Help Your New Grad Find a Job

As parents of graduates facing a tough job market, what can you do to assist your son or daughter in transitioning from the secure world of classes and residence halls to the unknown reality of what lies ahead? Here are some suggestions:

***Ask* how you can help**.
Your son or daughter may have specific ideas about ways you can assist. Your editing skills may be the second pair of eyes needed to critique a resume; your managerial skills could be useful as a mock interviewer; your research skills might uncover some new job leads. Think about how your role as something other than mom or dad could be helpful.

But don't be pushy: Let your new grad take the lead.

Suggest a visit to the campus career center.
The campus career center provides a wealth of job search resources—job postings, career fairs, resume assistance, and career counseling, just to name a few. Make sure your son or daughter is aware of the office. If your new grad isn't near his or her alma mater, suggest that he/she call the career services offices at local colleges and ask if help is available.

Offer networking contacts.
Networking is one of the most effective ways to find a job. With your child's permission, talk to your co-workers about your son or daughter's job search. Discuss it with neighbors and friends. You never know who may know of a job opportunity.

Be ready to hear new ideas.
Your new grad may mention attending graduate school or raise a new career goal. Listen to new ideas with an open mind, making positive suggestions when appropriate. Ask open-ended questions to show your son or daughter that you're interested—and the answers will help your new grad think through the new ideas.

Provide a sounding board when frustrations overflow.
The nightly news about unemployment is stressful. Imagine trying to complete your studies and conduct a job search, too. If your child calls to talk, but really needs to vent, listen. Sometimes the best thing you can say is nothing at all.

Give an early graduation present with the job search in mind.
Don't wait until May to say congratulations. Now is a great time to give a graduation present that will be used during the job search and first year on the job. Looking for ideas? Interview suits, briefcases, portfolios, and memory sticks are great gifts for the new grad.

Reassure your new grad that a tough job market is temporary.
The ebb and flow of the economy is constant, and brighter days lie ahead. You've likely experienced similar ups and downs. Convey your experience to your new grad.

Look and listen for signs of depression.
If your son or daughter talks about skipping class, exhaustion, or loss of appetite, he or she might need some help.

If your student is still on campus, contact appropriate campus representatives (residence life offices, counseling centers, and so forth) for help.

Remind your new grad that you are proud of his or her accomplishments.
A sour economy should not take away the success of earning a college degree. Be sure your son or daughter knows that you are proud of this achievement. Send a card or make a phone call to specifically convey this message.

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