

SMART PARENTS PAPER



PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND ADVICE

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DEGREE APPLICATIONS TO US UNIVERSITIES RISE



Intense competition for places at British universities places is fuelling record applications to higher education institutions in the US. Nearly 9,000 students began studying at universities in the US between 2008-09, according to the Open Doors report on international student mobility. A record number – nearly 4,500 – began an undergraduate degree course. Failure to find a place at a British university prompted many students to apply for a university place in the US, while others were attracted by the quality of the country's institutions. Thirteen of the world's 20 best universities are in the United States according to the 2009 Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings. These world beating institutions include the University of Chicago, Yale University, Harvard University and Princeton University (all in the top ten). The universities ranked from 11-20 include the University of Michigan, Columbia University, Duke University and the University of Pennsylvania.

"UK students appreciate the quality of US institutions and the message is getting out that studying in the US is a possibility," said Lauren Welch, head of advising at Fulbright, an organisation that provides practical advice to students planning to study in the US.

"Benefits of studying in the US include the sheer volume of universities; there are over 4,000

compared to just over 100 in the UK. The number and diverse range of subjects on offer means that students can find a good fit for them."

Generous scholarships and bursaries from US universities are available to British students wishing to study in the US. "Many universities see scholarships as a recruitment tool," said Lauren. "They are based on merit, financial need and diversity, including being an international student. We encourage British students to apply for these scholarships."

The 'Obama effect' is also contributing to the rise in the number of British students applying to US universities, said Lauren. "Since President Barack Obama's election victory, public opinion in Britain of Obama and the US has been very high. There is more curiosity about the US and his presidency. This is seen anecdotally and borne out by public opinion."

When Britons surveyed for the Pew Global Attitudes Project in 2008, were asked how much confidence they had in President Barack Obama to do the right thing regarding world affairs, 86 percent said they had 'a lot' of confidence or 'some confidence'. When posed the same question about President George W Bush in 2008, only 16 percent said they had confidence in the president to

do the right thing regarding world affairs, compared to 51 percent back in 2003. The survey also revealed that in 2009 69 percent of Britons had a favourable opinion of the US compared to 51 percent in 2007.

Commenting on the rise in the number of British students applying for places at universities in America, NUS spokesman Jon Carroll said: "It is negligible when you take into account the fact that demand for places at universities in the UK is at an all time high, with tens of thousands of applicants being turned away last year."

The Fulbright Advisory Service aims to support UK parents with children interested in US study. The application process to US universities can seem challenging for students, parents and advisors alike. Our advising team is here to help! Don't hesitate to refer your children to our comprehensive website on study in the US and the Fulbright Awards for postgraduate study and research. The Commission also hosts two annual study in the US events, USA College Day and USA Grad School Day.

The Advisory Service also conducts two-hour seminars on undergraduate and postgraduate study, as well as preparing for US study. Your children may also wish to take advantage of our Resource Library and outreach events.

USA College Day

Annual undergraduate study in the US fair - 25 September 2010
USA College Day 2010 is set for Saturday, 25 September and will be held at the Kensington Town Hall. Visitor registration will start from June 2010.

LAURA TUNBRIDGE "I LEFT SCHOOL WITH NO UNIVERSITY TO GO TO – NOW I'M AT YALE"



"I didn't want to settle for any university."

Rejections from Oxford and Bristol turned out to be blessings in disguise for Laura Tunbridge. Her five brilliant A levels in English Literature (A), ICT (A) Theatre Studies (A) General Studies (A) and maths (B) eventually won her a place at one of the world's best universities - Yale. What's more she also received a generous financial aid package. "If I hadn't got rejected by Oxford, I wouldn't have set my sights higher," said Laura. "Yale is the absolute pinnacle as far as universities go and every day I wake up thinking, 'how did I get here'? It's amazing."

Laura, 20 is a first year liberal arts student at Yale University. Her subjects include philosophy, Spanish, theatre studies and economics.

After leaving school without a university place, Laura decided not to go through clearing, but work for a year instead.

"I didn't want to settle for any university, I wanted to go to one that was right," she explained.

In the autumn of 2008, Laura looked at Ivy League universities in the US and

applied to just one, Yale. She heard that these universities were the US equivalents of Oxbridge and were more likely to offer financial assistance to foreign students.

"Yale is the absolute pinnacle as far as universities go and every day I wake up thinking, 'how did I get here'? It's amazing."

Laura also applied for places through UCAS again and this led to an offer from Bristol University, who rejected her first time round. The liberal arts programme was instrumental in Laura opting for Yale over Bristol. "I couldn't decide entirely on what I wanted to

study," recalled Laura. "The liberal arts programme allows me to choose a major while dipping in and out of subjects of interest. Laura, who is from the Isle of Sheppey in north Kent, also chose Yale over Bristol because she liked the idea of living in the US. "I had never been to the US before and was curious to see what it could offer me."

The four year £55,000 financial aid package based on need was appealing too. "As a student I'm much better off here as I don't have to take out a student loan, but my parents do contribute financially to my studies since the financial aid package covers 94 percent of my costs."

studentfinanceengland

Brand new student finance service

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

For help and advice on studying in the US
visit <http://www.fulbright.co.uk/study-in-the-us>

in the PARENTS PAPER this issue



TACKLE THE BULLIES

How to deal with the age old problem in the correct manner



KNOW YOUR HOMEWORK

A Parents guide to what's expected and what's handed out



WHAT'S HIGHER EDUCATION?

Southampton Solent University share their knowledge

the PARENTS PAPER is FREE

HOMEWORK: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Schools are encouraged to plan homework carefully alongside work that children do at school, and to ensure that all activities are appropriate for individual children. Here are some guidelines to give you an idea of how much time your child should be spending on homework, and how you can help them.

Homework guidelines for primary and secondary schools

The emphasis is on how homework helps your child to learn, rather than on whether it takes a certain amount of time.

For example, some children will work quicker than others and get more done in less time. The rough guidelines for primary school children are:

- **Years 1 and 2: 1 hour per week**
- **Years 3 and 4: 1.5 hours per week**
- **Years 5 and 6: 30 minutes per day**

The guidelines for secondary school children are:

- **Years 7 and 8: 45 to 90 minutes per day**
- **Year 9: 1 to 2 hours per day**
- **Years 10 and 11: 1.5 to 2.5 hours per day**

Your child shouldn't be expected to spend much longer on homework than the guide times. It doesn't matter if activities don't take as long as the guide times as long as they are useful. Schools should organise homework carefully so that children aren't asked to do too much on any one day.

Homework activities

All homework activities should be related to work that children



are doing at school. However, homework should not always be written work. For younger children it will largely be:

- **Reading with parents or carers**
- **Informal games to practice mathematical skills**
- **Developing reading, writing and spelling for five to 11 year olds**
- **Developing maths skills for five to 11 year olds**

For older children homework activities may include:

- **Reading**
- **Preparing a presentation to the class**
- **Finding out information**
- **Making something**
- **Trying out a simple scientific experiment**
- **Cooking**
- **Helping your 11 to 14 year old to learn**
- **Helping your 14 to 19 year old to learn**

Helping your child with homework

Schools are happy for you to support and help your child with their homework. However, they will also want to see what your child can do on their own. As they get older, it is particularly important for your child to become more independent in their learning.

Your child is likely to get more out of an activity if you get involved, as long as you don't take over too

much. If you're unsure about what your role should be, you should discuss it with your child's school.

Doing homework outside of the home

Your child will have the opportunity to do homework either at school or in supervised out of school hours clubs. This could be through study support or extended schools services.

- **Extended schools and services**
- **Study support**
- **Study support: breakfast and homework clubs**

Feedback on your child's homework

Schools are expected to make sure children are given feedback on their homework. It should be given in a way that lets your child know:

- **how well they have done**
- **how they could do better**

This may not always happen through written comments from the teacher. Sometimes work will be discussed in lessons or teachers may give written comments on just one or two aspects of a piece of work. If you're concerned about the feedback given to your child you should discuss this with the school.

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By Mena Farag

INTERNET SAFETY AT SCHOOL

Using t[]

higher quality service. However, the internet allows access to a lot of adult material, and so without some restrictions children are at risk of being exposed to harmful content.

The debate up till present has referred to whether schools should block content in advance, or educate children to use good judgement in avoiding anything they deem as harmful. On one hand, any caring parent would vote for protecting their child, however in reality this cannot be possible every minute of the day, and sooner or later children will come into contact with something that parents would rather they didn't. This could make them feel uneasy and be hard to understand if they haven't had some education on what to expect when using the internet.

Perhaps advising children via online safety discussions at school can work towards ensuring a constant measure of

online safety. It allows children to use their own discretion and can help them to feel independent whilst equipping them with powerful tools for safe internet use. Teaching students to inform a teacher when they come across any material that makes them feel uncomfortable will help them stay in control and allow them a level of responsibility. It will never be possible to eliminate every single risk, considering how almost infinite the internet is, and so teaching children in this way is a practical method for ensuring a good level of content control.

It takes a lot of time and research on the part of the school to decide what is appropriate or not for the different age

groups at their institution. For example, an older child may have been set a novel in class which includes references to sexuality, and therefore will need access to online material of a more adult nature, so this needs to be catered for via careful consideration. Online protection should be tailored to the institution, for example a primary school may have a strict internet access policy whilst a secondary school can be a little more lenient with what they filter. This teaches the child as they progress by addressing their age and level of maturity. Strategies that may assist in keeping the internet safe but allowing children to access a wealth of information may include blocking, filtering and incorporating a ratings system.

Blocking some access completely can sometimes be necessary for the safety of children at school. For example, chat rooms are not useful for education and may distract students from their work therefore blocking them wouldn't take away from the quality of learning. Though children are more aware today than they were even five years ago about the dangers of chat rooms, they should still be controlled when in an educational setting as they can lead to distressing situations.

Besides safety measures sometimes better quality information can be obtained from books, so teaching children how to check for accuracy and to be aware that some of the information online will be

less than credible is useful for ensuring that they get the most out of their education. Teaching children different ways to validate information before simply accepting it can be valuable and will be useful when they enter into further education.

Some schools have been in discussion with parents in order to ensure responsible use of internet at home and in the community, therefore perhaps having similar systems at home and school could help children to grow accustomed to safety methods and go towards giving parents some peace of mind, knowing that they can trust their child to use the internet safely whilst allowing children to enjoy the fascinating world of online learning.

WORLDSKILLS CALGARY

THE RESULTS ARE IN - BRITAIN'S GOT MORE TALENT!

It's official: Britain really has got talent thanks to an exceptionally skilled team of 26 young people who have spent the last four days competing at the skills equivalent of the Olympics – the WorldSkills competition in Calgary, Canada. At an emotional closing ceremony attended by all 900 competitors, Team UK exceeded high expectations to win an impressive three gold and six bronze medals at skills ranging from painting and decorating to floristry and autobody repair.

