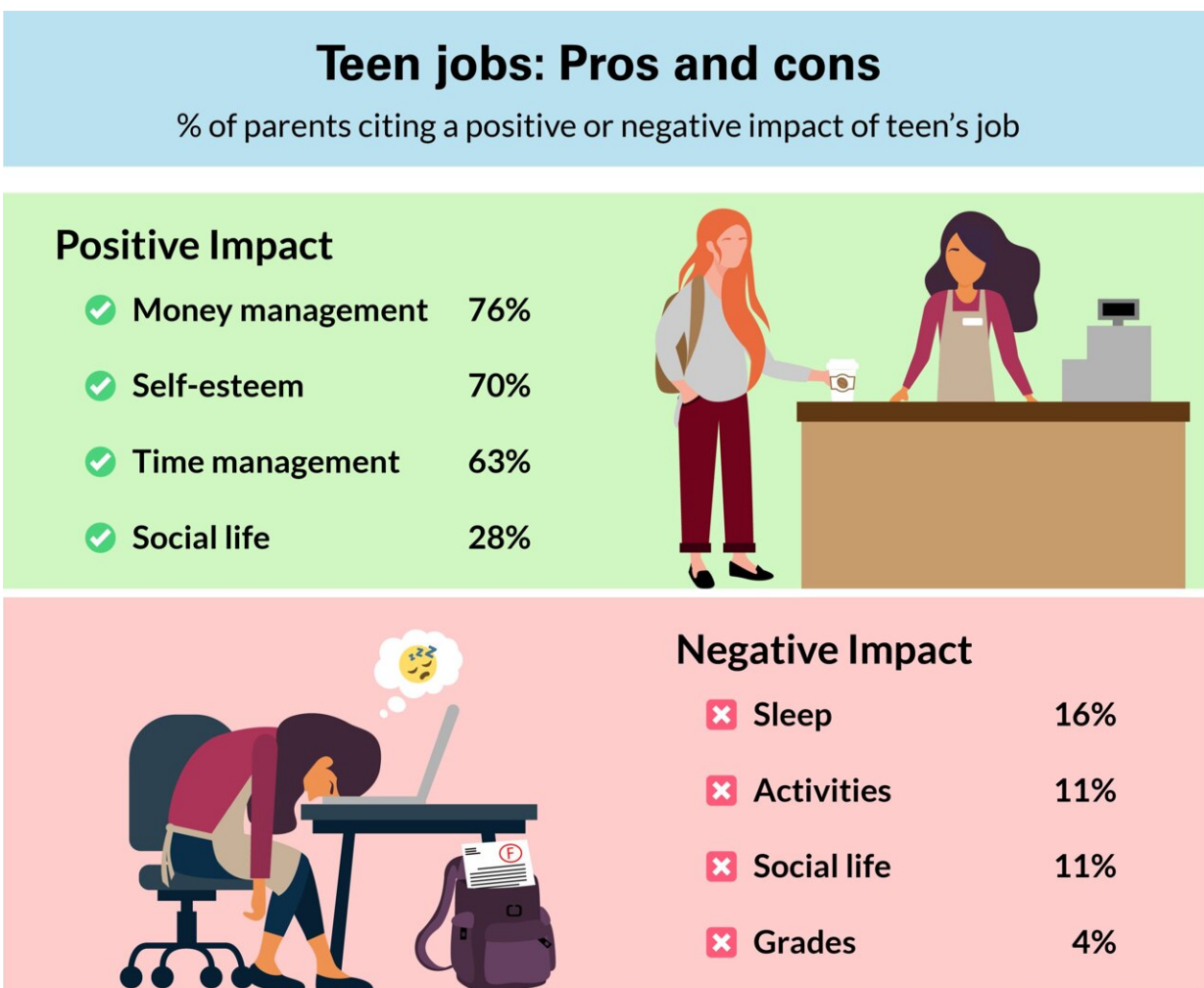


Teen jobs: Some parents cautious about negative impact on grades, sleep and social life

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Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2023

While some families tout the positives of job experiences, such as improving their teen's money management skills and self-esteem, others worry about the

potential to negatively impact sleep, schedules and grades. Credit: University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health

For many teens, that first formal job as a fast-food cashier, barista or lifeguard is a rite of passage.

And while some families tout the positives of job experiences, such as improving their [teen's](#) money management skills and [self-esteem](#), others worry about the potential to negatively impact sleep, schedules and grades, according to the University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.

But finding a job that meets logistical considerations—with schedules and transportation topping the list of importance—may be the key to minimizing any [negative consequences](#), the new national poll suggests.

"Having a part time job at a young age can teach responsibility, independence and help teens gain valuable experiences," said Mott Poll co-director Sarah Clark, M.P.H.

"But taking on too much can have an adverse effect on a teen's physical and mental health. Parents can play a big role in helping their teen find a job that meshes with the teen's and family's needs."

Biggest influencers on parents' support of teens working

More than three fourths of [parents](#) of working teens believe having a formal job has a positive impact on their teen's money management while self-esteem ranked high on the pros list for 70 % of parents and 63

% see social benefits.

Parents of teens who don't work express concerns that having a job could negatively impact their teen's grades, involvement in activities, sleep or social life.

But logistics topped parents' list as the most important considerations for whether a job is appropriate for their teen, with more than four in five saying it depends on whether hours fit with their teen's schedule and two thirds worried about the convenience of getting them to and from the job. More than half of parents also wanted a job to provide a learning experience for their child.

Being too busy and transportation issues were the top barriers parents listed for preventing their teen from getting a job while fewer referred to a lack of job availability, having to help at home, school or health.

"Families should have upfront conversations about logistical factors when teens are thinking about looking for a job, and certainly before they make any commitment," Clark said.

"Teens need to be realistic about time needed for schoolwork, as well as extracurricular activities, family commitments, and planned social events in order to prevent the new responsibility from negatively impacting their grades, health and other parts their life."

Navigating on-the-job conflicts

Among parents of teens who work, nearly half also say their teen has experienced workplace problems, with top issues including getting as many hours as promised, having to work more hours or later hours and disagreements with coworkers or managers. Fewer reported unsafe situations in the workplace and incorrect or delayed pay.

"Many teens will feel anxious about being in an unfamiliar situation, having someone evaluate their performance, and dealing with more demands on their time. Parents need to continually assess whether the job is having a negative burden on their teen," Clark said.

"Teens may feel overwhelmed by some of the new challenges that come in a workplace setting," she added. "Parents can help provide guidance on working through conflicts and how to communicate about them."

Just one in three parents also say they feel very informed about [state laws](#) for teen employment.

"Parents with working teens should take steps to become knowledgeable about state laws for teen employment to ensure that their child's rights, education, and safety are protected," Clark said.

The nationally representative poll report is based on responses from 1,017 parents with at least one child aged 14-18.

Over half of parents of 18-year-olds say their teen has a formal job, compared to a little more than two fifths of parents of teens ages 16-17 and 8% of parents of kids aged 14-15. More than a fourth of parents of teens with a formal job estimate their child works less than 20 hours a week.

Most parents say [teens](#) use their job money to pay for personal items, followed by savings. Less than a third say the pay goes towards activities.

"Teen employment may a good opportunity for some young people to earn their own money and help them learn to develop new skills, such as time and financial management, problem-solving, and teamwork," Clark said.

"But not every job is right for every teen. Parents can guide discussions with their child to make sure a job is the right fit for them. Teens are more likely to see positive benefits, with less family conflict, when they are in a job that is appropriate for their circumstances."

Provided by University of Michigan

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