action plan using the Plan, Do, Review tool. What steps will they take in a prescribed time period, e.g., the next week or month?

In addition, this topic:

- Supports whole-family economic well-being.
- Begins to address how racial biases, discrimination, and institutional barriers impact education and job attainment.
- Provides guidance on developing a career and establishing economic well-being - a journey that a parent will continue long after they have completed your program. Providing guidance on this process and helping them practice and strengthen these planning skills sets them up for success.

### GENERAL TIPS AND ADVICE FOR COACHING ON THIS TOPIC:

- If getting a new or better job is a goal, then it is important not only to help a parent obtain a job, but also to provide them with information on opportunities for increasing their skills so they can qualify for better-paying jobs. Even though parents seeking jobs can be facing numerous challenges, they also have incredible strengths. Helping families uncover and remember their supports, such as family, neighbors, community programs, spouse/partner, school, church, and support group, is one of the best ways to begin this dialogue from a strength-based approach, right from the start. This is good way to talk with families who may be interested in taking the next steps in training or education, given that few jobs pay enough to support a family unless you have either industry recognized credentials or other post-secondary education.
- Let the parent know you will continue to be there to help them through the process and that they can tell you what works best for them and their families. If your program isn't equipped for long-term coaching, discuss with the parent if they would like your help in identifying other resources that can support them in the long run, and work with them to ensure a continuity of services.

Understanding these elements is essential for a parent:

- What skills do they have? Do they have prior work or volunteer experience that is transferable to other jobs? These are strengths the parent brings to a job search. Knowing the answers to these questions helps a parent determine what they want to do, and know how to market themselves for a job.
  - What supports do they have to address any constraints? Do they have access to child care subsidies, or to family members who can provide child care, after school care, or transportation access? Do other members of the family provide income? Are they able to work flexible schedules? Does the family receive benefits or services from a particular kind of program that has education or training funds, like TANF or SNAP? Reassure the family to let them know it is OK to start small, and that you will work together to achieve success a step at a time until any constraints are less and less.
  - Here are some specific techniques to help make the process of finding a job or determining options for education and training more manageable for the parent:
    - Create a short time horizon: What would you like to accomplish in the next month? If your program is of fixed duration, ask, "What would you like to accomplish in your time here?"
    - Be clear on what are your program's goals, and keep goal-setting and milestone achievement within those parameters. For example, you can say, "We can get you this far and then connect you with other services and supports for this part."
  - Keep in mind bias and stereotypes.
- Gender bias includes:
- Guiding women to enter nursing, teaching, domestic work, or other helping professions, and not exploring other options.
  - Assuming women are supposed to make less money than men.

- Accepting the conditioned belief that women are not as qualified or competent for a job as men.
- Guiding men to enter construction, technical, mechanical, or professional careers, and not exploring other options.
- Assuming men are best at being in charge at work.

Racial bias includes:

- Guiding Asians into technical and math-oriented jobs, guiding away from managerial jobs.
  - Guiding African-Americans or Latinos away from higher-level jobs or professional jobs, such as computer programmer, engineering technician, sales representative.
- If a parent has experienced race/gender bias or discrimination in previous jobs, help them think about:
    - What are things they can do to mitigate that in the next interview or job?
    - What are they looking for in an employer and a supervisor to help prevent being in a bad situation again?
    - What can you learn from the experience of bias or discrimination?
  - What do you like to do?
  - What do you think you're good at?
  - What makes you happy? What makes your family happy?
  - What type of environment do you want to work in?
  - What type of employer do you want to work for?
  - What do you NOT want to do?

## POWERFUL QUESTIONS AND OTHER FAMILY-CENTERED INQUIRIES

- What would your ideal job look like?
- What are your family's aspirations and strengths? How can those help you in setting an education/employment/career goal?
- How much do you need to earn to meet expenses and goals?

Be intentional and explicit about asking about a family's situation. Then you and the parent together can begin to understand how the family situation affects decision making.

- What are the job hours that work best for your family? If a job has odd hours, evenings, or weekends, can the family help out? If not, what are the hours that will work, and which jobs are a good match?
- Is your family supportive of your goal of getting a job?

- Is the occupation favorably viewed in the family's culture? If not, is that impacting the parent from moving forward? If so, how can it be addressed?
- Are there other things to think about from the perspective of your family?
- Are there physical/health limitations that need to be addressed?