Team UK – 14 of who are City & Guilds qualified – were understandably ecstatic about their achievements last night. The team, all under the age of 25 and chosen throughout the home nations, have trained hard for this moment over

the last eighteen months. Medals were won by the following six City & Guilds qualified team members:

GOLD: Electrical Installations - Richard Sagar, 22, from Langholm, who works for Eden Electrics. Richard is City & Guilds qualified.

BRONZE: Autobody Repair - Daniel Cain, 22, from Grimsby, who works for Just Car Clinics. Daniel is City & Guilds qualified.

BRONZE: Joinery - Trevor Woods, 21, from Co. Fermanagh, who works for McAleer & Teague and attends Omagh College. Trevor is City & Guilds qualified.

BRONZE: Floristry - Joe Massie, 21, from Liverpool, who works

for Fishlocks Florist. Joe is City & Guilds qualified.

BRONZE: Beauty Therapy - Charlotte Burford, 19, from Penkridge, near Stafford, who works for Tranquility @ Esporta Stafford and who attends South Staffordshire College. Charlotte is City & Guilds qualified.

BRONZE: Aircraft Maintenance - Stewart Wright, 25, from Northampton, who serves with the Royal Navy. Stewart is City & Guilds qualified.

In addition, Medallions for Excellence were awarded to the following six City & Guilds competitors who achieved at least 500 points, deemed the world class standard.

MEDALLION FOR EXCELLENCE: Bricklaying - Sam Fairgrieve, 21, from Leicester who works for Jelson Homes Ltd. Sam is City & Guilds qualified.

MEDALLION FOR EXCELLENCE: Cabinet Making - Luke Griffiths, 22, from Chichester, who works for Cimitree Furniture and also teaches at Chichester College. Luke is City & Guilds qualified.

MEDALLION FOR EXCELLENCE: Landscape Gardening - Luke Denby, 19 from Skipton who works for Roderick French Groundworks and attends Craven College and William Gadd, 22, from

Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, who works for The Country Life Landscapes and attends Otley College. Luke and William are both City & Guilds qualified.

MEDALLION FOR EXCELLENCE: Plumbing & Heating - Christopher Lonsdale, 22, Bishop, Auckland, who is self employed. Christopher is City & Guilds qualified.

MEDALLION FOR EXCELLENCE: Stonemasonry - Oliver Clack, 21, from Chichester, who works for Cathedral Works Organisation and who attends Weymouth College. Oliver is City & Guilds qualified.



Visit worldskillsteamuk.org/ to see more photographs and video footage from this year's competition.

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

TO START AN ARMY CAREER

The Army doesn't only offer over 140 different career paths, it offers multiple ways to take the first steps on the journey too. As well as Standard Entry, there are School Scholarships, Apprenticeships at Army College, plus Further Education and Higher Education Bursaries. With our help (and yours) your son or daughter can choose the path that's right for them.

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Understanding Student Finance

If you're a parent with a child preparing for A Levels - you'll know what a nerve wracking time this can be. They've been working towards this for nearly two years and their future choices about higher education and careers may well rest on these results.

If they're planning to go to university or college they should have made their application by now and will be waiting for their results. However, they don't have to wait to apply for student finance - and if they haven't already applied, they need to do so now.

What help can they get?

For the coming year (2010/2011) all English universities and colleges can charge students up to £3,290 for tuition fees, however your child won't have to find the money up front.

- All eligible students can take a **Tuition Fee Loan** for the fee charged by their college or university, up to £3,290.
- This is paid directly to their college or university.

In addition to the Tuition Fee Loan, your son or daughter can also apply for help with their living costs.

- A **Maintenance Loan**: The amount your child gets depends on where they live, where they study and, in part, on your income.

Students living at their parents' home while studying	Up to £3,838
Students living elsewhere or in their own home whilst studying	Up to £4,950
Students living elsewhere or in their own home whilst studying in London	Up to £6,928

Students have to re-apply for their student finance each year of their course - with the exception of Disabled Students' Allowances which are paid for the whole course.

Students only begin repaying their loans once they finish their course, are working and earning above the repayment threshold of £1,250 a month (or £15,000 a year).

- The **Maintenance Grant** is worth up to £2,906 a year. 35% of new, full-time students have been awarded the full Maintenance Grant in the current academic year. The really good news is that this does not have to be repaid. Students whose household income is less than £25,000 a year will receive a full grant, those whose household income is between £25,001 and £50,020 will receive a partial grant.
- For students who are entitled to some income-related benefits there is a **Special Support Grant** which replaces the Maintenance Grant. How much the student gets will depend upon their household income but it could be up to £2,906.

There is a lot of other support which includes extra financial help for students with children or with adult caring responsibilities, students with disabilities, mental health conditions or specific learning difficulty. This does not have to be repaid but how much the student gets may depend upon household circumstances.

If you'd like to find out more about any of these, including **Disabled Students' Allowances, Childcare Grant, Adult Dependents' Grant** and the **Parents' Learning Allowance** go to www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

All English universities and colleges offer a **Bursary** to students who are being charged the full tuition fee and are receiving a Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant. Many universities and colleges offer bursaries to students who do not meet this criteria.



You can use the **Student Finance Calculator** which is available at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance/calculator to work out exactly what your son or daughter might be able to get, and, if they haven't already applied for student finance, then this is the best place to start.

Your child can use the calculator to compare what it will cost at up to 5 different universities, colleges or courses, and work out what support is available for each. There's even a budget calculator to help them work out how much they might need to cover things like rent, bills, travel, food, clothing and even their social life!

Together the information builds a very accurate financial picture and helps you and your child budget and plan for their future. Early application is recommended for students who want to make sure they receive a payment at the beginning of their first term.

What about repayment?

Students pay interest on their loans from when they receive them but as they are subsidised by the Government, they are not like commercial loans and the interest charged is very low. Your child will pay back 9% of their salary above the annual threshold of £15,000 once they finish their course and are working. On a salary of £18,000 a year this would be about £5.19 a week. You can find out more about interest rates and repayment at www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk

How do they apply for Student Finance?

The easiest and quickest way to apply for student finance is online. The student doesn't have to have a firm offer from a university to make an application for support. There are two deadlines for new students to apply for student finance. The first of these is **23 April**; if your son or daughter is applying for student finance which doesn't depend on your household income, then they need to apply by this date to be sure they get their money when they start their course.

The second deadline is for students who are applying for any student finance which depends on their household income - for example any of the grants or part of the Maintenance Loan. If they are applying for this then they need to do so by **25 June**.

Financial Evidence

You will need to supply us with your personal financial evidence to support their application if they are applying for these products and you will have to do so by the deadline. You will be asked to give 'prior tax year' financial information - so if your child is applying for academic year 2010/2011 you need to give us your financial information for tax year 2008-2009.

To find out more about student finance, visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance



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Follow us on twitter.com/sf_england



Make sure your son or daughter gets paid on time.



If your child is going to university this autumn and hasn't already applied for student finance, they need to do it now. If they don't apply by the deadline they may not get paid in time.

Apply by **23 April** if you are only applying for student finance which doesn't depend on your household income and by **25 June** if you are applying for student finance which does.

For more information and to apply for student finance visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

studentfinanceengland

IS HIGHER EDUCATION RIGHT FOR MY CHILD?

University or college is an option for everyone who has the ability to succeed in higher education.

Once university was seen as being only for those from better-off families, but this is no longer true. More people are going into higher education than ever before - including students from all backgrounds, and at different ages.

There are also more ways to get in than ever before. NVQs, a BTEC or other work-related qualifications, the 14-19 Diploma can all be routes into higher education, as well as the traditional A levels.

By going into higher education, your child will be making a long-term investment in their future. Not only could it open up a wider choice of careers: they may earn more. Based on the value of money today, over their working life the average graduate will earn around £100,000 more, after tax, than someone with A levels who hasn't been to university. So even if no-one else from your family has been to university, there's no reason why your child shouldn't.

What can my child study?

There's a huge range of courses on offer, from ancient history to hospitality management to veterinary nursing. It's important that your child studies subjects they enjoy, but if they're planning to go to college or university they should check what subjects they'll need to get on the course they want. For example, if they're interested in a science course or career they may need GCSEs, A levels or equivalent qualifications in science subjects.

Does my child have to move away from home?

Not necessarily: many local colleges now offer higher education courses. Plenty of people stay at home while they're studying, and it can be convenient - as well as cheaper. On the other hand, moving away means a wider choice of courses - and it can help develop a sense of independence.

Money for university: a parent's guide

If your son or daughter is going to university there are costs your child will need to cover during their three or four years of study - but there's also financial support available to help them.

What financial help is available to full-time students?



There are three main sources of financial support available to new full-time students - student loans and grants from the government, and bursaries from universities and colleges.

Student loans have to be repaid when your child has left their course and started work, but grants and bursaries don't - regardless of how much your child receives.

Student loans

There are two different types of student loan. The Tuition Fee Loan covers the fees charged by the university or college, up to a maximum of £3,290 for 2010/11. The amount does not depend on household income.

The Maintenance Loan helps towards day-to-day living costs such as rent and travel. All eligible students can get a Maintenance Loan - whatever their household income.

Your child won't have to start repaying student loans until they have left their course and are earning more than £15,000 - equal to £288 a week or £1,250 a month.

Student loans accrue interest from the date they are paid out, up until they are repaid in full. The interest rate for student loans is set in September each year.

Maintenance Grants

Your child may also be able to get help with living costs through the Maintenance Grant. It's worth up to £2,906 for the academic year. Around 40 per cent of new, full-time students are expected to qualify for a full grant in 2010/11 - and many more could get a partial grant. For some groups of students, the Maintenance Grant is replaced by the Special Support Grant - meaning that students on lower incomes may be able to get a higher Maintenance Loan.

Bursaries

On top of student loans and Maintenance Grants, universities and colleges also offer bursaries or scholarships to a wide range of students. These don't have to be paid back.

Students paying maximum tuition fees, studying in England and receiving the full Maintenance Grant or Special Support Grant are guaranteed at least £329 for 2010/11, but they'll often get significantly more.

Payments may be made in cash or in kind - for example, reduced accommodation costs or a free computer.

Applying for student finance

Your son or daughter should make their application for financial support as soon as

possible after they've applied for a course - they don't need to wait until they have received an offer from a university or college. If they miss the deadline for applying, they risk not getting their money in time for the start of term.

Your role as a parent

If your child is classed as being dependent on you and they apply for types of financial help which are 'income assessed', you'll be asked to provide information about your own income in support of their application. You can find full information together with parents stories on www.direct.gov.uk/parents

Student Finance Calculator

If your child is planning to start a full-time course you can enter their details into the Student Finance Calculator for an idea of how much they're likely to get through student loans, grants and bursaries find this at www.direct.gov.uk/educationandlearning

Where can I find out more about higher education?

