

## Helping Teens Explore Their Career Options

In 2002, the U.S. Department of Education published the results of a longitudinal study. In 1988, they surveyed a group of 8th graders from around the country about their hopes for the future. Approximately 66% of the students indicated they wanted to earn a bachelor's degree or higher. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the parents expected their 8th grade student would attend college, and 58% of parents expected their child to graduate from college. Twenty percent (20%) of parents expected their 8th graders to earn a post-baccalaureate academic or professional degree.

Twelve years later, in 2000, the Department of Education surveyed these families again to find out what the students had actually achieved. After being out of high school for eight years, only 29% had earned a bachelor's degree. Another 47% indicated they had earned some college credits, but not a degree, after high school. For more study results go online at [www.nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002321.pdf](http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002321.pdf)

Despite the relatively high educational aspirations of students and their parents, the statistic — only about 30% of high school students go on to earn a bachelor's degree — has been the case for some time now. Not all occupational choices require a 4-year degree. Technology has radically changed the nature of work and careers. Students can pursue a wider variety of educational avenues and opportunities.

### What does this all mean for today's high school students?

The task of selecting a career field and developing a plan to realize that goal is both challenging and complicated. Students need to understand the career exploration and planning process, the rapidly changing world of work, and the different education and training options available to them.

### The ASVAB Career Exploration Program can help.

The ASVAB Program is designed to help students learn more about themselves and the world of work, identify and explore potentially satisfying occupations, and develop an effective strategy to realize their goals.

### Career exploration pays off.

Exploring occupations in line with one's interests, skills, and abilities helps a student make realistic and satisfying educational and career choices. Research has shown that students who participate in the ASVAB Program experience less career indecision, enjoy greater confidence in making career decisions, and consider more thoughtfully their options than do students who do not participate in the ASVAB Program.

**We hope that you will encourage  
your students to participate.**