

FOCUS CAREER

MAIN THEME
CHOOSING A CAREER
ROLES, PROSPECTS,
EXPERIENCES

The vocational education magazine for parents and teachers
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VETPLUS.CH

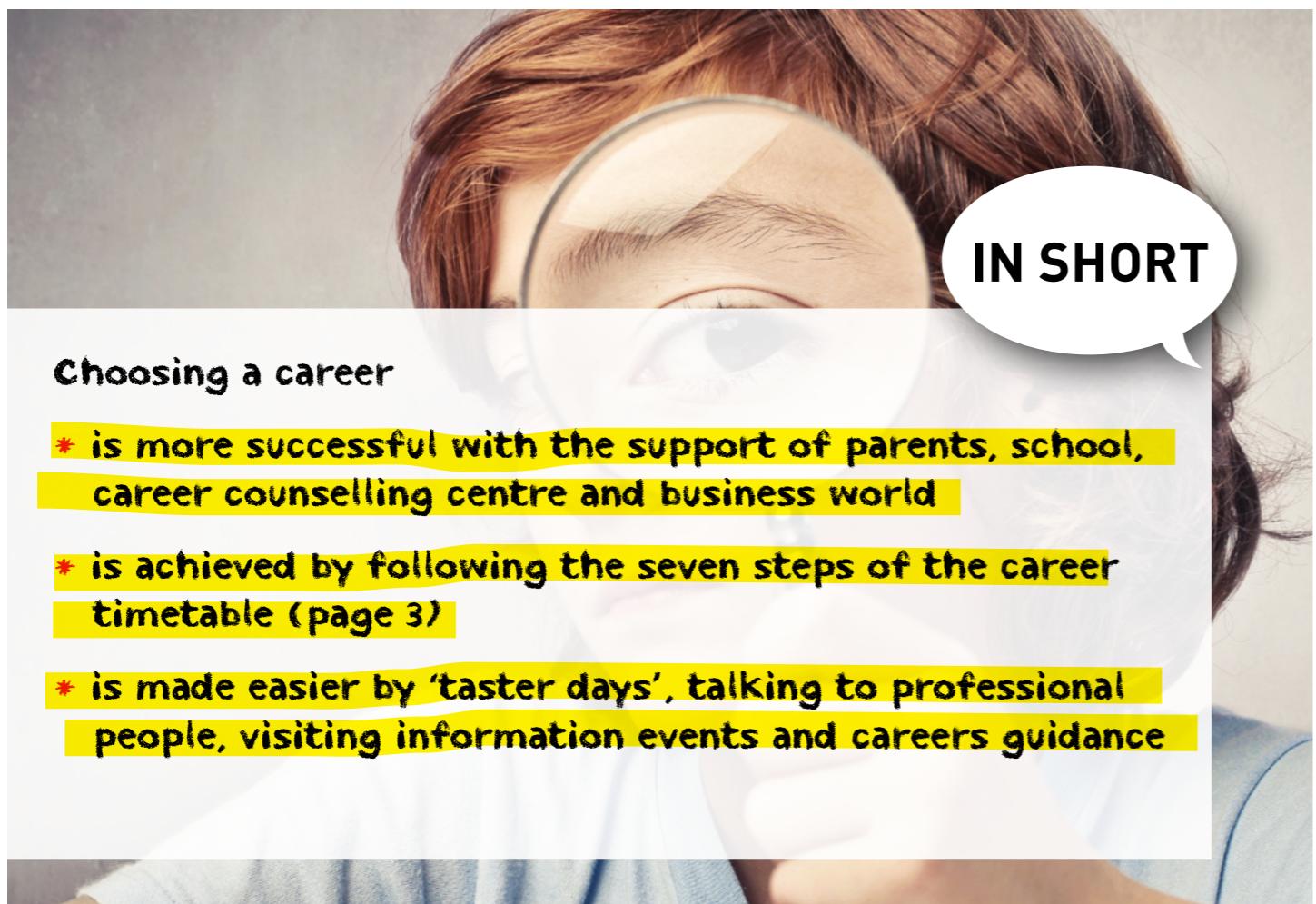
THE PATH OF THE PROFESSIONALS.

