

How to Use a Course Outline for Career Exploration:

Public and private high schools offer their students numerous elective courses, in areas from archaeology to zoology, and everything in between. Homeschoolers have that same opportunity but it takes a little bit more work on the part of the "staff" to offer those sorts of courses. The same holds true in the area of career exploration. High schools offer co-ops in which high school students work in the community for short periods of time, testing different career paths and trying out ideas for future employment, all from the comfort of a high school course. This is a possibility for your child too, with a little work on your part.

Is your child interested in exploring a certain career? You can build a career exploration course for her based on her interests. For instance, is she interested in a career in pharmacy? Write up a course outline that will allow her to research the educational path to becoming a pharmacist, the different types of pharmacy degrees, the different areas in which pharmacists can work (hospitals, drug stores, research labs, military, etc.), courses needed in high school to prepare for a pharmacy degree, salary ranges, opportunities for entrepreneurship, and more. Be sure to include all sorts of activities, from writing and oral presentations, to PowerPoint presentations and job-shadowing. Include opportunities to volunteer in the area of career interest, if at all possible. Gather letters from the people who directed the volunteer programs and include them in your final product. Try to offer your child as many different opportunities to explore this career path as possible, brainstorming with friends, family members, local pharmacists, online groups, and anyone else you can think of to consult.

This sort of course in a high school typically includes unpaid, internship-like work over the course of several weeks. That is definitely something that you should consider for your child if you are able to work it out with a local business. Actually working in the field of interest, even if it is for no pay, is a wonderful way to rule career choices in or out. Your child may find that she absolutely wants to work in a pharmacy in a hospital, or she may find that she can not stand the thought of filling prescriptions every day for the rest of her working life. Either way, important information is gained and high school credit can be granted for a course such as this.

It is a good idea to do several career explorations over the course of a child's high school years. If your child is interested in several careers, work on one exploration per year of high school. Between online courses, research projects, in-the-field work, volunteering, writing, presentations, and so on, there is more than enough to keep a high school student busily exploring future career choices and working toward high school credit at the same time.

**High school is a great time to Live & Learn
....and explore career choices!**