

From school to job

Information for Parents

Dear Parents

You have a daughter or a son in the 7th, 8th, 9th or 10th class (Harmos: 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th class). Your son or your daughter must now decide on a job or a school for further education. This is an important step: With a finished education in a job or with qualifications of a school for further education, young people in Switzerland have a good basis for their further development in the professional life.

How does the school help?

The school prepares students from the 8th and 9th classes (Harmos: 10th and 11th classes) for the choice of a job or a school for further education. Ask your teachers, for example at a parents evening, how this preparation exactly looks like.

How does career counselling help? ¹

Career counselling centres provide information about professions and further training possibilities. Moreover, you can arrange personal interviews to discuss your interests, talents and professional options. This offer is free and confidential for students.

School and career guidance assist young people in the choice of a profession or a school of further education, if necessary, also in finding an apprenticeship. However, the responsibility together with the principal work remains with the concerned family.

What must young people do for themselves?

How can you help your child?

Your son or daughter must do a lot on his or her own, until he or she finds a place for further education after the 9th or 10th class (Harmos: 11th or 12th class). For many, this is difficult. It is therefore very important for mothers and fathers to help their children. If you have questions and do not know what to do anymore, please contact the career-counselling centre.

Choosing a profession or a school of further education is a process, during which young people should ask questions and find the right answers to them. This process needs time. The most important questions and the most important ways to get the answers are described in the following:

A Get to know yourself

Your children have to ask themselves:

- What am I good at in school? Which subjects do I like?

¹ Each canton has at least one career counselling centre. The addresses can be found at your school, commune or under: German: www.adressen.sdbb.ch French: www.adresses.csfo.ch Italian: www.indirizzi.csfo.ch

The career counselling centre is often better-known under a particular name or abbreviation:

In German-speaking Switzerland	BIZ, Laufbahnzentrum
In French-speaking Switzerland	OP, SOPFA, OFPC, COS, OROSP, CIO, OCOSP
In Italian-speaking Switzerland	orientamento, UOSP

- What have I learnt in my spare time or from my family? (e.g. to speak other languages, to clean, to cook, to shop, to repair something, to listen to my friends when they have problems, to help in a sports club, in a youth group or in another club when there is a celebration.)
- Did I prove in an extra job, that I am on time and reliable? (e.g. when delivering newspapers, looking after children, mowing the lawn, helping out in a company during 2-3 hours a week)
- Where are my strengths? What weak points do I have?

How can you help your child as parents?

- Together with your daughter or son, try to find out, what activities could suit her or him, and what strengths she or he has.

B Get to know jobs

Your child gets to know professions thanks to information and „Schnupperlehren“ (brief work placement in a company, where your child gets a taste of the profession)²

- Getting to know jobs means informing oneself: Read job descriptions, watch films about professions, attend information events ³ and job and further education fairs ⁴, talk to the career counselling professionals
- Do a “Schnupperlehre” and get some practical work experience. During a “Schnupperlehre”, one gets to know a profession in a company better. Such a “Schnupperlehre” usually lasts 2 to 3 days. Companies also often use these “Schnupperlehre” as a selection tool: they want to get to know youngsters. Whoever makes a good impression during a “Schnupperlehre” has a better chance of getting an apprenticeship in that company.

How can you help your children as parents?

- If possible, accompany your daughter or son to information events. Help your child to remember the dates of information events.
- Accompany your daughter or son to a career-counselling centre. Obtain information about the education and apprenticeship possibilities in Switzerland.
- Talk to your daughter or son about her or his experiences during the “Schnupperlehren”.

C Choose a job or school

During the process of choosing a job or school your children must pay attention to the following:

- Choosing a job or a school for further education needs time for consideration and time for undertaking various activities.

² German	Schnupperlehre
French	stage d'information professionnelle; stage en entreprises
Italian	stage d'orientamento

³ Information events:

In German-speaking Switzerland	www.berufsberatung.ch/infoveranstaltungen
In French-speaking Switzerland	www.orientation.ch/manifestations
and Italian-speaking Switzerland	http://www.orientamento.ch/eventi

⁴ Job and further education fairs:

Ask the career counselling professionals or your teachers at school, when and where there are job and further education fairs. These fairs have the following names:

German	Berufsmesse, Ausbildungsmesse, Berufsschau
French	Salon des métiers, Cité des métiers, salon de la formation
Italian	ESPOProfessioni

- When choosing an appropriate career or a school of further education, it is important to keep 1-2 alternatives in reserve.
- Ask your teachers: “Where do I have knowledge gaps? How can I prepare myself at school for further education after the 9th or 10th class (Harmos: 11th or 12th class)?”

How can you help your child as parents?

- Take an interest in this decision-making process.
- Discuss the chosen career and appropriate alternatives with your child.