An initiative of the Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations

FOCUS ON: CHOOSING A CAREER

I'm going to be – what? When they reach the age to choose a career, young people face a big question. They have to decide on a basic vocational education course or upper secondary-level school. **Parents, school, career counselling centres and the business world help them with this.** This magazine shows what role the four partners play in the process of choosing a career. Young people who have only recently mastered the process of choosing a career as well as parents and careers advisers are given the opportunity to express their views. Plus: **background information, tips and links** to make a successful choice of career.

Focus Career – the vocational education magazine for parents and teachers – provides information on the prospects and career opportunities of Swiss professional and vocational education.



Choosing a career

- * **is more successful with the support of parents, school, career counselling centre and business world**
- * **is achieved by following the seven steps of the career timetable (page 3)**
- * **is made easier by 'taster days', talking to professional people, visiting information events and careers guidance**

MASTHEAD

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A MATTER FOR PARENTS, ETC. CHOOSING A CAREER

What career is right for me? Young people have to find the answer to this during their 8th and 9th school year – together with parents, school, careers advisers and organisations that take on trainees.

Young children know exactly what they want to be one day. Professional football player, singer, astronaut, vet... They're allowed to dream. Young people who decide on their choice of career during the 8th and 9th school year are also allowed to dream. But they have to reconcile their dreams with the real possibilities. Professional football player, singer? That might not be possible. But carpenter, businesswoman, health specialist, polymechanic and so on might be. So, dream careers turn into ideal careers or jobs. Jobs which are right for the young people concerned, which match their interests and abilities and for which there are appropriate training vacancies.

But which career is right for me? For many young people, the answer to that question is not easy. They need time to consider carefully what they want, their inclinations and abilities; they have to scout around the world of work and gather information and, finally, make a choice and find a position as an apprentice (see "Career choice timetable" box, page 4). They can't do it on their own. Young people need support – from their parents, school, career counselling centres and the business world.

The role of the parents

Parents bear most responsibility for the process of choosing a career, and demands are placed on them on a number of different levels: as mentors, motivators, comforters, companions, coaches and confidant[e]s. They are responsible for their child's advancement in the process of choosing a career. When it comes to finding a taster vacancy or an apprenticeship, it's often the parents' network (employers, friends, acquaintances) that helps things along. What is crucial for the children, is to feel that their parents are involved and ready to listen to their ideas and questions. Equally important: parents should not put their child under unnecessary pressure. The process of choosing a career takes time and requires patience and the necessary composure. Stress seldom leads to good solutions.

Info for parents

When it comes to choosing a career, the people to whom children relate most closely by are their parents. So it's even more important for their parents to know how the process of choosing a career works and how they can best support their children. Parents who want to be prepared specifically for this task can get helpful publications from the publishing house CSFO. They can be ordered from the website www.shop.csfo.ch. (→ Choosing a career for the first time [Choix professionnel]).

The role of the school

In career choice lessons, young people learn how to set about choosing a career properly. They take a good look at their expectations and ideas, gather information about different jobs and upper secondary-level schools, learn how to write applications and prepare themselves for possible job interviews. Career choice lessons start in the penultimate year of school. Usually, the teachers carry out a skills assessment and needs analysis together with the young people and parents. Many schools also hold career choice information events.

The role of career counselling centres

Careers guidance supports young people in their choice of career by providing a number of services (see interview page 5). These services are usually offered free of charge.

- The career counselling centre (centre d'orientation professionnelle) has printed and electronic media on all training and continuing education opportunities. They can be taken out on loan and studied at home with the parents.
- On the Internet there is a lot of information available on individual jobs and careers as well as help with choosing a career: www.orientation.ch.
- In individual guidance, young people who aren't sure what their inclinations and abilities are or who lose their way in the multitude of different career options, are given targeted support.

The role of the business world

The business sector presents the world of work and the jobs it offers in a clear and realistic way – with information events, taster days and practical work experience. Insights of this kind are important for young people because neither brochures nor DVDs are a substitute for a person's own experiences and impressions (see "Taster days", page 5).

Career choice timetable

The last two years of school is the time when a career choice is made. The following seven steps have proven worthwhile as an aid to young people.

Step 1: Find out interests and strengths

Only when I know what I can do and what I want to do, will I find the right career. So, first, I work out what my strengths and weaknesses, my inclinations and aptitudes are.

Step 2: Find out about the world of work and training

Which careers am I interested in? What are their requirements? I gather information and gain an overview.

