

Should Teens Work of After School Jobs?

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Around 51% of all youths in the United States aged 16-24 were employed either in a full-time or part-time capacity with approximately 20% attributed to high school students who were employed (US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). These statistics indicate that there are many youngsters today who work while also studying. The teenage years represent one of the most important periods in the life of individuals as it is where children transition into adulthood. Thus, whatever happens during this time may have significant impacts on the child's future outcomes and life quality. There are various reasons why teenagers in high school may prefer to work including to fund their education, help their families, and gain experience. However, given the delicate nature of the teenage years, I strongly believe that teenagers in high schools should not be allowed to work on after school jobs.

The first important reason why teenagers in high school should not be allowed to work is because working may interfere with their studies. Working on an after-school job will greatly reduce the amount of time that such teenagers can dedicate to their assignments, homework, and other types of school work. Work is something that is very demanding, and students should focus on school. I know this as I have personally taken multiple gigs in the past (waitress, catering server, and store clerk) on a part-time basis. Working on an after-school job will significantly shift the attention of the students from the complete focus on getting quality education and grades to an emphasis on being better employees and performing better at work. Jobs cause stress which in turn results in bad actions and poor performances in school. The unique stressors that students experience as a result of the conflict between work and study drive poor health and reduced academic outcomes (Owen, Kavanagh, & Dollard, 2018). High school students should therefore not be allowed to work part-time as this will interfere with their studies.

Another important reason why high school students should not be allowed to work on a part-time basis is due to the fact that part-time employment leads to increased risk of alcohol and substance abuse. Studies have revealed that students who work are at an increased risk of using drugs or drinking alcohol given the intersection of added responsibilities and an extra injection of cash. Colell, Bell, & Britton (2014) established that being employed is a strong determinant of alcohol use among both men and women. Alcohol drinking and substance use is common among college and high-school students and employment during the academic year plays an important role in student drinking and substance use thereby making the employment context an appropriate site for interventions targeting drug use and alcohol consumption (Butler, Dodge, & Faurote (2013). Therefore, by not allowing high school students to work part-time jobs while in school will go a long way towards reducing their risk exposure to alcohol and drug use.

Third, teenagers in high school are not just ready to work. Most teenagers in high school are still too young and lack the necessary skills and capabilities to make their own independent decisions and properly handle the various problems that might arise from being employed. There is a high probability among teenagers for the possibility of being subjected to exploitative and illegal employment practices. This is one of the main concerns that has resulted in the rise of criminal cases involving working high school students. This is usually not because on an aspect of them working on a part-time basis but is a consequence of the stressful situations that accompany work coupled with the fact that they still have not developed sufficient abilities to cope with work and attain a perfect work-school balance. Whenever I think of exploitative work practices, I remember Cassie, a friend of mine who was doing well in her part-time job as a supermarket cashier until someone quit and she was forced to take the extra shifts at no

additional pay as she felt uncomfortable pressing the issue. The issue left a negative impression of work on her which greatly affected her perception of work going into the future.

Working on a part-time basis also greatly limits the amount of personal time that teenagers have thereby resulting in missed opportunities and limited socialization. Having an obligation to work after school takes away the high school experience which is critical to the proper growth and development of teenagers. Due to work, students will find it very difficult to engage in sporting activities, volunteer work, drama activities or other relevant activities that make high-school life meaningful. Therefore, the students will miss the opportunity to learn useful living skills and gain valuable knowledge without having to work about work force problems. Work also limits the ability to make friends and participate in hobbies and other interests hence limiting both the emotional as well as intellectual growth among working teenagers.

In conclusion, having a part-time job is not a very wise idea as it may greatly affect school work, lead to an increase in the risk of alcohol and drug use, and limit proper growth and development. In addition, teenagers in high school are not just ready to work and so high school is not a good time to decide to take a part-time job. There is no denying that there are positives that can be associated with taking after-school jobs while in high school including gaining that valuable experiences, nurturing independent financial skills, learning responsibility, saving for college and even supporting one's family. However, teenagers in high school are under so much academic pressure and given the fact that most of them do not really know how to handle the added demands of an after-school job, it is not really worth it to risk an entire future based on some short-term gigs.

## References

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