

Navigating Career Fairs

Employer comments and observations made by Career Services Professionals have alerted us to the growing trend of parents attending career fairs with their students.

The reason your student went off to college was to prepare them for a career, and for many juniors and seniors the time to get serious about the career search is fast approaching. It can be tempting to assist your student through this process, particularly given our current economy and the amount of money you've invested in school. However, there are helpful ways to assist your student and ways that can be harmful to their future as a professional. The helpful and harmful ways to assist your student through this process are explained below:

Helpful: Buying resume paper for your student's resume, and even proofreading their final copy.

Harmful: Passing out your student's resume for them at the career fair.

Why: If your student is going to perform tasks at their future job effectively, the employer needs to see they can work independently. If they do not hand out their resumes on their own, will they be able to perform daily job duties without assistance?

Helpful: Taking your student's suit to the dry cleaner, or purchasing them a new suit before the event.

Harmful: Adjusting your student's tie at the table of a prospective employer.

Why: Employers want to see that your student is independent and can think for themselves. Your presence at the career fair can undermine your student's abilities to perform independently in a job.

Helpful: Practicing interview questions with your student before the career fair.

Harmful: Answering interview questions for your student at the career fair.

Why: You and your student have invested a lot of time, money, and effort in their education, which has prepared them to think for themselves and answer questions on their own. Answering for your student undermines their preparation and intelligence. Instead, help instill confidence in their interview skills by conducting practice interviews prior to the fair.

Helpful: Going over the list of potential employers attending the career fair to help your student choose the best

companies to focus on. **Helpful:** Answering interview questions for your student at the career fair. **Why:** You and your student have invested a lot of time, money, and effort in their education, which has prepared them to think for themselves and answer questions on their own. Answering for your student undermines their preparation and intelligence. Instead, help instill confidence in their interview skills by conducting practice interviews prior to the fair.

