

Students at Risk and Early Leavers – Successful ways to help them

Working with students at risk of leaving early before they complete their high school studies or who have not adjusted well to their high school studies can be the most challenging and equally the most rewarding.

There are factors which may be well beyond your ability to influence them for the better. Working with the School Counsellor, Year Adviser, support agencies and of course the parents and key family members are all integral to give the student the best chance to achieve their potential and head towards a successful transition.

Often, the Careers Adviser is brought in at a stage where you are asked to provide a transition plan for a student at risk in a short space of time.

Let's confirm a few basic points and if their progress in these are further developed you will have gone a long way towards making their transition successful.

- Every student wants to be happy
- Every student wants to be independent
- Every student wants to enjoy a rewarding career

Here is a handy checklist to measure their progress:

Does the student have good friends that can be a good influence and support for them?

Does the student have a good family network that can influence and support them?

Does the student have interests and hobbies?

Does the student have a part time job?

Does the student have an idea on a possible career or career field for their future?

Here are some strategies to give the student some guidance and support before they leave.

Important: Does your school identify students at risk on an ongoing basis through the Welfare Team (Year Adviser, Counsellor, Executive, parent)? The earlier the identification, the better.

Does the student know a career or career field that they may wish to pursue?

Use the Career Cwiz and Career Videos on JobJump to identify details of the career they may like and check why they like it.

If yes:

1. Now look at the Personal Qualities for this career and begin to build their resume with examples of when they have demonstrated these qualities.
2. Next, check who are people they can approach for references. Ask these people if they can write a reference and while doing so, ask them to mention in their reference that this student possesses these personal qualities for this career.
3. Ask the Principal if they will allow the student to go on Work Experience one day a week in this career. Set up this work experience.
4. Use the JobJump Work Experience lesson provided as support. The Student Work Experience Reference can be used to check the student is achieving the goals of the work experience. Details of skills learnt can now be added to the student's resume. The reference is also a valuable addition to their Personal Folder.

5. Go to **Career Explorer** menu item and select **My Career**. Click on the career the student desires and find their **10 point plan**. Go through it with them and use it as a checklist to help them towards their career.
6. See if there is a staff member or family member (older brother or sister, uncle or aunty) who will be a mentor. Ask the mentor to support the student with the 10 point plan. Have the student do a Careers Project as provided on JobJump's 10 point plan. Ask the mentor to give support and encouragement towards completing the project. Can the project be of some help to someone or to the mentor? An example could be if the student wants to be a landscaper and the mentor (eg, neighbour) allows the student to do some gardening and simple landscape improvement to their garden. Take photos and include it in the Personal Folder with a reference from the mentor and/or add details of this into the resume.
7. Speak to the local TAFE to introduce the student to the relevant course to meet their career aspirations. Check the entry requirements and provide simple to follow instructions such as when to come back, where, who to speak to, what to bring on entrance/enrolment day. Pass this on to the student, their parent and follow up on this or ask the mentor to follow up.

If the student says that they have no idea on what they want to do.

If they seem lacking in motivation and a direction, then see if they are happy to look into getting a part time job. What type of part-time job would they like?

1. Now look at the Personal Qualities for this type of business and begin to build their resume with examples of when they have demonstrated these qualities.
2. Next, check who are the people they can approach for references. Ask these people if they can write a reference and while doing so, ask them to mention in their reference that this student possesses these personal qualities for this part-time job.
3. Ask the Principal if the student can do one day a week work experience at a local business that has the potential of offering part time work. Examples are Woolworths, Coles, Macdonalds. Instigate this work experience.
4. Use the Work Experience lesson provided as support. The Student Work Experience Reference can be used to check the student is achieving the goals of a work experience. Details of skills learnt can now be added to the student's resume. The reference is also a valuable addition to their Personal Folder.
5. See if there is a staff member or family member (older brother or sister, uncle or aunty) who is willing to be a mentor and keep an eye on their progress at the one day a week work experience. Any encouragement is positive. Students will grow if they know someone cares about them.
6. Once the student builds confidence and successes at the work experience, there is the potential for the offer of part time paid work. If this does or doesn't occur the student will still be in a more confident space. This will in turn allow them to look more positively towards other future career options.

If they have no career that interests them and if they aren't motivated to do part time work.

1. Ask if they are willing to do work experience one day a week with their mentor or within the school as support for the General Assistant, Clerical Support, Canteen, Librarian or a mix of these.

2. Now look at the Personal Qualities for this type of work and begin to build their resume with examples of when they have demonstrated these qualities.
3. Next, check who are the people they can approach for references. Ask these people if they can write a reference and while doing so, ask them to mention in their reference that this student possesses these personal qualities for this career.
4. Use the Work Experience lesson provided as support. The Student Work Experience Reference can be used to check the student is achieving the goals of a work experience. Details of skills learnt can now be added to the student's resume. The reference is also a valuable addition to their Personal Folder.
5. See if there is a staff member or family member (older brother or sister, uncle or aunty) who is willing to be a mentor and keep an eye on their progress at the one day a week work experience. Any encouragement is positive. Students will grow if they know someone cares about them.
6. Once the student builds confidence and successes at this work experience, there is the potential for them to progress towards the offer of part time paid work. If this does or doesn't occur the student will still be in a more confident space. This will in turn allow them to look more positively towards other future career options.

If the student is not willing to do any form of work experience.

1. You can say the offer is always there for them. They can approach you and/or you can keep a close eye when they may be ready to do it.
2. They can still do the Career Cwiz and Career Videos and explore options.
3. They can still have a mentor.
4. They can still build a Personal Folder with references.
5. Support from the Counsellor will be integral to their progress and wellbeing.