Step 3: Compare interests and strengths with the requirements
I know what my interests and strengths are and have discovered exciting careers. In which careers do my own abilities match the job description?

Step 4: Take a closer look at interesting careers and training options
Now I want to know exactly: is this career or that training option really right for me? I visit information events, apply for taster days and talk to professional people.

Step 5: Weigh up various possibilities and make a choice
When I know which careers or training options are right for me, I make a decision. Or – if several different careers are possible – I set priorities. A list of pros and cons may help.

Step 6: Put the decision into practice
I put my decision into practice. I draw up application documents, look for an apprenticeship vacancy or enrol in an upper secondary-level school.

Step 7: Prepare for apprenticeship position or school
I have found my training place. Sit back and relax? No! I prepare myself for the new phase of my life, stick at it in school and fill in any gaps.

myorientation.ch

The interactive career choice platform, myorientation.ch, goes through the seven steps involved in choosing a career and is aimed equally at pupils, parents and teachers. For every step, the three target groups are given tailor-made information and back-up.

Pupils can find interactive tools and games to help them assess their interests and abilities. With a click of the mouse, they can find out about various educational routes and obtain information about training options and careers. They can record everything they discover and all the information they need in a logbook. This serves as the basis for conversations with teachers or careers advisers. For the later phase of the career choice process, the pupils find instructions for seeking apprenticeship or trainee positions, preparing for job interviews and much more.

Parents can follow their children's career choice process. Every step is explained and documented so that the parents always know where their child is in the process, which task he/she has to tackle next and how they can support him/her with it.

Teachers can find materials for career choice lessons and helpful links. With the logbook, they can follow and assist the development of the pupils.

The reminder e-mails are a central aid: young people, parents and teachers are kept informed regularly about which step comes next. This ensures that the timetable for the career choice is adhered to and nothing important is overlooked. So, anyone who, in the context of choosing a career, doesn't want to leave anything to chance, can log on, free of charge, to myorientation.ch.

Taster days

It doesn't matter how appetising a dish looks – anyone who hasn't tried it before will take a little taste of it first before eating it. The same should apply to choosing a career. Taster days (career choice work experience) give an initial impression of the professional and working world. It lasts between two and five days and takes place in a company or organisation that takes on trainees. The young people get to know what the everyday job is like on a one-to-one basis, accompany experienced professional people and gain practical experience.

Taster days are allowed from the age of 13. The best way is for the young people to approach the companies directly and inquire about taster vacancies. Even better: they set their sights on those companies where they would like to do an apprenticeship. The taster days show whether the chemistry is right. And the organisations taking the trainees also look closely at whether a young person fits into their company. Because 'taster trainees' are potential full trainees. Whoever does several different 'tasters', gets to know various jobs

and companies – a sound basis for the career choice decision. Taster days are not possible in all occupations. Nevertheless, insights can be gained into the business world. For example, at information events of companies or professional organisations or trade associations. Or by accompanying professional people from the young person's circle of acquaintances for a day. Whichever way: someone who wants to try out a job should first take a thorough look at that job and prepare themselves well before starting. The website www.orientation.ch (Choix professionnel > Stages et entreprises) or the "taster set" on www.schulverlag.ch (E-Services > Mediendatenbank > Artikelliste → Schnupper-Set)* shows how to do this.

