

Facing our Future Together

This global crisis has brought with it rising instability and it has become important for so many, now more than ever, to take each day as it comes! What the world will look like over the coming months and years is anyone's guess, so maybe let's not just leave the guess work to the journalists, scientists and the politicians. If you're anything like me, as a parent, I often find talking about the future quite daunting. Taking time to talk with our children to explore their hopes, dreams and plans for the future, can open a doorway to consider life and opportunities beyond the here and now.

Maybe your teenager has just found out that they will not be taking their GCSEs or A-Levels this year; or at least definitely not quite like those who have gone before them. Maybe talking with them about the possibilities for the future can create a safe space to acknowledge the loss of this rite of passage, recognise and celebrate their hard-work towards their exams and explore additional ways to fulfil their hopes and dreams for their future, in the absence of what may be for some, a "clear" transition to further training or study.

In my role as an education researcher, I've talked to many young people about what they aspire to do beyond 16. Come to think of it, my PhD research explored what some pupils in this GCSE Class of 2020 have planned for their future. Many "are waiting for their GCSEs to decide what to do next!" It is possible that without regular schooling and exams as expected, they may be looking for a direction for their future.

This is where you may be able to step in and talk about what might guide their plans. We have included resources so that you and your child can begin to think and talk to each other about the future. Of course, we've added a board game to explore some questions about degree options and consider some advantages and challenges they may encounter at University, if that's something that may be on their horizon. But it is also important to explore the future, not just in relation to their education,

but also considering what they may enjoy, change or plan for, in the months and years to come. This may be at home, in their local community or they may wish to make big social changes. In the resources, there is an activity to identify factors that they may currently enjoy, or plan to change, both big or small, in the world.

This may present you and your child with an opportunity to link their passions or even daily gripes, with potential career paths, by thinking about ways to create solutions or see gaps in the workforce that they could fill.

For younger children, it may also be a good time to explore what the future could look like for them and how they see themselves in the short to long term. It is a nervous time for us all, so it may be good to start thinking with them beyond now to what they would like the world to look like. Do they want to spend more time communicating with family and friends digitally... or have they had quite enough?! Maybe you can enjoy thinking about what their first fancy dress day outfit at school may be when it arrives or what they might like to do with their weekends, when Saturdays and Sundays feel noticeably less like every other day in the week.

We are currently facing the future, whilst taking each day as it comes. Even though we are far apart, we hope these activities offer an introduction to new ways we may be able to imagine a future for our young people, all together.