'Help your child into higher education', the Aimhigher guide for parents, has more information on higher education - including what your child can get out of it, how they can get into university or college and what student life is like. You can download a copy on www.direct.gov.uk or order one: by freephone on **0800 587 8500** by textphone on **0800 280 024**

Maintenance Grant: the facts

For 2010/11, around 40 per cent of new students are expected to qualify for the full Maintenance Grant - £2,906 in non-repayable support - with many more getting a partial grant.

Bursaries: the facts

Students getting the full Maintenance Grant and paying maximum tuition fees are entitled to a non-repayable bursary of at least £329 for 2010/11, or £319 for 2009/10.

Many universities offer considerably more than this. In 2008/09 the typical bursary for a student receiving the full Maintenance Grant on a course charging maximum tuition fees was £800.

Student loans: the facts

All eligible students can get student loans from the government - one to cover tuition fees, and one to help with living costs like rent and travel.

Students don't have to start paying them back until they've left their course and are earning over £15,000. So someone earning £18,000 (the average starting salary for a graduate) would pay back £5.19 a week.

Student Finance Calculator

If your child is planning to start a full-time course you can enter their details into the Student Finance Calculator for an idea of how much they're likely to get through student loans, grants and bursaries. www.direct.gov.uk/educationandlearning

WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)?

Southampton Solent University share their expertise in the following pages: The most common questions we are asked are: "What is Higher Education?" and "Why should I encourage my child to go into Higher Education?"

Higher education refers to studying for qualifications such as bachelor's degrees, higher national diplomas or foundation degrees, usually undertaken by students aged 18 and students can enter via many routes, such as A levels or through on-the-job training such as apprenticeships. Higher education can enable your son/daughter to take their education to the next level and fulfil their potential.

Studying at Higher level is challenging to all students. Employers look for key skills that studying at degree level teaches students for instance: communication, teamwork, problem solving and using information technology. These skills can be transferred into employment so students should be encouraged to take a degree they are interested in. If they wish to specialise in a certain subject eg law or engineering they will need to undertake a degree in that area.

Career prospects

Possessing a university qualification is an advantage both in terms of career prospects and progression. Employers know that a university qualification confers a higher standard of learning, as well as a broad range of transferable skills and competencies. By gaining such valuable skills, your son/daughter will have access to a broad range of interesting and fulfilling careers.



Earning potential

Undertaking a university course is an investment in the future. Graduates earn a greater starting salary than non-graduates and can expect their salary to rise at a faster rate. Ten years later, on average, university-qualified men earn 30% more and women 46% more than non-graduates.

Personal development

Student life is not all about studying, it's also about meeting new people, forming new friendships and making the most of the opportunities that university

can provide. Whether your son/daughter wants to move away from home or stay local, university will increase their life experiences through learning new skills and developing new interests, helping them become a more confident and well-rounded adult.

Choosing the right course

The range of courses available at university level can seem overwhelming, but you can help by taking an interest in your child's ideas and plans for the future, as well as discussing your own experiences of work and training. With so much variety, there's sure to be a course that fits their interests, talents and aspirations.

Expert advice – Careers advisers at school or college, or in your local Connexions or careers office, are a great place to start when you need to find out more about courses and careers.

Professional requirements – Some professions require specific qualifications.

It may be helpful to contact the professional body your son/daughter is interested in joining to get their advice.

Course format – Many courses offer a 'sandwich' year, where time is spent working in industry. Valuable work experience can give your son/daughter a head start when they graduate. What's more, such placements are usually salaried.

Research – Look at university prospectuses in detail: what compulsory modules form part of the course? You may be surprised by some of the content – our Football Studies degree includes

modules on related sociology and psychology.

Choosing the right university It is important that students choose the right university as well as the right course, as this is where they will be spending three or four important years.

Distance from home – How far away from home does your child want to study? The location of the university and its surroundings can be key, whether it's in the centre of a bustling city or in a quieter rural site, a self-contained campus or part of the general community. Accessibility and transport links need to be considered, as well as travel costs if they want to come home regularly.

Course choice – Certain courses, course content or modes of study are only available at certain universities. Entry requirements can also differ. Does the university offer exactly the right course? Does your son/daughter expect to meet the entry requirements of their chosen university?

Facilities – You will also want to bear in mind the facilities the institution offers, such as library, IT, sport and recreation, disability support and student welfare.

Open days – One of the best ways to find out what a university is like is simply to go and visit it. You will be able to get a flavour of the institution and have an opportunity to ask any questions. Universities welcome parents who choose to accompany their son/daughter.



How to apply

For students, the journey to higher education can be long – starting with deciding what to do and then taking all of the necessary steps until they are actually doing it. Your encouragement, guidance and support throughout the application process will prove invaluable.

When and how does my son/daughter apply for a university course?

Your son/daughter must apply through UCAS (Universities & Colleges Admissions Service). This facility and all course information can be found on the UCAS website: www.ucas.com

Where can I get more information if I want to help my son/daughter with their application?

The UCAS website (www.ucas.com) has lots more information on the application process as well as useful tips and guidance on completing the forms.

What is a 'personal statement'?

The personal statement is a student's opportunity to promote him/herself and to tell the university or college about their suitability for a particular course. The personal statement should demonstrate what your son/daughter will bring to the course and may include academic strengths, skills and relevant interests and experiences.

What if my son/daughter is taking a gap year/deferring entry?

Each year thousands of applicants opt to defer entry to university or college. Taking a gap year gives students a rare opportunity to enjoy new experiences and learn new skills. If your son/daughter wants to take a year out before starting their course, check with universities and colleges that they will accept a deferred entry application. If your son/daughter applies for deferred entry in 2010 (to start 2011), they must still apply by the relevant UCAS application deadline, and meet the conditions of any offers by late August 2010.

When will my son/daughter hear back from universities?

Universities and colleges aim to send decisions on all applications received by the January deadline before 31 March.

What happens if my son/

TOP TIPS FOR UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS...

Your son/daughter should...

1. Make sure their application is organised and literate, with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation – an application filled with errors will give a negative impression of your son/daughter's skills and the effort they have put into the application.
2. Check university prospectuses and websites, and the UCAS website, for entry profiles – these usually explain the criteria and qualities they want students to demonstrate.
3. Explain why they have chosen the course – this is particularly important when they are applying for a subject not studied before.
4. Explain why they want to go to university.
5. Give details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work of relevance to their chosen course.
6. List hobbies, interests and social activities that demonstrate their skills and abilities.
7. Give details of non-accredited skills and achievements of which they are particularly proud, such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards or being selected for a sports team.
8. Include positions of responsibility that they hold or have held both in and out of school, such as prefect.
9. Be careful if including jokes/humorous quotes – admissions staff may not share their sense of humour!
10. Not lie – if your son/daughter exaggerates they may get caught out at interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.

TOP 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK AT OPEN DAYS...

1. What financial support is available for studying at university?
2. If my child has problems while at university, what support is available (in terms of health, academic needs, pastoral care, special needs, dyslexia or physical disabilities)?
3. How safe is the university? What measures are in place to ensure student safety?
4. What is the university accommodation like – facilities, location, fees and availability?
5. What support is there to help my son/daughter to get a job upon graduation?
6. What extracurricular clubs, societies and activities are on offer?
7. Will my child need to purchase special equipment for their course? If so, how much will that cost?
8. How accessible is the university from home?
9. What are the term dates and lecture hours?
10. How is the course taught and assessed?

Of course, the questions you will want to ask will be very specific to the needs and circumstances of your child, and some will be answered simply from looking around the university. If you have a question that you forget to ask at the open day, you can always get in touch after the event.



daughter does not meet the academic requirement of an offer?

If your son/daughter has no offers, has declined all their offers, or the university or college has turned them down, they can apply for a different choice through UCAS 'Extra', which runs from the end of February though to the end of June.

If your son/daughter does not get an offer through Extra, don't panic, they will still be able to apply through the UCAS 'Clearing' process, which runs from early July to late September. This is the process whereby an institution will make all their places on available courses open to applicants who have not already been accepted elsewhere. Some universities offer courses through Clearing with slightly lower grade requirements, so your son/daughter may be able to shop around. However, they should be aware that all courses are operated on a first-come, first-served basis – so they'll need to make a quick decision!

For more information on Extra and Clearing visit www.ucas.com or www.solent.ac.uk/clearing

Money

The cost of going to university can be a big worry, but there's plenty of financial support on offer from the government and from universities to help ensure that financial circumstances aren't a barrier to gaining a higher education qualification.

How much are tuition fees?

For 2010 entry, universities and colleges in England will charge new students up to £3,290 a year for degree courses. Most universities and colleges of higher education, including Southampton Solent University, charge variable fees.

Amounts charged may vary between different universities and colleges.

What other costs will my son/daughter need to pay?

As well as tuition fees for their course, students will also have to pay living costs, such as rent, food, books, transport and entertainment.

I'm worried that my son/daughter won't be able to afford fees...

Cost is a concern for most potential students and their parents, but your son/daughter

will be able to take out a student loan to cover the tuition fees charged by the university or college. This will only begin to be repaid after graduation. For further information regarding funding please visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

How are student loans repaid?

Students only start repaying student loans once they have finished studying and are earning more than £15,000 a year. They may even be eligible to defer repayment for up to five years. The loan will be increased in line with the rate of inflation, but commercial rates of interest will not be charged. Further information is available at www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk

Is there any other financial assistance available?

In addition to student loans, financial help is available in the form of grants and awards. These can vary depending on the chosen university or college and personal circumstances. Maintenance grants – to assist with living costs – are available to students and are targeted at those from low-income families. These grants do not have to be repaid and eligible students are assessed on their or their parents' income. In 2010, around one-third of eligible students are expected to be entitled to a full maintenance grant of up to around £2,906 per year. For more information, go to www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance or you can contact our expert funding advisers in the University's Students 1st Information Centre on 023 8031 9427 or at welfare@solent.ac.uk

What scholarships and bursaries are on offer?

English universities are required to provide bursaries if they charge UK students the maximum tuition fee per year for a course. To find out about the bursaries offered at Southampton Solent University – currently up to £750 – please visit www.solent.ac.uk/fees

Scholarships are grants given to students by institutions or another sponsoring body, such as a workplace. We have two scholarships to assist students with the cost of university, the Lisa Wilson Scholarship and the Sports Scholarship. More details about these scholarships, including qualifying criteria, can be found at www.solent.ac.uk/scholarships

Bursaries and scholarships do not normally have to be repaid, although qualification for them will depend on personal circumstances.

When should my son/daughter apply for financial support?

Applying for financial support can be quite a long process so it is important to apply early. The deadline for new students is the end of June, so the sooner

your son/daughter submits their application, the better. Applications after June are still processed, but students may not get the first installment in time for the start of their course.