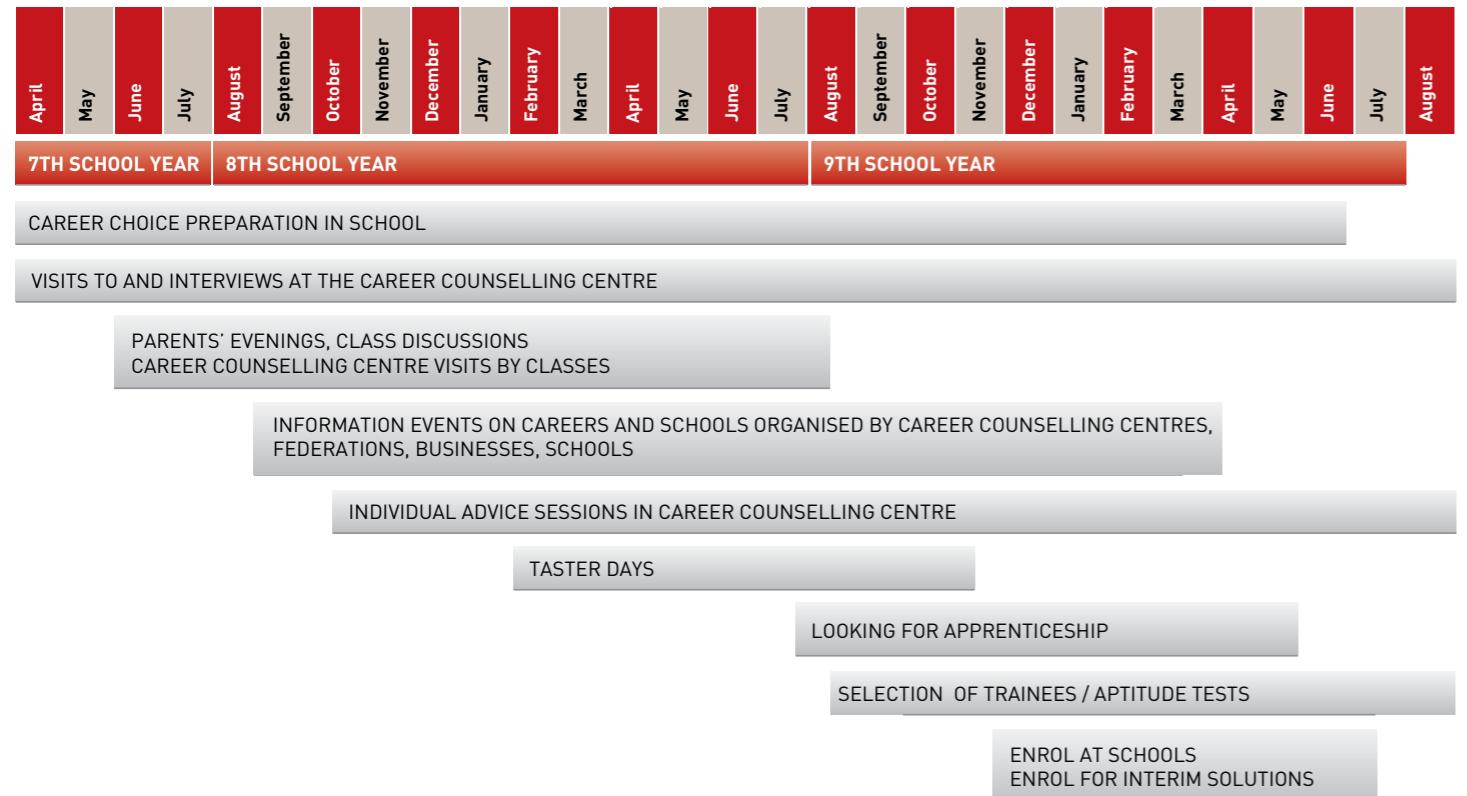
*available in German

A link for all eventualities

www.orientation.ch takes you to all the information relating to choosing a career:

- Job outlines and upper secondary-level schools
- myorientation.ch
- Work experience taster days
- Information events
- List of apprenticeship vacancies
- Bridge-year courses and interim solutions
- Tips for parents
- Information for those with a different mother tongue
- Addresses of the careers guidance offices (or directly: www.adresses.csfo.ch)

Choosing a career – overview



There may be timing differences depending on the canton. Ask the careers guidance office in your region.
© myorientation.ch, SDBB

«CAREERS GUIDANCE HELPS IN THE SEARCH FOR POSSIBLE TRAINING COURSES»

Careers guidance is an important source of support when it comes to choosing a career. Careers guidance expert Marc Chassot* explains how it can help and where its limits lie.

When is careers guidance necessary and useful?

Guidance on jobs, university courses and careers is useful in all situations where the person has to choose a career or course, whatever his/her age. It's particularly active during the transitional phases, whether that's between school and post-compulsory education or when changing careers. It meets people's need for information when they want to find out about the range of all the options that exist. It helps to clarify which solution suits someone best at a given point on his/her educational or career path.

What can careers guidance achieve?

The career counselling centres make information services available to the public in electronic form through the website www.orientation.ch or in printed form, which can be consulted on-site or taken out on loan from the different career and job information centres. The documentati-



on can also be ordered from the Swiss Service Centre for vocational and professional education and training / study and careers counselling (Centre suisse de services Formation professionnelle, orientation professionnelle, universitaire et de carrière CSFO). The career counselling centres also offer advice services provided by careers advisers. The advice process takes place in the context of conversations or interviews. In most cases, the basic services are free of charge but some cantons offer more extensive services for which there is a charge.