## INFORMATION FROM OTHER CONTENT AREAS CAN SUPPORT SUCCESS IN THIS ONE

This topic ties closely in with other topics such as child well-being and parenting; basic needs; financial; and legal. Looking at these areas provides insights into other interests, strengths, and potential challenges that can support or hinder a parent's ability to make progress toward employment, education, and career goals.

OTHER CONTENT AREAS	QUESTIONS FOR THE COACH AND PARENT TO DISCUSS
CHILD WELL-BEING AND PARENTING	<p>What are the ages of your children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What child care, education, and/or after school needs do they have? What happens in the summer?</li> <li>- What extra-curricular activities do they have?</li> <li>- Do you have other support in your family, in the community, or with other parents where costs can be shared?</li> <li>- How does the timing and/or extra cost compare to what the job pays or might pay?</li> </ul>
	What child care is needed, and what are the options?
	Are there child care subsidies available for working parents?
	What are your backup plans for child care?
	What hours are needed to support attending school, training, or a job?
	How far is it from school/job/home?
	Who in the family can provide support?
	<p>What are the medical needs of your children or other family members?</p> <p>For example, if a child has asthma, a parent may have to attend many doctor appointments or administer meds, making it necessary to have a job either with flexibility or with limited hours.</p> <p>Follow-up questions might include, "How can we address meeting these costs? Have you looked at any options?"</p>

OTHER CONTENT AREAS	QUESTIONS FOR THE COACH AND PARENT TO DISCUSS
BASIC NEEDS	<p>How long is the commute to school/training/job? Where is your children's school/child care in relation to the jobs you are thinking about, and how will you get to each place on time?</p>
	<p>Is there public transportation or a car to use?</p>
	<p>Is it reliable? Does it meet the hours needed?</p>
	<p>If others are working, what are their hours and transportation? This information helps budget for time and other costs.</p>
	<p>What are your backup plans?</p>
	<p>Have you thought about carpooling with family or neighbors? How will this impact childcare arrangements?</p>
	<p>How else can you enlist the support of family and friends?</p>
FINANCIAL	<p>What do you need to earn to support your family? You should come ready to address this as the family may not know.</p>
	<p>Is anyone else in the family working?</p>
	<p>What other income is coming into the family?</p>
	<p>Do you need to work while in training? This may point toward training programs with stipends, or to training programs with different hours.</p>
	<p>Are you aware of any benefit options that may be available? Mention any you know of.</p>
LEGAL	<p>Do you have any past criminal background that could affect your employment?</p>
	<p>Do you know of ways we can address this? The more the coach can become familiar with options for dealing with criminal records in your state/city, the more options you can suggest to the parents.</p>

*The resources identified below are recommended by the Advisory Committee and Topic Experts for the Family-Centered Coaching Toolkit.*

## FOR YOUR TOOLKIT: IDENTIFY RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- One Stop Career Centers
- Skills training providers (This can include community-based organizations, technical schools, and community colleges.)
- Community Colleges
- Adult basic education and ESOL programs
- SNAP Employment and Training Programs

### TOOLS/RESOURCES:

#### **My Next Move**

*This website helps people figure out what they want to do for a living.*

<https://www.mynextmove.org/>

#### **Skillful.com**

<https://www.skillful.com/>

#### **Knack**

*People use Knack to identify their interests and career pathways, and connect with job opportunities.*

<https://www.knack.it/apps/index.html>

#### **Promising Occupations for Low-Income Families by State**

<https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-focus-areas/family-support/data-visualizations/tanfmap>

#### **Building Foundations for Economic Mobility Webinar Series, Head Start: Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center**

<http://tinyurl.com/y75ogxsf>

#### **My Skills My Future**

<https://www.myskillsmymfuture.org/>

**What a Family Needs to Get By**

<http://www.epi.org/publication/what-families-need-to-get-by-epis-2015-family-budget-calculator/>

**GENERAL GUIDES/CURRICULA:**

**Empower Your Future: Career Readiness Curriculum**

<http://tinyurl.com/ydavap33>

**Resources for Connecting TANF Recipients and Other Low-Income Families to Good Jobs**

<http://tinyurl.com/ya8t5mrq>

**MOMS Partnership: Personal Skills for Work Success**

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[newhavenmomspartnership.org](http://newhavenmomspartnership.org)