The deadline for making an application for financial support is nine months after you first start the course. Applications can now be made online at www.studentfinance.direct.gov.uk. Entitlement is assessed each year, so your son/daughter must remember to reapply every year of their course.

Do many students have part-time jobs?

Lots of students choose to undertake part-time and casual work while at university. In addition to gaining skills for life after university or college, the extra income can help to



pay for necessities, reduce borrowing, maintain a social life and buy a few luxuries. Using a part-time job to cut down on borrowing is a sound investment, as it reduces the debt that will need to be paid off after graduation. However, to ensure studies are not adversely affected, most institutions advise that students not work more than 10–15 hours a week.

Further information on finance is available at:

www.solent.ac.uk/fees

www.gsc.org.uk (for Social Work bursaries)

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Student life



TOP 10 TIPS FOR MANAGING MONEY...

Your son/daughter should be encouraged to:

1. Use their anticipated income and expenditure to work out a budget – be realistic about spending patterns and avoid underestimating. Visit www.solent.ac.uk/welfare/finance/budgeting.aspx for more information.
2. Investigate student bank accounts – these are specifically designed for students and offer useful extras such as an interest-free overdraft as well as other incentives.
3. Join the NUS (National Union of students) and invest in an NUS Extra card to get exclusive discounts on books, travel, music, computer equipment, events, clothing and more.
4. Look out for student discounts offered by shops and organisations for products and services.
5. Look out for internal jobs and part-time work that will not adversely affect their studies.
6. Use free-to-use ATMs – some charge a fee of £1.50 for each withdrawal.
7. Work out what they can live without or cut back on so they can make savings.
8. Keep a running total of how much money they have in their bank account.
9. Not be tempted to use credit or store cards which charge very high interest rates and are hard to pay off.
10. Not be pressured into spending money they don't have for social reasons.

At times, university life can be as challenging and anxious for parents as it is for students. The transition can be difficult to manage, but support is on hand to ensure that everyone's experience of higher education is as rewarding and fulfilling as possible.

The following advice is specific to Southampton Solent University but all universities have support services available so do encourage your child to seek them out if necessary, their details will be on the university website.

What support is available for students with disabilities or dyslexia?

Southampton Solent University offers a Disability Support Service which aims to remove barriers to learning and enable students to enjoy the full use of all facilities at the University. We provide a range of learning support, including individual academic support in the form of dyslexia tutors, note-takers and mentors. The quality of our support was recognised by a Disability Equality Achievement Award for Public Services in 2006. The University's Disability Equality Scheme sets out how the University will ensure that disabled people receive fair and equitable services. For more information contact our friendly and well-informed Disability Co-ordinator: telephone **023 8031 9201** or email study_help@solent.ac.uk

Will my son/daughter be able to worship or pray at University?

The Chaplaincy at Southampton Solent University provides a faith room available for prayer or reflection, and our two chaplains are on hand if your son/daughter has a problem or something to share.

What if my son/daughter is unwell?

To access NHS services, all students are required to be registered with a doctor near to where they are living whilst at the University. Information about local doctors and dentists can be found in the Students 1st Information Centre.

Who can my son/daughter speak to if they have money worries?

Our Students' 1st Information Centre (visit **RM050** or call **023 8031 9427**) is the hub of the University's comprehensive support network. It offers a daily drop in service where students with money concerns can talk to one of our trained



Student Funding Advisers. Our dedicated team will be able to provide information about further financial support to which you son/daughter may be entitled, as well as offering advice and support on debt-related issues.

What careers support is available?

The University's Careers & Jobshop service offers a range of benefits to students and graduates. As well as offering advice on job-seeking, creating CVs and interview techniques, the team of expert advisers can help students find part-time or casual work, relevant work experience placements, work abroad and voluntary positions. It has made a lifetime commitment to all students, enabling this support to continue far beyond graduation.

What support is available if my son/daughter has study problems?

It is important to speak to the tutor about any specific concerns with learning material. All students can also access the free and confidential services offered by the University's Study Assistance unit. There's a helpdesk service as well as tutorials, maths workshops and technology assistance. Students can book an appointment with one of the advisers or attend a drop-in session.

Is there any part-time work available through the University?

Our Careers & Jobshop service advertises a wide variety of part-time jobs and casual work available at the university as well as with external employers.

To receive regular updates of vacancies via email, students simply need to register on the Student Portal – the exclusive online gateway to the University's services and resources.

Does the University monitor attendance?

The University is legally obliged to monitor student attendance – if a student is not participating we are bound to inform certain organisations, such as the Higher Education Funding Council or Student Loans Company. We also appreciate how difficult and demoralising it is for a student to catch up with work once they have fallen behind. Students are therefore sometimes asked to sign-in to lectures and tutorials.

If a student is identified as frequently missing classes they will receive a phone call, email or letter from their Faculty's Student Support Network Officer. If the student is experiencing any problems they are offered support; if not, they are made aware that their lack of attendance is being observed and further more serious consequences may result should this continue.

Work placement availability
We encourage and support our students to take part in credit-bearing work placements, ranging from year-long salaried placements in a related business to a few hours of voluntary work in the local community.

The University's Careers & Jobshop has a team of Employment Advisers dedicated to helping students find work placements relevant to their

studies or career goals. Our close links and informal partnerships with business and organisations enable us to provide a wealth of work placement opportunities, ranging from positions with influential regional employers such as the city council, high-profile national organisations such as the Ordnance Survey, and prestigious global leaders such as IBM.

What happens if my son/daughter drops out of University?

If your child decides that university really isn't for them, we suggest that they first speak to their course tutor and one of our Student Advisers in the Students 1st Information Centre, just to ensure there is no underlying problem that can be resolved. If after discussions your son/daughter is certain they would like to leave, we understand that you will be keen to know for what costs they will be liable. Tuition fee liability can range from 10–100% of the course fee, depending on when the Faculty Registrar is formally notified. We have established processes for managing student withdrawals, which are dealt with on an individual basis – plenty of support is always on hand.

What happens if my son/daughter wants to change course?

Your son/daughter should first contact their course tutor to discuss the situation. We also advise that they speak with one of our Student Funding Advisers about any implications a change of course may have on their funding position, and to a Careers Adviser to ensure that the course

they now want to pursue is the most appropriate for their long term goals. If and when your son/daughter will be able to transfer onto another course will depend on a number of factors, including how far into the academic year they are, how similar the course is to the one on which they enrolled and, of course, whether a place is available.

My son/daughter seems very unhappy, what should I do?

It is very difficult to hear that your child is unhappy, especially if you feel they are too far away for you to really help them. However, please be reassured that there are many trained people on hand to help and support your son/daughter should they become unhappy while studying here. As a first port of call we would advise you to encourage your son/daughter to visit the Students 1st Information Centre. There are many reasons why your child may be unhappy, and our approachable and experienced Student Advisers can offer assistance and guidance – all in total confidentiality. They will be able to determine how we can best help, including referring your son/daughter to one of the many services we offer, be it counselling, student funding and debt advice, mental health support, study assistance or disability support.

Who do I contact if I'm worried about my son/daughter?

We understand that there may be times when you are concerned about your son/daughter's well-being, especially if you haven't heard from them in a while. Again, the University's Students 1st Information Centre is your best point of contact. However, it is important to note that due to legal restraints we are unable to discuss or provide information on students' personal matters with third parties, and that includes parents. This means we will be unable to provide you with any information in relation to their attendance, health and performance. Our Student Advisers will be happy to ask your child to make contact with you, but unfortunately your son/daughter is under no obligation to do so. We hope that the information provided on these web pages will make you aware of all the help and support that is available to your child while they are studying with us, and will enable you to encourage them to seek out the appropriate services should they need them.

http://www.solent.ac.uk/parents/parents_guide.aspx

Full information on the university and courses offered at www.solent.ac.uk



Smart Parents would like to thank Southampton Solent University for their excellent advice for parents. You can see the full article on their website http://www.solent.ac.uk/parents/parents_guide.aspx And full information on the university and courses offered at www.solent.ac.uk

HOW TO HANDLE PARENT'S EVENING

As a parent, you can make an enormous difference to your child's chances of success in school, at home and in their later life.

Working in partnership with your child's school can help them to succeed. Please don't be worried about speaking to any or all of your children's teachers, remember they are exactly the same as you but have chosen teaching as a career as against what you have chosen. They do not think they have all the answers but teaching is their specialism just as medicine, retail, engineering etc. is ours. We are all in this together, they want the best for your child just as you do.

Pupil reports and parents' consultation evenings

Pupil reports and parents' consultation evenings (also known as parent evenings) play an important part in making sure you are kept up to date with your child's progress.

Parents' consultation evenings are a chance for you to discuss how your children are doing in class and in school generally with their teachers, and to decide how best to work together to support your children's achievement in school.

Your child's latest school report should help you to identify issues you want to discuss. It will contain information on your child's progress and levels of achievement in the subjects they are studying, together with details of their attendance, behaviour and - where appropriate - special needs. From September 2008 all schools have been working towards making this information available online, as well as in existing ways like

traditional reports and face-to-face contact.

However, these aren't the only ways to keep informed. Remember that talking to your children about school can benefit them. If there is anything you want to discuss with your child's teacher, and are unable to attend parents evening or it may take up too much time, most will be happy to arrange a time to do so.

Parent's evenings are designed so that teachers and parents may come together and discuss children's educational achievements but that is only part a child's life experiences at school. Their experiences at school will help them learn more about themselves whilst on the path to adulthood, therefore it is essential that parents understand how their child is doing, both academically and in the broader school life. What they enjoy, what they may be struggling with, and the most effective ways in which to support them on their journey.

During a meeting with your child's teacher you will have the opportunity to set targets for future learning. The educational system will undoubtedly have changed somewhat since you were last at school, and may seem complex. There might be new teaching methods or new topics; your child's teacher will be aware of this, so ask if you ever feel unsure about something that has been mentioned.

Seeing your child from another point of view is advantageous; as a parent you will normally see them from one perspective and may end up missing something of value. Staying open minded and not becoming overly sensitive to any constructive criticism at parent's evening will only improve your child's educational attainment. Look at it as entering into the world of your child - seeing where they spend their time, meeting the people they interact with; this could be a refreshing and eye-opening experience!

In the same way, getting to know your child's teacher is a priority. This is a person who has regular influence in their life, and is also a primary disciplinarian. Taking advantage of parent's evening as a way to become familiar may help you to understand some of the things your child is being taught, and can in turn assist you in helping them learn whilst at home.

Many schools have a display of work out at parent's evenings, so you might have the pleasure of seeing some of your child's work. When this isn't available you should feel free to ask the teacher if you can have a look at work they have recently completed. It is joyful and often quite surprising to see how much knowledge your child has acquired over the school year. A useful tip is to have a look at the teacher's comments and then

see how your child has gone about tackling tasks; this is also valuable for helping them with homework.