Where are career counselling centres resources limited, where can it no longer help?

Career counselling centres do not help people to look for an apprenticeship or training position. Nor can they help an applicant to access an educational route when he/she doesn't fulfil the requirements set by the school or education institute. The careers guidance process involves active participation by the applicant. It doesn't offer ready-made solutions but provides help with decision-making.

Briefly, what happens at the advice process?

The guidance interview starts with an explicit enquiry the person concerned: What is his/her aim? what's the reason for the consultation? It continues with facts and information being gathered about the person's personal development and schooling. The person is

then asked to think about all the aspects relating to his/her future choice, for example his/her personal and work-related interests, skills and abilities, environment, wishes and constraints. During this phase, tests may be suggested depending on requirements. The careers adviser suggests a range of possible solutions and assesses them together with the person concerned. This process is a decision-making aid. In the end, the decision is up to the job seeker or applicant.

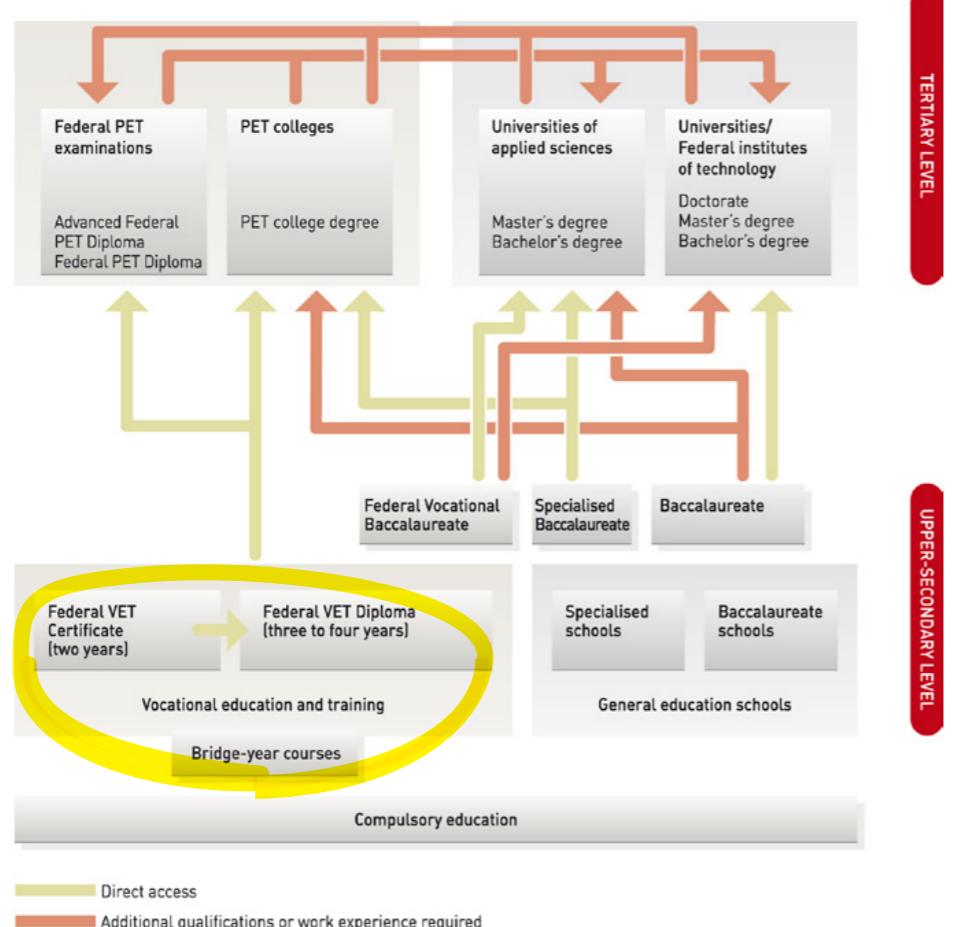
Finally: what tips can parents and teachers of young people give them in the process of choosing a career?

