

HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF APPEARANCE ON THE JOB



You know how important it is to look your best when you are looking for a job or keeping that job. Now, this guide will help you talk with your kids as they venture out into the work force for after-school jobs, internships, summer jobs, or full-time employment.

A relationship of mutual trust and respect with your young person is important on this topic and on so many others as well. Here are some general tips which may help you build this respect:

- Avoid lectures.
- Express an opinion rather than telling teens what to do or not do.
- Relate it to their life and what they think is important.
- Don't be afraid to be the adult in your relationship and not the pal but do this by sharing your life experience with them, not running their life.
- Most importantly, ask for their opinion and listen to what they say.

Now here are some thoughts about talking to your kids on why their appearance for the job is important.

What to say

The message you want to give them might sound like this:

- Looking your best makes you feel better, function better and helps boost your confidence. When you look sharp and pulled together you are more likely to feel that way and people around you will take positive notice.
- Improving your appearance alone won't get you a job offer, but it will help to win positive attention and respect from your interviewer. It will give you a foot in the door so that the interviewer can then focus on your talents, skills, and positive attitude.
- Good appearance can be the deciding factor between two equally qualified candidates. First impressions can often be made very quickly in as little as 30 seconds. Well-groomed job applicants are chosen more



often and offered higher pay than less well-groomed rivals. Once in their jobs, they are more likely to be promoted and have their income increased.

IT ALL GOES TOGETHER — GOOD IMAGE, GOOD ATTITUDE, GOOD JOB!

How to say it

You'll be heard best if you make these points as they come up in natural conversation, not all at once which will sound like a lecture.

For example, one of the most common statements you may hear from young people is "The employer should take me the way I am, the way I look and dress. I should not have to change my appearance to conform."

Here are some ways you might handle that attitude. You can pick one of these answers one day and another the next. Over time you will get your message across.

1. **When you get a job, you become part of that team.** And just as there are uniforms for playing sports, there are "uniforms" for work. Wearing the right "uniform" to an interview, and later on the job, tells the employer you are serious about wanting to be on their team. The right uniform says "I'm ready for business, I'm ready to "play".
2. **Looking the part for the "team" is especially important at the job interview.** The person doing the hiring is looking for ways to eliminate applicants, especially where there are many people competing for the same job. Don't give them such an easy way to drop you before you have had a chance to shine. You need to get your foot in the door and you don't want it slammed in your face just because you do not look the part.

3. **Think about what is more important — the job and the money and the experience you can get OR insisting on a look that will lessen your chances of getting the job.** The choice is yours. The employer also has a choice — they can hire you or NOT hire you.
4. **Remind them that we have many looks in life and they depend on the situation.** For example, what fits in at school would not be right for a dance. They dress the part for special events. Dressing for the job is no different — it is another special event with its own rules for fitting in.

When to say it

There will probably be times when your teen brings up the job interview or asks you for practical advice:

1. **"I'm not sure what to wear and how to look.":** Advise your young person to check out how people look on the job at the place they want to work. Clean



Interview Tips

Here are some tips for the interview:

- Be sure to make eye contact and talk directly to the interviewer.
- Smile naturally.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard.
- Don't mumble.
- Don't squirm or fiddle with your hair or move around a lot.
- Don't chew gum.
- Have a firm handshake and sit up straight.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time.
- Write a thank you note and send it promptly after the interview. An e-mail thank you is also acceptable.

and conservative dress and make up work best if you're not sure. Make sure you have good personal hygiene and that your interview clothes and shoes are clean, in good shape, not too tight, not too loose, and not too short or revealing. Make up and grooming should not be distracting. You want the interview to focus on you and what you have to offer, not your clothes, make up or hair style.

2. "How does my hair look?"

It's best to give criticism after you give a compliment. If their hair is not job-appropriate, compliment them first on their general appearance or the clothes they picked out. You could also point out that their hair is hiding their attractive eyes and making it more difficult for someone to see their face and connect with them during an interview.

3. "I'm nervous about the interview, what should I do?":

The best way to do a good job on the interview is to be prepared. Discuss why the young person wants the job — what are their goals, what will the job do for them, what can they offer the employer, why should the employer hire them.

It's what you do as much as what you say

The more "together" you look and the more confidence you have in yourself, the more your kids will respect YOU. You should Work Your Own Image!



Making sure your appearance is job-ready when you go on an interview or to your job is going to help your self esteem and will make you a more effective role model in your family. Not only that, but you are also probably going to be happier when your self esteem is up and that happiness will make for a happier household!

Good luck in talking with your teen or young adult. You can give them valuable advice and be the voice of experience as they set out on one of the most important things in life — getting and keeping a job!

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Body language dos and don'ts:

DON'T

Way Too Laid Back
slouches, legs sprawled
chews gum

Far Too Shy
looks down
doesn't smile
has a limp handshake

Too Overeager
smiles constantly and/or unnaturally
shakes hand too hard
nods head all the time
laughs nervously

Very Nervous
fiddles with hair and/or hands
taps feet, drums fingers,
jiggles legs, eyes dart

Much Too Fidgety
bounces legs
crosses arms
frowns

DO

Got It Right
smiles naturally
makes eye contact
has a confident, good handshake
sits up straight
is pleasant and friendly

Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association (CTFA)

1101 17th St. NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20036

202-331-1770

workimage@ctfa.org

website: www.ctfa.org

Women Work!

The National Network for Women's
Employment

1625 K St. NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20006

202-467-6346

e-mail: womenwork@womenwork.org

website: www.womenwork.org

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