Ask the teacher if they have any suggestions to do with your child's learning; together you are a team who will inspire your child's education, and working together will only serve to benefit them.

Try not to be late to a parent's evening - appointments are often made to avoid queues and confusion and so disrupting the system may lead to things becoming disorganised. If you can't make the appointment then it is fine to book for a more appropriate time, schools are always happy when parents want to take an active role.

Getting involved with your child's education

Home-school agreements

Home-school agreements can form the basis of the partnership between you and your child's school. They help to make clear what you and your child's school can expect from each other, setting out:

- the school's responsibilities, aims and values
- parents' and carers' responsibilities in supporting the school
- what the school expects of its pupils

Helping out at school

Some schools offer parents the opportunity to help out in the class-

room, with after-school activities and with school events or trips. Pupils can benefit from the support offered by an extra adult, and helping out can be a good way to find out more about what your child is doing at school.

Depending on what exactly you will be doing and how regularly you intend to help out, the school may ask for your permission to arrange a check on your police records.

Parent-teacher associations

Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) are groups made up of parents, teachers and sometimes others within the school community. They provide a range of opportunities for you to get involved in school life, many of which don't take up too much of your time.

Different PTAs will focus on different types of activity, but many organise:

- fundraising for extra items or services to provide additional opportunities for pupils
- social events which allow parents to get to know each other
- meetings to inform parents about issues in education

Ask your child's teacher about getting involved in your local PTA. If your school doesn't have a PTA, the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations' website has advice on setting one up.

A GROWING OCCUPATION: CREATIVE MEDIA

It would be a rare teenager indeed who had not at some stage considered a career in the media. Whether it be working as a journalist, performing in front of the camera or directing proceedings from behind it, jobs in the media are in high demand among school leavers and graduates.

While the broader UK economy may be struggling, employment in the UK's Creative occupations, a sub-set of which is Creative Media, has been growing at two per cent per year in recent times, compared with an average of one per cent for the whole economy.

But while the Creative Media Industries remain an attractive and vibrant sector for young people to work in,

competition is fierce, and entry routes are often convoluted.

With more than 13,000 media courses at Further and Higher Education levels on offer in the UK, it is a daunting task for a school leaver trying to choose the programme that best suits their aspirations, and will best prepare them for a career in the industry after they graduate.

Skillset's research has found that, in terms of the Creative Media Industries, too many courses produce graduates without the most relevant skills. Skillset has answered this call by working with Further and Higher Education institutions to develop a network of Skillset Media and Screen Academies that has drawn together creative education partnerships from colleges and universities across the UK. The institutions in this network are centres of excellence in television, film and interactive media that have undergone a rigorous assessment process by Skillset and panels of industry experts. This makes sure that they

provide the most industry-relevant training, combined with up-to-date learning environments and strong links with industry.

The Screen and Media Academies are spread across the UK, with at least one in each nation or region. Skillset has also accredited 25 individual courses in Animation, Computer Games and Screenwriting, which are also spread across the UK.

We have signposted all of these courses and institutions by awarding them the Skillset Tick. The Tick is a kite mark of quality that serves as a clear indicator for parents, students and employers that these programmes possess all of the qualities essential to make them leaders in their field.

BAFTA award-winning actor, writer and director Noel Clarke, whose credits include Dr Who, Kidulthood, Adulthood and the forthcoming 4.3.2.1 (to be released June 2), is a passionate advocate of providing industry-appropriate training for

young people trying to break into the Creative Media Industries. As a spokesperson for the Skillset Tick, Noel is urging students, parents and employers to 'Pick the Tick'.

He says: "Working in this industry is not all glitz and glamour, but that's beside the point. Even if it was, it's still work, and people have to put in the work to succeed. I think that young people need to realise that there are many jobs that need doing, and by picking the Tick, they can learn more about these."

Noel has recently joined with award-winning film and television director Steve Barron (Merlin, Coneheads) and renowned cinematographer Mike Eley (Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang) to produce a promotional film for the Skillset Tick.

He adds: "What we need are new, young, fresh people in the industry to really make sure it remains the powerhouse that it is."

For more information about Skillset's network of Screen and Media Acad-



Mike Eley - Cinematographer

emies, and comprehensive listings of all of the Ticked courses that are being offered in the UK please visit Skillset's courses database at:

<http://courses.skillset.org>

And if you would like to find out more about the range of job roles available in the Creative Media Industries, please visit <http://skillset.org/careers>



Noel Clarke & Steve Barron
"Tick" Star and Director

PLANNING: THEIR FUTURE?



What do they want from their future?

Does your son or daughter want to join a profession where caring for the environment is an important part of their job? Do they want to make decisions that affect communities and how people live in a positive way? Do they want a diverse career, that gives them the opportunity to work at home or abroad, in different sectors, with the chance to specialise? A career in town and country planning offers all that – plus the chance to really make a difference.

What is planning?

From protecting our coastlines to developing greener energy solutions and creating better homes, planning helps make better places.

You probably know that planners get involved in things like traffic one way systems and house extensions, but did you know planners are also working on the 2012 Olympic site, designing skateboard parks and tackling climate change?



Jayshree Patel

Jayshree Patel, a Graduate Planner at Savills, says “It’s an excellent career path to go down. Think carefully about what interests you as planning is extremely varied, but there’s definitely something for everyone.”

What sort of career is the right one?

When your son or daughter is choosing a career, it’s really important to find something that suits their skills and personality. If they like getting out and about, or working with people, a job that keeps them at a desk all day isn’t likely to make them happy.

A career in planning offers the opportunity to make a positive difference to the world around them, and whatever type of person your son/daughter is, there’s a role that will suit them. If they work well with people and want to get involved with their local community, a role in community engagement could be for them. If they’re into design and making things work better, maybe urban design is the right choice. If they like negotiating with people and making decisions then development management could be ideal for them.

What do planners do?

There are many different areas of planning, which focus on different aspects of making places better. For example, planning policy is about developing a vision for an area through plans and policies.

Bethan Jackson, 22, is a Homes & Communities Agency Graduate Trainee who works in housing and regeneration, and says “I am motivated to work in a career which seeks to improve the built and social environment to enable people to live in places that they want to live and can afford to live”.

Regeneration planners work on proposals for new development that really do breathe life back into an area. They can be involved in a wide range of projects, from finding new uses for existing buildings to creating street improvements or making sure a new business facility is located in the right place.

Urban designers work at the point where planning meets architecture – they look at the design of individual buildings, how buildings relate to the street and beyond that, to the space between buildings where everyday life takes place.

Lynsey Whitley, an Urban Designer for Salford City Council, finds that “The variety of people and the characters you meet add to the rich diversity of the job. Each project is different and brings with it its own design challenges, everyday you learn something new.”

But planning doesn’t only happen in cities and urban areas - local authorities and private planning consultancies right across the UK employ planners in an incredibly diverse range of roles. Planners working in heritage and conservation protect the historic environment, environmental planners look at how to manage and reduce waste, and planners in coastal areas manage flood risk and protect our coastline.



Sarah Foster

Sarah Foster works for the Peak District National Park Authority and says “I’m making decisions that influence one of the country’s greatest natural assets and I regularly get out and about on site visits in one of the most beautiful areas of the UK.”

You can find out more about all the different areas in which planners work in our booklet, “Planning your future” at www.rtpi.org.uk/careers.

Where do you want to go?

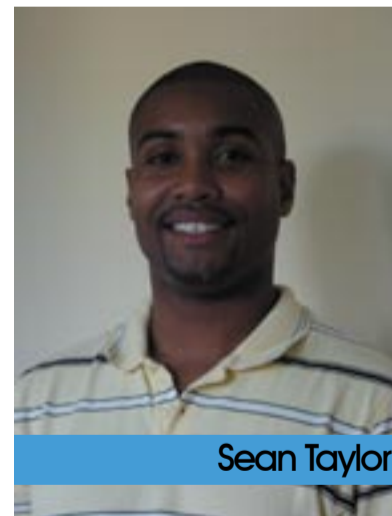
One of the great things about a career in planning is the different situations planners find themselves in, from dealing with high profile projects to being in exciting places.



Simon Bradbury

Simon Bradbury, a planner at Transport for London, is working on travel plans for the London Olympics; “It’s incredibly exciting to develop innovative strategies using the very latest thinking while working on a unique project that will have the whole world watching.”

Planners trained in the UK often have the opportunity to work abroad, like Chris Ferrary, whose work in Malaysia included the re-building of Kuala Lumpur International Airport. A career in planning not only enables you to move around the world, but also around the profession, giving your son or daughter real flexibility to develop their career.



Sean Taylor

Sean Taylor, a freelance planning consultant, became interested in planning after a GCSE geography field trip to his Local Authority, and started work as a Planning Technician. He combined full time work with part-time study (supported by his employer), gaining an HNC, Certificate of Professional Planning

and finally an MSc in Town Planning. This enabled Sean to become a Chartered Town Planner and be promoted to the role of Senior Planner. He then moved into the private sector as a Senior Planning Consultant at SLR Consulting Ltd. Sean says “Depending on your own personal aspirations and aims you can progress your planning career (whether in the private or public sector) to suit your own goals.”

How do you get started?

To become a professionally qualified Chartered Town Planner your son/daughter will need to study an undergraduate or postgraduate course accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). RTPI is the professional body for people working in planning, like the Law Society is for solicitors. Becoming a Chartered Town Planner demonstrates professionalism; it enhances a planner’s credibility among colleagues, customers and clients and could help future earning potential. You can find out more about the RTPI and how to join at www.rtpi.org.uk/membership.

But there are a wide range of ways into a career in planning. Planners don’t need specific subjects at GCSE or A-Level (although subjects like environmental studies, geography, history or ICT would be useful) and can also study a non-planning subject as an undergraduate – they can always do an RTPI-accredited postgraduate degree later. You can find out more about planning courses at www.rtpi.org.uk/education.

Jobs in planning are available in most areas of the UK, working for private, public and voluntary sector employers. As Sean’s experience shows, with work and study you can progress within the profession. A typical entry level salary would be around £15,000-£20,000, but there are director level jobs in planning with salaries of £100,000.

Planning – their future

Does your son or daughter want a job that makes a difference to the environment, to communities and to their career prospects? That gives them choices about where to work, a wide choice of specialisms, a professional qualification and the ability to progress? Then they should make a career in planning their future.



THE ACA, A PASSPORT TO SUCCESS!

For students aiming to succeed in business, the ACA from the ICAEW is the ticket to a great start in an exciting variety of careers.