Parents and teachers play an important role in supporting young people when they're choosing a career. It's useful for this question to be tackled freely both within the family and in the classroom. Adults' opinions shouldn't be imposed on them but they do have a part to play in the way young people think about their future. Role models with whom young people can identify often influence career choices. It's also important for adults to set an example in living according to their own professional values and showing interest in their own work.

* Marc Chassot, head of the career counselling centre and adult education service, State of Fribourg

Choosing a career

The transition from compulsory education to upper secondary school level is crucial for child and parents. The step into professional and vocational education leaves many different routes open.



Claudia Graf, works as a chemist
My parents encouraged and supported me to complete a 10th school year. The interim year was very important for me to become more mature, think intensively about my choice of career and prepare myself for it. During that year, I was fairly stubbornly set on one career. My mother helped to open up new possibilities and look at other careers too. She encouraged me

new possibilities and look at other careers too. She encouraged me to do a taster period with a chemist. I would never have done that of my own accord. Now, I'm sure that I've trained in the ideal job and taken the right path for me.



Dimitrios Lavantsiotis, qualified machine and plant engineer, works as a skilled stage hand at the Theatre of Basel

When I was choosing a career, my parents and teachers gave me a lot of support. For example, my teacher came up with the idea of machine and plant engineer. My parents always supported me: with tips and advice and useful comments. But they didn't put me under pressure. They let me make the decision myself.



Silvia Meister, works as a nurse
Based on experience, I can say that the process of choosing a career is different for every child. With my three children, I always made sure that they went to try jobs out in several places. Various experiences and impressions always help in the decision. I also think it's important to take the pressure off

the children and make them aware that their choice of training is only an initial start in the world of work, not the final destination. If they want to do something different later on, they can do further training or retrain. As a parent, you should forget your career choices for your children and let them decide for themselves.



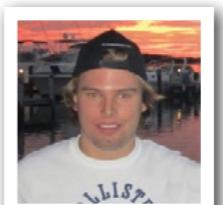
Dominique Heller, qualified electrical fitter, works as a radio presenter
My parents found the right combination between "allowing me time" and "giving me a push". For a long time, I couldn't decide on a training course and, in that respect, my parents helped me along with ideas. Today, I work in a completely different occupation. Because although we have to decide when we're young, we can retrain.



Kathrin Marti, works as a nurse
When they were choosing a career, we always supported both our children and were ready to listen to them. We encouraged them to do taster days. We helped them to organise things by setting up contacts with friends who work in the desired career. When the children had questions, we answered them as well as we could. If we were unable to help, we asked the careers guidance service.



René Zahno, works as a careers and course adviser
In order to find a suitable position as an apprentice, nowadays, taster periods, tests and a lot of applications are necessary. As well as good school exam results, workplace trainers also look for good manners, motivation and dedication. Taster days offer the opportunity to show these qualities.



Michel Zwahlen, office worker, works in ordering, sales and customer service
Sometimes you don't have to look very far at all because you can also make a career out of your hobby. My biggest hobby was and is ice hockey. So, I did a commercial/business course and now I work in an ice hockey shop. With a bit of searching and asking around, you may be able to turn your hobby into a suitable career.



Sylvie Meyer, works as university lecturer (HES-SO)
Finding an apprenticeship after choosing a career is a difficult task for the parents and the young person. Some advice about the interviews and taster days are useful. Finally, when he/she starts an apprenticeship, it's important to see how the teenager is coping because working life is more demanding than school life. In the end, what perhaps helped my children most was to allow them breathing space by letting them take a year off and spend time in another language region.

WEBSITES

Orientation.ch: This portal for choosing an occupation, course options and career path-related questions leads you to all the information relating to choosing an occupation, including for parents of young people at the age of choosing a career. www.orientation.ch

vetplus.ch: The basic professional and vocational education page provides information on the various entry routes into the world of work, shows the seven steps towards a career and the various guidance services offered. www.vetplus.ch

Missionfuture.ch: Trainees report on their own experiences in choosing a career. Questions can be asked on the bulletin board, the two games show, in a fun way, what the various career routes are and the collection of links provides further help. www.missionfuture.ch

Career and education fairs: A programme of forthcoming career and education fairs. www.vetplus.ch → Agenda

CSFO: Tips for parents on questions about choosing a career, help and information for young people, career choice magazine, material for career choice lessons.

www.shop.csfo.ch → Choosing a career for the first time [Choix professionnel]

