
WITHINREACH

12 Ways to Keep Students Focused on Career Readiness

1. Volunteer for Community Service

As most states require a minimum number of community service hours for state-funded scholarships, summer is a peak time to collect those hours. Students should choose organizations that are aligned with their career interests. For example, if a student has high interest in health sciences, then perhaps they should seek opportunities to volunteer at a local veterinary clinic or nursing home.

2. Try Job Shadowing

Job shadowing allows students to follow a professional in an authentic work setting. The process could last a day or a week, depending on the schedule arranged by the student and professional. Job shadowing also offers students an opportunity to conduct a firsthand interview and gain detailed insight on the occupation from an expert. Often students have a concept of what is involved in an occupation yet lack true understanding of the day-to-day experiences and other duties involved. Job shadowing may validate a career choice or even cause the student to cross that job off their wish list.

3. Explore a New Hobby

Hobbies are areas of interest we enjoy outside of work or school. What students frequently forget is that a hobby could lead to a career. For example, if a student is a natural shutterbug, taking a photography class in person or online will provide a new set of technical skills as a foundation which could lead to a potential career as a professional photographer.

4. Visit Technical Colleges/Centers

Technical Colleges/Centers offer industry certification programs that can be completed in a shorter time frame than a degree program and carry much less financial burden. These campuses are located across the US in convenient locations to most people. Some include pre-apprenticeship programs and vary in duration (2-12 months) based on chosen program. Examples of certificate programs include culinary, plumbing, cosmetology, and auto mechanic.

5. Tour College Campuses

There is no better way to discover if a college or university campus will feel like home than touring the campus. How a student feels in their new environment will shape the entire college experience. Summer is the busiest time for tours so students and families should book early! Students are advised to explore the campus, take a guided tour to learn the history of the school, ask lots of questions, take notes, take photos, and stop by the admissions office to meet the folks that decide who will be accepted. Families living far away or those with concerns regarding in-person tours can also take advantage of virtual options from [Campus Tours](#).

6. Register for Summer Classes

As in the example above, students can make the most of their summertime exploring a hobby or maximizing their academic potential while earning college credit. Pre-College summer programs offer students learning opportunities on diverse areas of focus. Many of these summer programs provide a dorm experience where students learn and live among their peers.

7. Apply for an Internship

Frequently the first experience in a professional work setting, internships provide opportunities for growth, development of employability skills, and evidence to support the talents and experience stated on the student's resume. Many internships offer paid compensation, and others often lead to excellent networking opportunities and full-time employment.

8. Build a Resume

Whether students choose post-secondary education at a technical college, college, or university, or they decide to enter the workforce, all students need to create a resume. It is important that students keep track of jobs, schools attended, specialized skills, awards, honors, and member organizations or clubs that they've participated in. Every year students should add new content to their resume based on their most recent experiences and achievements. Resume builders, like the one in the [Kuder Career Planning System](#), allows students to create a resume and update it regularly with ease and efficiency.

9. Get a Job

One way to build a resume is to get a summer job. Many companies will hire for the summer and beyond. Students should seek work that is aligned with their interests. For example, if a student's [Kuder Career Interest Assessment](#) results reflected high interest in human services, perhaps seeking a job as a preschool teacher assistant would be especially rewarding.

10. Take a Family Field Trip

When a student has a firm understanding of their career interests, a family field trip offers an opportunity to explore occupations in a fun way. For example, if the student is showing high interest in aerospace engineering, taking a tour through one of [NASA's Visitor Centers](#) would be an exciting day for the whole family that could perhaps even spark a passion in younger siblings.

11. Apply to Scholarships

Apply, Apply, Apply! College-bound students do not have to accrue debt as new college graduates, but many do. High school students often view applying to scholarships as a senior year action step. There are many scholarships that allow students to apply as early as middle school. If the scholarship is earned prior to graduating high school, the donor will hold those funds and send them either to the student or the student's chosen college upon high school graduation. Students can access more than 500 available scholarships currently available in the Kuder Career Planning System database.

12. Practice for the SAT and/or ACT

Students can improve their SAT or ACT results by preparing over the summer with practice sessions and courses available within Kuder's [College Access Package](#) toolkit. These scores are still a determining factor in some college admissions, though many colleges have removed this requirement for the 2021-2022 college admissions cycle due to COVID-19. To review current SAT/ACT updates, visit the [Prep Scholar website](#) for more information.