The ACA is the professional accountancy qualification from the Institute of Chartered accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). The ACA is highly regarded, across all industry sectors, as one of the leading business and finance qualifications. Students, whilst earning a competitive salary, will gain key skills across all areas in business giving them access to a wide range of amazing career opportunities. The ACA helps students to balance work and study, allowing individuals to put their technical knowledge into practice, preparing them to fly high in any industry.

Chartered accountants' experience, knowledge and business expertise is required all around the world. Every organisation across all industry sectors from practice to commerce, the public sector and not-for-profit organisations all work with, or employ chartered accountants. Therefore, once qualified with a prestigious qualification such as the ACA, student's opportunities are endless.

Training contract - The runway to success

In order to complete the ACA students will need to secure a training contract with an ICAEW authorised training employer. The training contract takes a minimum of three years and outlines the obligation and commitment between student and employer to complete the ACA. In exchange for commitment and a strong desire to succeed in becoming an ACA, employers will finance the tuition, exams and pay individuals a competitive salary, which can increase as they progress through their training.

Everyday students will receive hands on work experience working alongside qualified chartered accountants allowing them to put their knowledge and theory into practice. As well as completing work experience, study and exams, students are encouraged to develop professional skills such as communication, presentation skills and decision making abilities. Otherwise known as the Institutes initial professional development (IPD) this, along with the support from their employer and the ICAEW, helps students prepare for the working world. The thorough and integrated approach ensures that students have all the skills needed to reach their career destination.

Entry requirements - Have they got the ticket to succeed?

Entry requirements will differ between employers. As a guide the ICAEW suggests the following (international equivalents are accepted):

- three GCSE's C grade or above including an A or B in maths and English
- a minimum of two A-levels, in any subject (general studies is not accepted by most employers)
- a minimum of 260 UCAS points, many larger employers look for a score of 300+
- a first or 2:1 in any degree discipline.

Did you know? Students do not need an A-level in maths or an accountancy related degree to be eligible for the ACA!

Entry routes - How to reach their career destination?

Students can begin their journey into the ACA via a range of different entry routes. Whether they decide to go to university or start training straight from school, there are a number of options available to them.

School leavers; Students who obtain an ACA training contract straight after their A- levels can qualify in three to five years. This allows them to take an exciting step towards a lifelong career a lot quicker than their peers who decide to go to university. Individuals will need a minimum of 260 UCAS points to be accepted onto a training contract.

AAT-ACA Fast track; Students can go on to study for the AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) at a college or a training firm after they have finished their A-levels. The AAT takes two years to complete and provides individuals with credits working towards some ACA modules enabling them to Fast Track. The ACA could only take a further two years after the AAT meaning that individuals choosing this option could gain two accounting qualifications in just four years.

The Certificate in Finance Accounting and Business (CFAB); CFAB can take between one and two years to complete. CFAB is ideal

for individuals wanting a taster of accountancy as it provides a strong knowledge base for those who wish to progress onto the ACA. CFAB does not require students to have any previous qualifications and can be started at any time of their career.

Graduate; The majority of ACA students are graduates, who leave university with a wide range of degree disciplines. You do not need to have studied accountancy or finance at degree level to become an ACA, although relevant degrees can entitle individuals to claim credits for some of the ACA professional modules. Individuals will need a minimum of a 2:1 degree to be accepted onto an ACA training contract, training from graduate level will usually take three years.

If a great salary, career success and the opportunity to be a business leader is what appeals, perhaps your child should consider the ACA.

Find out more about the ACA
T +44 (0)1908 248 040 E careers@icaew.com
icaew.com/careers

The journey of a professional

Kenneth Osborne, ACA Director of Finance and Administration, RSNO



I attended Linlithgow Academy and St Mary's Music School in Edinburgh where I studied A- level Music, Higher Maths, English, Physics and Chemistry. After school I attended the Royal Northern College of Music, training as a musician. Although I had a keen interest in music, I left college working as a care assistant in old people's homes and after a while decided to train as an accountant.

My training was fairly conventional, I was in my late 20's by then and wanted to qualify as soon as possible and the ICAEW offered a well defined route over three years, I was accepted onto a training contract with a small practice firm based in Manchester where I worked in audit. After I qualified I moved into the business sector taking roles as a finance and general manager in the leisure and property sector.

I now work for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra as the Director of Finance & Administration. I am the only qualified accountant on staff and my role is very broad with no typical day. My qualification has been absolutely crucial to my career progression. It's opened doors which otherwise would have been shut. That said, being an ACA is just the starting point, and it's the experience you gain and the contributions you make to organisations which will determine your future career.

A lot of people are surprised to hear that I've gone from a career as a musician to accountancy, but I can honestly say I don't regret the decision at all. Working in the finance department you get to see something of almost every aspect of a company and I've never stopped enjoying it.

THE ACA
GIVES STUDENTS
A FLYING START
IN THEIR CAREERS.



The ACA. Qualified to succeed

Students with the ambition to achieve great things deserve one of the leading business and finance qualifications, the ACA from the ICAEW. The ACA opens up a world of opportunity, with the chance to work in any industry sector. The ACA helps students get their career in business off the ground.

To find out more:
T +44 (0)1908 248 040
icaew.com/careers





HEADstart Programmes
Flying Start Degree
1NSIGHT Days

Requirements:
Minimum of 280
UCAS tariff or
equivalent depending
on entry route.

Career Insights and Opportunities 2010

Got an enquiring mind and a keen interest in business? Then discover how much a world leading professional services firm can offer you. If you also have a strong team ethic and plenty of drive, you could soon be making the most of all your potential on one of our programmes.

- Our HEADstart Programmes in Tax and Assurance are designed for school and college leavers and career changers.
- Our Flying Start Degree at Newcastle University, which combines study with paid work placements, will help you qualify as a Chartered Accountant faster.
- Our 1NSIGHT Day gives you loads of information about what we do and where we do it so you can work out which of our career options interests you most.

If you're as curious as we expect you to be, you'll want to find out more.

pwc.com/uk/careers

Text: PwC to 85792 to visit our website on your mobile

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We value diversity in our people.

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS 

APPRENTICES LEFT IN DARK

SURVEY SHOWS MORE YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD CONSIDER AN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME IF THEY HAD MORE INFORMATION

Despite rising youth unemployment, research commissioned by Lifetime shows that 80 per cent of 16-18 year olds are not being advised by a careers advisor, parent or teacher on the full range of government funded apprenticeships available to them.

Of those asked, 66 per cent didn't know where to find any information about doing an apprenticeship in their chosen career, yet 80 per cent would be happy to consider this form of training to help them get a job.

These new results suggest that many more young people could be training towards employment if only they were receiving adequate advice on the options available to them. With the UK rate of unemployment for 16-24 year olds standing at 16.1 per cent, above the European average of 15.9 per cent, careers advisor's need to be made more aware of



training opportunities and where to direct young people for more information.

With the introduction of level 2 apprenticeships and the increased investment made by the Government since 1997, there has been a major improvement in the number of apprentices and in the quality of apprenticeships. According to the National Apprenticeship Service, only 24 per cent of learners completed the full programmes in 2001. Today, the figure stands at 63 per cent.

Lifetime takes a thousand learners each year through its Centre of Excellence apprenticeships in fitness instructing and activity leadership. Of those who complete the programme, around 75 per cent go onto either a paid or voluntary work placement. Yet, Lifetime and other providers of apprenticeships could train many more. In fact, the Government has set a target for more than 900,000 learners to complete a full apprenticeship by 2010/11. This is where career advisor's play a crucial role in communicating the benefits of apprenticeships to both young people and employers.

Recent research by CQM Learning shows that 77 per cent of employers believe apprenticeships make them more competitive. Almost 90 per cent feel apprenticeships lead to a more motivated and satisfied workforce and 57 per cent report a high proportion of their apprentices going on to management positions within the company, resulting in higher staff retention.

"While it is encouraging that a high percentage of young people view apprenticeships as a credible and effective route to employment, it is disappointing they are not receiving enough information on the vast array of opportunities available and how to get started", says Nigel Wallace, Director of Training at Lifetime.

"This could be simply down to the fact that careers advisor's are not being informed about apprenticeships and the benefits they bring to both individuals and employers. At Lifetime, we offer government-funded, leisure-based apprenticeships across England and have already trained more than 2,000 people in the last 14 months but we could train more. The resource is available but the problem seems to be that young people are not being signposted to us."

Lifetime is working with a number of Connexions centres across the UK and, from those relationships, is seeing great referrals through to its apprenticeship programmes. In order to continue to grow and develop these positive results, Lifetime offers a marketing toolkit for careers advisor's to help increase awareness, suggest appropriate training and provide reports and case studies on successful young adults who have been referred to Lifetime from Connexions.

Lifetime trains over 12,000 people every year. In addition to its Centre of Excellence apprenticeships, Lifetime also develops the skills and knowledge of people already in the industry through its work-based learning apprenticeship programmes and distance learning awards and diplomas. Lifetime works with some of the biggest national operators including LA fitness, Fitness First, DC Leisure, David



Lloyd Leisure, SLM, Virgin Active and Hilton to continue its employees' career development through work-based learning.

Thousands of places on Lifetime's unique government funded apprenticeships in fitness instructing and activity leadership are available to 16-18 year olds across the country. After a three-week, full-time

tutor-led study programme, apprentices have the opportunity to gain employment or a paid or voluntary work placement while completing their full NVQ in approximately 12 weeks. Learners also have the opportunity to receive £95 a week supplementary training allowance whilst completing their NVQ in the workplace over a 12 week period.



Careers advisor's wanting advice on apprenticeship opportunities in the leisure sector, a marketing toolkit or training can call Lifetime on 0845 123 8508. For more information on Lifetime visit www.lifetimehf.co.uk

By Mena Farag

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND EXCLUSIONS

Your child's school should have a written policy setting out the standards of behaviour it expects. The policy should outline what the school will do if your child's behaviour falls below these standards.

Promoting good behaviour

All pupils in a school benefit when behaviour is good. High standards of behaviour are important in helping children to feel safe and learn well, and parents and carers play a key part in this.

The government advises schools to focus on promoting positive behaviour, helping to build self-discipline and encouraging respect for others. But schools also need sanctions to deter pupils from misbehaving.

Behaviour policies

Schools should review their behaviour policies regularly and publicise them to parents, staff and pupils. Behaviour policies should include a code of conduct for pupils. Rules on conduct can apply before and after school as well as during the school day. They can set expectations for how pupils will behave in corridors, in bus queues and at lunch and break times as well as in the classroom.

Sanctions

Schools have a legal right to impose reasonable sanctions if a pupil misbehaves. Sanctions a school might use include:

- a reprimand
- a letter to parents or carers
- removal from a class or group
- loss of privileges
- confiscating something belonging to your child if it's inappropriate for school (for example, a mobile phone or music player)
- detention

Discipline and physical contact

Teachers can't punish pupils physically, but can physically



restrain them where it's necessary to stop a pupil injuring him or herself or someone else, damaging property or causing serious disruption.