CAREER COUNSELLING CENTRES

Aargau

Beratungsdienste für Ausbildung und Beruf
Herzogstrasse 1, 5000 Aarau
Tel. 062 832 64 00
www.beratungsdienste-aargau.ch

Appenzell Ausserrhoden

Fachstelle Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung
Regierungsgebäude, 9102 Herisau
Tel. 071 353 67 19
www.berufsberatung.ar.ch

Appenzell Innerrhoden

Amt für Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung
Hauptgasse 51, 9050 Appenzell
Tel. 071 788 93 70
www.ai.ch/de/verwaltung/aemter

Basel Land

Amt für Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung
Rosenstrasse 25, 4410 Liestal
Tel. 061 927 28 28
www.afbb.bl.ch

Basel Stadt

Basler Berufsinformation
Rebgasse 14, 4058 Basel
Tel. 061 267 86 92
www.bbe-bs.ch

Bern

Zentralstelle für Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung
Bremgartenstrasse 37, Postfach, 3001 Bern
Tel. 031 633 81 00
www.be.ch/berufsberatung

Fribourg

Amt für Berufsberatung und Erwachsenenbildung, Rue St-Pierre Canisius 12
1700 Freiburg
Tel. 026 305 41 86
www.berufsberatungfr.ch

Geneva

Office pour l'orientation, la formation professionnelle et continue
Rue Prévost-Martin 6, case postale 192
1211 Genève 4
Tel. 022 388 44 00
www.geneve.ch/ofpc

Glarus

Berufs- und Laufbahnberatung
Gerichtshausstrasse 25, 8750 Glarus
Tel. 055 646 62 60
www.biz-gl.ch

Graubünden

Amt für Berufsbildung
Rohanstrasse 5, 7000 Chur
Tel. 081 257 27 72
www.berufsbildung.gr.ch

Jura

Centre d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle et de psychologie scolaire
Chemin des Arquebusiers
2900 Porrentruy
Tel. 032 420 34 70
www.jura.ch/cos

Lucerne

Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung
Obergrundstrasse 51, 6002 Luzern
Tel. 041 228 52 52
www.biz.lu.ch

Neuchâtel

Office cantonal de l'orientation scolaire et professionnelle
Rue du Parc 53, 2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds
Tel. 032 889 69 59
www.ne.ch/orosp

Nidwalden

Berufs- und Studienberatung
Robert-Durrer-Strasse 4, 6371 Stans
Tel. 041 618 74 40
www.netwalden.ch

Obwalden

Berufs- und Weiterbildungsberatung
Brünigstrasse 178, 6061 Sarnen
Tel 041 666 63 44
www.berufsberatung-ow.ch

Schaffhausen

Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung
Herrenacker 9, 8201 Schaffhausen
Tel. 052 632 72 59
www.biz-sh.ch

Schwyz

Amt für Berufs- und Studienberatung
Huobstrasse 9, 8808 Pfäffikon
Tel. 055 417 88 99
www.sz.ch/berufsberatung

Solothurn

Berufs- und Studienberatung
Bielstrasse 102, 4502 Solothurn
Tel. 032 627 28 90
www.biz.so.ch

St. Gallen

Zentralstelle für Berufsberatung
Davidstrasse 31, 9001 St. Gallen
Tel. 058 229 20 46
www.berufsberatung.sg.ch

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6501 Bellinzona
Tel. 091 814 63 51
www.ti.ch/uosp

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Am Marktplatz, St.Gallerstrasse 11
8510 Frauenfeld
Tel. 052 724 13 81
www.abb.tg.ch

Uri

Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung
Klausenstrasse 4, 6460 Altdorf
Tel. 041 875 20 62
www.ur.ch/berufsberatung

Vaud

Office cantonal d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle
Rue de la Borde 3d, 1014 Lausanne
Tel. 021 316 11 70
www.vd.ch/orientation

Valais

Amt für Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung Oberwallis
Schlossstrasse 30, 3900 Brig-Glis
Tel. 027 922 48 80
www.vs.ch/berufsberatung
Office d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle du Valais romand
Avenue de France 23, 1950 Sion
Tel. 027 606 45 00
www.vs.ch/orientation

Zug

Amt für Berufsberatung
Baarerstrasse 21, 6300 Zug
Tel. 041 728 32 18
www.zug.ch/biz

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