



LET'S Connect

A Newsletter From Youth.Work.Connect.

UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN RULES OF WORK STARTS BY ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

A young employee is given a new project but does not fully understand one part of the assignment. They do their best, but the final work is not what the supervisor expected. The young worker did not want to look unprepared by asking too many questions. Meanwhile, the supervisor wished the employee had communicated earlier.

This is a common tension between new employees and their managers: “Am I asking too many questions?” vs. “Why aren’t they asking me more questions?”

That tension may show up first in a project or assignment, but it often points to something deeper. Many young workers are not only trying to understand the task in front of them.

They are also trying to figure out the hidden rules of the workplace: what is expected, when to speak up, how to ask for help, how to respond to feedback, and how to build trust with supervisors and coworkers.

That is why asking good questions matters. Questions are one of the most important ways young workers learn how a workplace really works.

Some good questions young workers can ask are:

- “How would you like me to keep you updated?”
- “What should I do if I get stuck?”
- “Can you explain what I should do differently next time?”
- “Who else can I learn from on this project?”

If young employees don't ask, supervisors can prompt them. A supervisor might say, “Before you get started, what questions do you have about the assignment?” They can also use this time to go over workplace norms such as presentation styles, when to check in, and what taking initiative looks like.

This creates clearer expectations and helps young workers learn how to navigate the workplace, not just complete the task.

If you're a young employee: Ask one question that helps you understand how the workplace works.

If you're an employer: Identify one expectation that may be obvious to you but may not be to a young employee and explain it to your new employees.

What's On Our Mind- Helping Youth Make Connections

Informational Interviews Help Students Build Connections

**Youth Work
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RESEARCH TRIANGLE
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Youth.Work.Connect. × Cristo Rey Research Triangle High School



Your Network Starts Now.

We were thrilled to partner with **Cristo Rey Research Triangle High School** in Durham, NC, for an **Informational Interview Workshop** with the school's incoming students.

The workshop had two important parts: a relationship mapping exercise and student-led interviews with volunteer participants.

Students first worked individually to think about the people they already know, from family members and teachers and coaches to work supervisors, faith leaders, and community leaders.

Antoinette Daye, Executive Director, framed the exercise simply: **"Who's in your corner?"** The answer gave each student a starting point for understanding and building their network.

Then they put network-building into practice. Students sat down with professionals and asked about their jobs, how they got started in their careers, and what advice they would give someone just beginning high school. It was fun to watch the genuine engagement among students and professionals.

Maria Blewitt, Co-Founder of Youth.Work.Connect., observed, **"This is when the magic begins."**

By the end of the workshop, the students had added 10 new allies to their networks.

It is not always easy to build a professional network. A good place to start is to recognize the relationships you already have and think intentionally about the relationships you want to develop. Then comes the important part: having opportunities to practice making those connections.

Adults can help make those opportunities possible. Consider being the person who says yes to a student's question, shares a career story, or makes an introduction. Small moments of connection can become the beginning of a young person's professional network.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

We would appreciate your thoughts on our initiative and welcome opportunities to collaborate. You can reach us at info@youthworkconnect.org and we look forward to staying connected.

**"Helping High School Youth From Underserved Communities
Build Social Capital to Promote Economic Mobility"**



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Youth.Work.Connect. LLC | 202 Beeston Ct | Cary, NC 27519 US

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