Certain members of school staff can search a pupil suspected of carrying a weapon, with or without their consent.

Your child and detention

Detentions can take place during school hours, at lunchtime, after school or at weekends. If your child fails to attend without a reasonable excuse, the school may give them a more severe punishment.

You are entitled to 24 hours' written notice of a detention that takes place outside normal school hours, so you can make

arrangements for transport or childcare. The notice should tell you why the detention was given and how long your child will have to stay at school.

If your child cannot attend the detention, you can explain your reasons to your child's teacher or headteacher. They may reconsider the detention in certain circumstances, such as:

- the detention falls on an important religious day for your family
- you're concerned about the length and safety of the route between school and home
- you can't reasonably make alternative arrangements for collecting your child from school

Fixed period exclusions

A child who gets into serious

trouble at school can be excluded for a fixed period of time. Schools can exclude a child if:

- they have seriously broken school rules
- allowing them to stay in school would seriously harm their education or welfare, or the education or welfare of other pupils

Some other points to bear in mind are that:

- only the headteacher or acting headteacher can exclude a child
- your child can't be given fixed period (non-permanent) exclusions which total more than 45 school days in any one school year
- if your child is excluded for longer than one school day, the school should set work for them and mark it

The school should call you on the day an exclusion is given and follow up with a letter including information on:

- the period and reason for exclusion
- your duty during the first five days of any exclusion to ensure that your child is not present in a public place during normal school hours, whether in the company of a parent or not
- any arrangements made by the school that apply from the sixth day of the exclusion

Permanent exclusions

A school will usually only permanently exclude a child as a last resort, after trying to improve the child's behaviour through other means. However, there are exceptional circumstances in which a headteacher may decide to permanently exclude a pupil for a 'one-off' offence.

If your child has been permanently excluded, be aware that:

- the school's governing body is required to review the headteacher's decision and you may meet with them to explain your views on the exclusion
- if the governing body confirms the exclusion, you can appeal to an independent appeal panel organised by the local authority
- the school must explain in a letter how to lodge an appeal
- the local authority must provide full-time education from the sixth day of a permanent exclusion

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PARENT-FRIENDLY SCHOOL WINS TOP AWARD

A school on the Isle of Man has won a prestigious award in recognition of its commitment to working with parents to promote learning in the classroom and wider community.

Education Minister Anne Craine MHK presented the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) to Ballakermeen High School Headteacher Adrienne Burnett, earlier this year.

To earn the award the school had to show that it is a welcoming and friendly for parents and visitors and that it keeps parents fully informed about their children's work in school, their attendance and academic progress. The School also demonstrated that

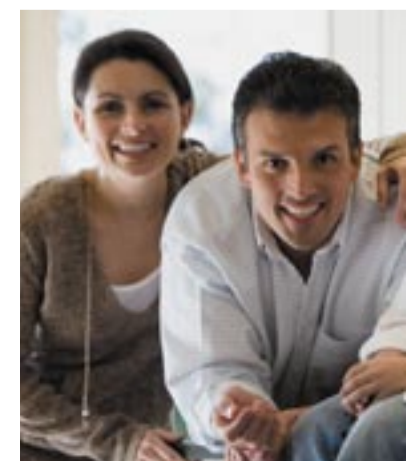
it aims to expand the range of learning and enrichment opportunities for both students and parents. At Ballakermeen, parents will have the chance to develop their ICT skills in parents' classes offered by the teaching staff in the spring term.

Parents and the home environment are the most important factor in shaping their children's well-being, achievement and prospects, said parental involvement specialist, Professor Charles Desforges:

"At the age of seven parental influences on learning is six times that of the school. At the age of 11 or 12 parental influence on learning is 30 per cent greater than that of the school. After the age of twelve, children – as they grow and mature – become their own greatest influence".

Developed by Prospects, one of the UK's leading providers of services for the education and skills sector, the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) programme is

recognised by Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) as the quality standard that aims to strengthen and enhance the relationship between parents, children and schools. The Award has been adopted by over 400 schools nationwide including over 70 in Manchester. Prospects is also working in partnership with Birmingham City Council, which is introducing the LPPA with a pilot scheme in a cluster of ten schools in the Handsworth area of the city.



NEW HELP FOR PARENTS SEEKING CHILDCARE

Nearly four

according to a new poll.

Information on childcare

Figures show that parents currently consult a range of different sources for information on finding childcare. Over three quarters (76 per cent) turn to friends, family or neighbours for information first, ahead of online media such as Netmums (60 per cent) and official sources such as local authority websites (58 per cent) and Ofsted (46 per cent). The good news is that clear and concise help is at hand. Choosing the right kind of childcare is an important decision and this is why the government has produced a handy, downloadable, Childcare

Checklist that parents can refer to when looking into the different childcare options for their children, such as nurseries, children's centres and childminders.

The poll of 1,700 parents was conducted by online forum Netmums, on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It found that parents considered the quality and services of childcare available the most when making a decision, with more than four fifths choosing this option. This is especially important given that evidence shows high quality

childcare benefits children long after their earliest years, and can help them to do better at school until at least the age of 11.

The second most commonly selected consideration was staffing levels, followed by the healthiness of the food provided by the childcarer to children under their supervision and the location of the nursery or childminder.

Informed choices about childcare With the help of the checklist, parents can also find out about the type of financial support available to them in the form of Working Tax

Credits and free childcare hours. They can also find where to go to seek information on the quality and standards of their local childcare provider. There is also a range of advice around safety, staffing levels and locality of childcare that parents should think about before making their decision.

Founder of Netmums and mum of three, Siobhan Freegard, who is supporting the government's campaign to help parents make informed decisions about childcare, said: "I come into contact with mums on a daily basis so I know that finding the right childcare

setting is high up on their list of priorities. Handing the responsibility for your child over to others is a big step and it is little wonder that parents would like more advice on finding what's best for them and their child. It's so important that parents are equipped with the right information when choosing childcare and this is why I am in support of the Childcare Checklist. It's such an important guide and I would urge all parents to refer to it, and take it with them, when researching their childcare options."

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You can download a copy of the checklist from the directgov website www.direct.gov.uk : For more information visit your local Family Information Service or to find your local childcare provider phone 0800 2 346 346 or visit the childcare pages on Directgov

CHILDREN AND HEALTHY WEIGHT

Your child's weight matters, and there are things you can do if you are concerned about it. You can also calculate your child's height and weight to see if they are in a healthy range.

Why your child's weight matters

Children are getting heavier these days and that is bad news for their health, especially as they get older.

Children who are overweight are more likely to develop diabetes or heart disease in later life and are more likely to be obese as adults. But health is not the only issue. Overweight children could also be affected by:

- **teasing or bullying**
- **low self-esteem**
- **embarrassment when playing games or sports**
- **difficulty in being active (for example, getting breathless quickly)**

Even if your child is not overweight or obese, it is important that they eat healthily and are physically active. The tips outlined on this page are relevant to all children, no matter what their weight is.

Is your child at a healthy weight?

Because children and teenagers are still growing, and because boys and girls grow differently, a child's sex and age must be taken into account while working out if they are in a healthy weight range. For this reason, adult height and weight categories cannot be used for anyone under 18.

An online calculator has been developed to help you understand your child's height and weight measurements and work out if

your child is in a healthy weight range. The calculator is in the testing stage, and is available to preview. To go to the calculator click on the link below.

It is important to remember that results from the calculator will only provide an estimation of body fat. Other factors like how fit the person is or their ethnic origin, or even puberty, can affect results and should also be considered. Even if a child is within a healthy range, their health could still be at risk if they are very unfit or have an unhealthy diet. If your child is overweight, always talk to your doctor before putting them on a weight-loss diet.

What to do if you are concerned about your child's weight

The best thing that you can do is to help your child develop healthy eating habits and be more physically active. Children who see their parents, grandparents and carers following a healthy lifestyle tend to learn by example and it will help them develop good habits. These habits become a normal part of everyday life. Most overweight children do not need to diet. They may not even need to lose weight. As they grow taller, aim to keep their weight at about the same level. That means they grow into their ideal weight as they get taller.

Healthy eating for children

It is not a good idea to count calories or severely restrict food for children. Eating regular sit-

down meals as a family, limiting high-calorie snacks and sugar-rich drinks, and trying to avoid 'food on the run' will help get your child into good eating habits for life. Resist the temptation to give your child sweets and chocolate for rewards or comfort.

Every day, all children should aim to eat:

- **five or more servings of a variety of fruit and vegetables per day (for advice on how to achieve this, visit the link below)**
- **meals that are based on starchy foods, like potatoes, pasta, rice, bread, breakfast cereal or other cereals**
- **lower fat dairy products like milk, yoghurt, fromage frais or cheese (once children are over five)**

A small amount of low-fat spread on bread or toast, and oil in cooking sauces or salad dressings, can help children enjoy healthy tasty meals. Savoury and sweet snacks (like crisps, biscuits and chocolate) and sugary drinks should be kept to a minimum. Try giving chopped up fruit as an alternative.

Healthy habits at home and school

To help your child adopt healthy eating habits start them at a young age. Schools are now required to meet new nutritional standards for school food, so children will only be offered healthy food choices while they are at school. Getting them to eat healthier options at

home will be consistent with what they get at school and help them towards healthier eating habits. Try to do as many of these as you can:

- **sit together as a family to eat your meal if you can**
- **switch the television off when you are eating**
- **eat a balanced choice of healthy foods yourself and be positive about them**
- **try and encourage the family to try new foods**
- **encourage and praise 'good eating' instead of nagging**
- **involve the children in food preparation**

For more information on how your child's school is helping your child stay fit and healthy, click on the link below.

Active children

All children should aim to be active for at least one hour every day. Restrict screen time (computer and TV) to a maximum of two hours a day, and aim for less if possible, especially for young children.

Help your children find activities they enjoy. For most children, playing in the playground or park or running around outside is a real joy – whatever the weather. Try to incorporate physical activity into your everyday family life – walking, cycling and outdoor play should be part of this.

A variety of activity is important to help children develop strong bones, muscle strength and flexibility. Activity can be natural and spontaneous (in the playground, playing outside), planned (walking, cycling to school) or school sports.

Remember to praise your children when they take part or are active and do not criticise them if they are not as able as other children. Through the PE and School Sports programme, over 80 per cent of children now participate in two hours of high quality PE and sport in school. The aim is to extend this to at least four hours each week (both inside and outside of the school day) by 2010.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/>

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/YourChildsHealth/DG_10015284

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/Goodfoodhome.aspx>

TACKLING BULLYING AT SCHOOL

“It is a fundamental democratic right for a child to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation implied in bullying” – Olweus, 1999

Children who are victims of bullying are considered to be slightly different from the crowd, whether that refers to skin colour or hair colour. They may be smarter, taller, or quieter than somebody else, be this just one individual or a group, and so are seen as easy targets. On the other hand, children who bully often have troubles of their own, which can result in low self esteem compensated for with bravado and aggression, amongst other defense mechanisms. When a child is suffering from bullying, it can feel like they are alone in the world and that nobody could possibly understand what is happening to them. In short, it is an isolating and depressing experience which can have severe effects on the emotional and physical health of a young person.

