

For parents and caregivers: helping your child make their Level 2 qualification choices

Helping your child make the right choices for them



Whether your child is about to take their GCSEs, National 4s/5s, or something else, choosing what to study can feel overwhelming for them. This guide will take you through everything you need to know to support them in making the right choice for them.

Check what's available

Not all schools and colleges offer the same options, and there are some subjects students are required to study at this level. For example, in England children must study English, maths, and science as their core subjects before making their other choices. Be aware that your child may study English language **and** English literature, and that they could be offered the option to study double or triple science.

Your child may also be offered the option to study:

- art: fine art, media studies, or graphic design
- performing arts: music, drama, dance, or performing arts
- technology: food technology, textiles, resistant materials, electronics, IT, or computer science

- humanities: geography, history, or religious studies
- languages
- sport or PE

Bear in mind that timetabling may mean that your child may not be able to study all the subjects they want to - for example, if PE and French are scheduled at the same time, they may not be able to study both, and in most cases, the timetable is set and won't be changed.

Speak to your child's school to find out what subjects they offer.

Skills and interests vs jobs

The most important thing for your child is that they feel they are able to succeed in the subjects they choose. This means that they should be encouraged to choose subjects they enjoy and that they are good at, even if they are not traditionally seen as 'good' subjects or qualifications.

For example, if your child loves working with their hands and doesn't enjoy academic studies, they may be more suited to BTECs than GCSEs, and there is nothing wrong with them choosing this as a pathway. Future employers will be more interested in how successful your child is in the qualification they choose, rather than the qualification itself.

Encourage your child to think about their skills and interests when making their choices. They can use the Unifrog [Competencies tool](#) to help them identify their best skills, then sit down with you to talk through what subjects might suit them best. If you're not sure, ask a teacher at your child's school for support.

Get clued up

Most schools offer an 'Options evening' where you and your child can talk to teachers about their subject, find out exactly what they'll be learning over the next two years, and ask any questions you have.

Prepare beforehand by asking your child what they might be interested in so that you don't visit subjects unnecessarily, and by creating a list of questions you both want to ask to take with you.

If you can't make the event for whatever reason, email your questions to your child's form tutor/s and ask them to see if they can get the answers from the relevant departments.

Your child's school is there to support you both, so don't be shy! Call, email, or go in and meet with staff and teachers to get what you need to help your child make this decision.

Remember who this is for

It can be easy to get caught up in the excitement and encourage children to choose subjects you wish you had taken, or to encourage them to take what you think is best for them. While it might seem helpful, in the long term they may end up having to take more courses to get into the job, apprenticeship, or university they want to because they haven't built the right skillset or knowledge base.

Be there as a sounding board for your child rather than a decision maker, and try to be open to all their ideas even if they aren't what you would choose for yourself.