D Look for a place for further education (generally in the autumn of the 9th class [Harmos: 11th class])

When looking for a place for further education, the following leaflet can help your child:

- “Looking for an apprenticeship: How do you best proceed?”⁵

How can you help your child as parents?

- Help your daughter or son to start looking for an apprenticeship early enough.
- After negative replies, encourage your daughter or son to keep looking for a job.

You can now find out from examples what mothers and fathers can do.

Speak to the teacher

Laura ist in der 8. Klasse. Sie spricht zu Hause nie über die Wahl eines Berufes oder einer weiterführenden Schule. „Was ist los?“, fragen sich die Eltern. Die Mutter geht nach der Schule zum Lehrer und fragt, ob sich Laura in der Schule auch nicht für die Wahl eines Berufes oder einer Schule interessiert.

Laura is in the 8th class (Harmos: 10th class). At home she never talks about choosing a job or school for further education. “What is the matter”, her parents ask. Her mother goes to the school and asks the teacher if Laura has also not shown any interest in the choice of a job or a school.

Stay aware of the different possibilities

Achmed is in the 9th class (Harmos: 11th class). Like many other youngsters, he wants to be an information technologist. He applies for apprenticeships but only receives negative replies. At a parents' evening, his parents learn there are too few apprenticeships in information technology. They tell Achmed he should contact the career-counselling centre for a personal discussion. Achmed comes home with a new idea. As he is good at mathematics and is interested in technology, he now looks for an apprenticeship as a poly-mechanic. He knows now that in this job he will also have something to do with computers. If he wants, he can specialise in information technology after completing his apprenticeship.

The family has expectations

“When does Nicholas start his studies?” ask relatives at home in the village. “In Switzerland many things are different to what you think”, reply Nicholas's parents. “Nicholas is good with his hands and likes cars. As he is a very good student too, he also finishes the demanding four-year basic training. He will become an automobile mechanic. That is a good training and the job will suit him. We are proud of our son who has achieved so much. Anyway, it is not so easy attending school when you speak a different language.” As a car mechanic, Nicholas can find work anywhere in the world!

⁵ www.berufsberatung.ch > Direkteinstieg für > Aus dem Ausland
www.orientation.ch > Accès direct: je suis > De l'étranger
www.orientamento.ch > Accesso diretto > Provenienti dall'estero

Insufficient language knowledge

Jennifer is a very intelligent girl. But as she only came to Switzerland when she was 15, she does not understand the language in school sufficiently for a demanding training. Jennifer and her parents learn that after obligatory schooling Jennifer can do a preparatory school year to prepare for a job, or she can prepare for an apprenticeship or do a two-year basic professional training. For Jennifer and her parents everything is unfamiliar. They must first get to know the possibilities in detail. Jennifer is also disappointed. She had dreamt of going to gymnasium. Her parents console her: "Perhaps you need more time than others. As soon as you have done enough work to cover the gaps in your knowledge, then you can do a more demanding basic job training and possibly you can study later. You will manage it!"

Job or marriage?

Samira will soon be 16. A young man comes visiting. He asks her father: "May I marry Samira?" Her father replies: "Our families are close. According to our tradition, a marriage between Samira and you would be appropriate. But you know we live in Switzerland. Life is different here. Here it is very important for men and women to have a job. So Samira must first train for a job. Later she can decide for herself if she wants to get married."

A father accompanies his son

David is in the 9th class. Learning is difficult for him. He can do a brief trial apprenticeship ("Schnupperlehre") as a carpenter's assistant. He knows that in a carpentry company he can do a two-year basic training, if the preliminary trial work placement is satisfactory. So he is quite nervous. He also feels uncertain because he does not know the way very well and yet he wants to be punctual. His father encourages him: "You already know a lot about this job. You try very hard. On the first day I will come with you to the entrance of the firm. We will leave home early enough. If we have enough time, we can even walk about a bit. That helps when one is nervous!"

Use your contacts

Jane is a good student. She has excellent marks in French, German and mathematics. In addition, she can speak, read and write English. She considers various jobs, goes to information events and gets some brief work experience. It is now clear she wants to do a commercial apprenticeship. She sends off many applications but only receives negative replies. Her father works in a building firm and tells his boss that his daughter is looking for an apprenticeship. "Ask our office. They also take trainees," says the boss. "I will do that. My wife can also ask in the hospital where she works. Haven't we also got a neighbour who can perhaps help us?" thinks her father.

Don't give up!

Again Mehmet has received a negative reply to his application as a retail employee. He has already sent many applications to different companies, but so far, he was not successful. More and more often, Mehmet forgets to look for new apprenticeships or to send applications to companies. Somehow, he has lost courage. In the evening at dinner with his family, his parents encourage him: "We will accompany you to the career counselling centre. There we can obtain information, what you can do and what help you can receive. Don't give up! You can achieve something and we help you."

Dear Parents,

If you have questions about your daughter's or your son's choice of job, waste no time. Ask the teacher or the career-counselling centre.