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Cochlear Family Guide



**Practical advice
for parents of high
school seniors**



Guiding and supporting your teenager

The day your teenager graduates high school is a momentous occasion. This milestone marks the start of a major life transition and each high school student will experience this phase of their life differently. For some, it's a chance to enthusiastically explore the next chapter of their life. For others, it's a time of introspection and self-discovery.

In the 12-24 months leading up to your teenager's last day of high school, you may find them beginning to contemplate their future more seriously. They may start to ask questions like:

- What do I want to do with my life?
- Do I go to university or learn a trade?
- Do I go straight into the workforce?
- Do I take a gap year to consider my options?
- Do I continue to live at home or move away?

This stage of your teenager's life requires them to make some significant decisions about their future. Providing positive feedback and reassurance can help your teenager successfully navigate this transition from high school.

A good place to start, is to ask your child how they would like to be supported. Being available to support your child at each step of the decision-making process and making them aware of the potential options available to them can go along way toward helping with their decision making.

Below are tips to help you support your teen, provide advice on the right questions to ask and help you navigate important discussions about the future.

Help them explore their interests

1 In the lead up to their final year, we recommend that you start to have conversations with your teen about their future goals and interests. Australian parenting website, raisingchildren.net.au recommends asking your teen the following questions²:

1. What subjects do you like?
2. What subjects do you think you do the best in?
3. Do you have other interests outside of school?

From there, you can help guide their research into some options that best suit their interests and capabilities, and encourage them to discover what future pathways may be best suited to them.

Another thing we recommend doing sooner rather than later, is having an open and realistic discussion about the financial investment associated with various choices. Depending on yours and your child's circumstances, the various pathways may be university, starting work, a traineeship, apprenticeship, or a gap year.

Help them discover the various pathways

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After you have confirmed your teen's interests and goals, there are things you can do to encourage them to explore their options. In addition to speaking with you and considering their interests, there are other things you can suggest that they do:

- **Speak to a teacher or career advisor:** If the high school they attend offers career counselling, encourage them to arrange a time to meet with their advisor. Alternatively, they can also speak to a teacher that they have good rapport with. You can help them prepare for this conversation by helping them list their interests, goals, favourite subjects, and extracurricular activities. From there, the teacher or advisor can provide feedback on how their interests and goals align with their aptitude in these areas and suggest some options.
- **Talk to friends and family:** Friends and family members can be a great source of support and may be able to give your teen another perspective on the areas they excel in the most. They can also share their own personal experience with finishing school and the choices they made afterwards.
- **Do some research:** Encourage your teen to do some research into some of the options they are looking at. If they are thinking about doing further education, you can suggest that they consider:
 - Attending open days
 - Exploring work experience or doing volunteer work in the field
 - Looking at the subjects they will be studying as part of the qualification
 - Doing research into hearing support available during their studies
 - Looking at future career prospects after completing their qualification

If your teen is considering going straight into the workforce, you can help guide their decision by encouraging them to:

- Look at job boards to read role descriptions and requirements
- Speak to recruiters
- Do research into future career prospects
- Do research into the companies they are interested in working for to understand the hearing support they offer to employees.

Talk about feelings of uncertainty

- 3** Having open and transparent discussions about the future can help ease feelings of uncertainty. It may be a good idea to let your teenager know that it's normal to have questions, to which they won't have all the answers. During this stage it's important to reiterate that the decision they make upon graduation doesn't have to dictate the rest of their life.

It's also good to remind them that if they decide to change their mind down the track, don't get into the course they want, or don't get a call back for an interview, it's not the end of the world. We recommend encouraging your teen to consider their options calmly, take a break from the decision-making process when needed, and to be kind to themselves.

Remember it's their life

- 4** After years of nurturing and caring for your child, it can be hard to take a less directive role in their decision making. It's important to actively listen to your teen and truly hear what they are saying. You may think that their academic capabilities all point to them studying finance at university. However, they may be passionate about baking and want to become a pastry chef. This is a pivotal moment in their life where they have the opportunity to exercise independent decision-making and develop problem-solving skills.

Talk about the importance of self-advocacy

- 5** No matter what your teenager decides to do or where their future takes them, self-advocating for their hearing needs is an important skill to bring to new situations. When the time comes, encourage them to have conversations with their future educators or employers. Confidently communicating their hearing needs can go a long way toward maximising productivity in the workplace or getting the most out of their education.

Remember, self-advocacy shouldn't be contained to the home environment or stop when they leave the school gates. We recommend reiterating the importance of educating others and how this can facilitate better conversations and relationship building with peers and colleagues.

Go through the Starting Tertiary Education and Work guides together

6 A great way to support your teenager is to go through the Starting Tertiary Education and Starting Work guides together. Contained within each of the guides are tips and tricks that can serve as a foundation to build your conversations around.

In the Starting Tertiary Education Guide, we cover topics such as:

- Selecting an area of study
- Selecting an educational institution
- Communication and advocacy tips for tertiary education
- Strategies to maximise learning and optimise hearing
- How to work with educational institutions to get hearing support

In the Starting Work Guide, we cover topics such as:

- How to approach the job application process
- How to prepare for interviews
- Practical advice for starting work
- How and when to disclose hearing loss
- The importance of self-advocacy in the workplace

When teenagers graduate high school, it can often feel like they are at the final frontier before entering into uncharted adult territory. It's important that you help your child feel supported as they explore their study and employment options.

However, something that is often overlooked, is that this is a new experience for many parents and carers as well. The Cochlear Family want to be there to support you as you seek to prepare your child and provide them with guidance.

For more information on Cochlear resources to help support you, visit [cochlear.com](https://www.cochlear.com) or contact your local customer service team.

Cochlear Family

Hear now. And always

As the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, Cochlear is dedicated to helping people with moderate to profound hearing loss experience a life full of hearing. We have provided more than 600,000 implantable devices, helping people of all ages to hear and connect with life's opportunities.

We aim to give people the best lifelong hearing experience and access to innovative future technologies. We have the industry's best clinical, research and support networks.

That's why more people choose Cochlear than any other hearing implant company.

Disclaimers

Please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always read the instructions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for more product information.

Views expressed are those of the individual. Consult your health professional to determine if you are a candidate for Cochlear Technology.

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