There is a minority view that bullying is a character forming and necessary part of growing up; however the majority sees it as at least unfair, as suggested by psychologists Smith and Brian (2000). Therefore, there are many resources available which are designed to combat the dilemma of bullying. Nonetheless, it is extremely difficult for a child to contemplate ways of handling the situation, and overcoming bullying could seem impossible. It takes bravery and strength to approach another person, especially an adult, and admit to having a problem of this magnitude. Therefore it is essential that, as a parent or carer, you understand how to deal effectively and calmly if your child confides in you about being bullied.

Types of Bullying

Sexual Harassment is frequently viewed as a taboo topic and thus avoided when in relation to school-aged children, though it is well addressed at colleges and universities. However, to a teenager, this sort of bullying can make the school environment unbearable, and furthermore is perhaps more difficult to admit to than another form of bullying. Teens who engage in this behaviour need to be held accountable, as they may be using sexual touching or language as a social weapon in order to intimidate and upset others. It is important to bring more awareness to sexual harassment in order to allow for parents and school officials to be prepared on how to combat this surprisingly common problem.

Racism: Britain is a mix of cultures and faiths; however some young people are unaccustomed



to differences and therefore engage in racial bullying. The important thing to realise is that racism is illegal and that if your child is the victim of this sort of bullying then it is possible to contact the police if you feel the school is not addressing the problem sufficiently. However, in most cases, the head-teacher will make it their priority to quickly eliminate this sort of behaviour, so make this your first step if you fear your child is being victimised.

Physical Bullying may leave visible evidence, and so it is far easier to be seen as an offense than another form. Victims can be too scared to tell who is bullying them, so being sensitive to your child's reactions when dealing with this situation will allow them to feel safe whilst confiding in you. Often the threat of bullying is more severe than the frequency of physical attacks, therefore it is important to realise that there is likely to be a deeper level of emotional scarring than anything you see visibly.

Reactions

Initially, it is normal to feel anxiety and rage when you become aware that there is a continuous threat to your child, but in spite of this remaining composed and open-minded is critical for the child's well-being. They will have summoned up a lot of courage in opening up to you, and so your reaction will directly affect how much or how little they tell you. If your child imagines that you will storm down to the school in anger, they

are likely to attempt 'protecting' you from becoming upset in the future, by deliberately denying further bullying that they suffer, or playing down the extent to which they are victimised.

It will be tempting to keep close surveillance once you are aware of what is happening; parents often struggle with guilt, however it is imperative that you give your child room to grow and to deal with their problems – by closely monitoring them you may cause feelings of self-consciousness and embarrassment.

Calm Communications

Show your child that you are ready to listen, that you are grateful for their honesty, and that you want to work with them to resolve the problems. If the child feels in control they are likely to become relaxed and keep you updated with what is going on in their life. Ask open-ended questions to allow them freedom of choice and come to an agreement together on how to proceed.

Take your time and get the whole story by talking to a variety of people, as well as discussing the matter on several occasions with your child. Being clear that your intentions are simply to understand the problem rather than seeking to punish anybody will ascertain you have people's attention and result in your situation being dealt with more efficiently.

Try to be open to the possibility that your child's reaction to an

school will be engaged, along with the other child and their family. Getting advice from a professional, such as a counsellor, on what to do is a good idea. Also, speak to your child's class teacher or form tutor, and ask them to keep an eye out for anything unusual regarding your child.

When speaking with school officials, it is useful to keep in mind that they may have also been unaware of the bullying occurring, as often a bully will not show negative behaviour in front of adults in order to avoid getting in trouble. You're guaranteed better results if you approach in a calm and respectful manner, as people will react defensively if they feel attacked. However, remain persistent and assertive, as some people may still react badly.

What Next?

Once the problem is out in the open, it is very likely to be resolved successfully by the school, however do keep an eye out and make sure you're continually being updated on any progress being made. Also, bring to your child's attention the resources available to them, such as books and skills workshops to teach them how to walk away from threatening situations, whilst maintaining strength and self-respect. There are plenty of resources available online as well as in the community, so do your homework and see what's out there.

interaction may have caused the bullying to begin; some children, as aforementioned, are suffering from their own problems, and so may be highly sensitive to behaviour that may be seen as humorous or non-offensive by another child, therefore will react in an unusual manner.

Taking Action

Dealing with bullying isn't easy, being that it is such a delicate circumstance, and often results in a number of people becoming involved in order to resolve. As well as your family, the

Useful Websites

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/>
Books, advice and useful contacts

www.childline.org.uk
Childline official website

www.kidpower.org
American website with interesting tips and facts

<http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk/>
For parents concerned about bullying

www.antibullying.net
Fun and easy to use website for children and parents

MONTESSORI TEACHER TRAINING

FAST TRACK YOUR CHILD'S CAREER

As a parent, you understand only too well the importance of giving your child the best start in life. Montessori embraces these values and puts a child's early education at the centre of its approach to learning and teacher training.

The educational approach was inspired by an Italian doctor, Maria Montessori (1870-1952). She was a true pioneer of child-centered education and developed a unique approach used and respected in countries all over the world.

The Government's Early Years Foundation Stage has acknowledged that Montessori's approach is at the core of its view on the way children learn. Fundamental to the approach is the belief that a child's early years – from birth to six – are the period when they have the greatest capacity to learn. It is what we, as adults, do during these critical years that lay the foundations for all future learning and confidence.

Montessori gives children a basis for life long learning across a broad spectrum of topics and skills. There are 22,000 schools worldwide and 600 here in the UK. Most UK Montessori schools teach pre-school children. There are approximately 30 UK Montessori junior schools. Montessori schools in Europe and the rest of world can extend to 18.

Montessori classrooms are often noted for special pieces of equipment, many of which were created by Maria Montessori. These are designed specifically to provide concrete representations of abstract concepts. For example, mathematical concepts are established using number rods, golden beads and spindle boxes, all designed to be interesting, fun and self-correcting, so the child can immediately see if they make a mistake.

The role of the teacher is to assist the children to follow whatever interests them at any particular time. Maria Montessori believed that children have certain windows of opportunity, called 'sensitive periods'. It is the teacher's job to recognize these and help the child make the most of them.

When the child is happily working, the teacher does not intervene until the child experiences difficulty, and then provides the minimum guidance necessary for the child to continue to work at their own pace and rhythm. Development comes

naturally as a result of the child's own exploration of a particular activity.

A study showed that Montessori children have a high level of cognitive attainment at age 5 - above the national average. They also demonstrate excellent levels of positive social and behavioral development in all areas and are more confident in their abilities and have a strong sense of self-esteem. Montessori children quite literally love learning!

Montessori can offer your child exciting and richly rewarding career opportunities if he/she has a passion for teaching and children.

There are two routes to your child's Montessori teaching qualification with Montessori Centre International – Europe's No.1 teacher training provider.

The first is The Early Childhood diploma course which develops a high level of competence in students wishing to work with children from two and half to six years of age. It can be studied part-time or by distance learning. The diploma takes around 18 months to complete. This is a level 4 CWDC (Children's Workforce and Development Council) qualification.

The second is the new full-time Early Childhood Practice foundation degree course. The course runs in partnership with London Metropolitan University and is the first available Montessori degree course. It is aimed at school leavers who want a degree based vocational qualification and to work with children from birth to seven.

The government has pledged that by 2015, every early years setting should be managed by a degree qualified practitioner with Early Years Professional Status. The foundation degree is aligned to this pledge and is a level 5 CWDC qualification.

The first two years of the foundation degree are spent at Montessori Centre International. Upon successful completion of the course, students then progress on to the BA (Hons) Early Childhood course at London Metropolitan University. Graduates will then have

DAYKOTA LYNN

MCI FULL-TIME MONTESSORI FOUNDATION DEGREE STUDENT

19 years old.

"I first heard about Montessori when I was 14. I am American and my younger brother attended a Montessori nursery in the USA. He has been in Montessori education for most of his school life. His head teacher was my guide and helped me on my path to Montessori teacher training.

Montessori teaches children to be independent and confident. It provides them with the tools for effective and enjoyable learning - through choosing, trying and doing themselves.

I decided to become a Montessori teacher after reading up on the method and how it was taught. I really connected with the philosophy and was inspired to train as a teacher from there on in.

I struggled in literacy studies at school when I was a child, and believe that a Montessori education would have helped me overcome my learning obstacles. My goal in becoming a Montessori teacher is to provide young children with the best possible education. I want them to grown into independent, self confident young people and know that Montessori enables this outcome.

The degree will enhance my employment opportunities both here and in the USA and MCI and the London Metropolitan University both have outstanding reputations.

I am gaining on-the-job experience through a teaching practice placement in a Montessori setting. This gives me real life insight into what it is like to work with Montessori children and puts my theory into practice.

The course covers Montessori philosophy, her life history, the many education resources available in a Montessori classroom, as well as child development theories.

There are plenty of challenges! It involves a lot of reading and you need to apply your study to the Montessori classroom. You must also learn effective time management, as the job is quite demanding!

opportunities to progress towards Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes.

To enroll on the Montessori diploma course, students must be a minimum of 17 years. The Montessori degree course requires students to be 18 years old. Both courses include college based study, assessed coursework,

written and practical examinations and assessed teaching practice in a Montessori nursery.

Teaching practice is hands-on and fun! It gives the student first-hand experience of life in a Montessori classroom, teaching a mixed age range of children. Montessori believed in vertical learning which means that children of different ages work alongside each other.

A Montessori teaching qualification is highly regarded. The course is rigorous and sets high standards. Most importantly, it offers your child a rich array of rewarding career opportunities. He/she can manage and own their own nursery, work abroad, become a much sought after Montessori trained nanny or teach in a Montessori prep school. The choice is endless...



There is high demand for Montessori teachers in the UK and internationally. Having a degree opens many more doors for me, particularly if I want to open my own Montessori nursery. The qualification is international – so I can work anywhere in the world, which is really exciting.

After I have qualified my long-term goal will be to return to America and open up a Montessori school.

I would say to anyone interested in becoming a Montessori teacher to go for it! Once you start learning the method and understand the theory behind it, you'll fall in love with it. When you witness a Montessori child beaming with pride at an accomplishment, you will be hooked! "

For more information, check out the web-site: www.montessori.org.uk/training
call: 020 7493 8300, email: career@montessori.org.uk

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