

A STREETWISE GUIDE TO EARNING MONEY

Looking for Work

Most people can do with making extra money. Here are some Streetwise tips on earning money safely and without problems . . .

1. Read the job ads in your local paper. Keep a look out for signs in your local shop windows asking for part-time help. Make sure that the ad makes it clear what you will be doing. Vague advertisements can spell danger. It may be worth calling in on shops where you know the staff and asking if they need anyone.

Be choosy. Stay away from places which make you uncomfortable or nervous. If you're visiting shops, don't go alone: take a friend or, even better, an adult you trust.

2. Newsagents' windows. People sometimes advertise odd jobs on cards here. If you spot a possible job this way, ring the number given and find out as much as you can about the job over the phone. If the person wants to arrange an interview, take along an adult you trust - preferably the person who normally looks after you, and if the employer offers you the job over the phone, don't rush in. Say you'd like to bring this adult along to meet them and discuss the work first.

Honest employers won't be put off by you involving a responsible adult. Talk to your family or the people who look after you about anything you're considering and never go to strange addresses alone.

Don't put your own card in a shop window. It's crazy to give a whole lot of strangers a way of getting in touch, when you have no idea what they're like. It's much safer - and quicker in the long run - to ask around within your own circle. Get your parents or other trusted adults to tell their friends you're looking for work.

Knocking on people's doors. This isn't a good way to get work - some people may be annoyed. And it can be risky going to houses you don't know. Instead, make the most of the people you do know: ask trusted adults to talk to their friends about giving you some jobs. Make a list of those who said they were interested and then pair up with a friend to go and call on them. Being with someone else gives you confidence and work's more fun when you have company.

The Paper Round Code

Hundreds of young people have paper rounds. It's one of the most popular ways for under 16's to earn money. It can be very hard work, whether you're doing it on foot or by bike. Check out the following tricks of the trade.

Beware of dogs! Don't pet them, even if their tails are wagging invitingly. They can turn nasty.

Suggest to your employer that you regularly vary your route. Even on the same

route, switch around the order in which you go to the addresses. Don't be predictable - this way, the job's more interesting and you avoid unwanted company.

In darkness or twilight, stick to well-lit roads.

If you go by bike, check it regularly to see it's working properly, and use your lights to help drivers spot you.

Wear bright reflective clothing - you're on the road at a busy time. And be prepared for car drivers to be in a hurry.

Wear a cyclists' helmet. It could make all the difference if you do have a fall.

If you leave your bike anywhere, lock it first. It's also a good idea to mark your bike with a special property number. Your local police station will advise you on how to do this. Then if your bike is stolen, the police have a better chance of finding it for you.

Don't accept lifts from anyone, even if you are on foot, wet and tired.

If customers ask you into their house, refuse politely. You can't afford the time and you don't want to take risks. If someone says they're ill or have had an accident and need help, tell them you'll get a neighbour.

You may be offered a tip or a gift at Christmas - and very nice too. But if you're invited in to get it explain that your employer prefers you not to enter anyone's house. Genuine people won't be offended.

Decisions, Decisions . . .

Dean and Paul have been washing cars for some friends of Paul's parents when a neighbour from across the street comes out and says "Will you wash my car too?" They can see the car is in the drive but they don't know the person and have never been in the house.

What should they do?

First, they should tell the people they're now working for, where they're going, and let the neighbour know they're telling them. That way, everyone can feel safe. It might be an idea to ask the neighbour if there's an outside tap. If not, they can fill their buckets in the house they already know and avoid going into a strange one.

When you're earning money, you may often have to make decisions about whether or not to do something. Think first. You don't need to treat everyone as a threat, but always try to weigh up each situation in advance.

Work Tips

Always let your family or the adult who normally looks after you, know where you

are.

Feel confident about the jobs you're doing - if you're scared or uncomfortable about doing them, then don't.

Settle when and what you'll be paid before you do the work.

Ask for instructions and advice if you're ever unsure about anything. It can save a lot of problems.

Think ahead. How will you get home when the work is over?

Put aside money for fares and snacks to keep you going.

Stay within sight of the public.

Do odd jobs in pairs.

Be aware of your rights. You're young but you're entitled to decent pay, conditions and respect.