

IS IT WORTH CHOOSING A CAREER THAT DOESN'T PAY WELL?

Summary: Sometimes, your career path and financial desires never line up. What do you do then?



Question: I am currently a student but am having a problem choosing a career path. From the time I was a child, I have always wanted to work with kids. I looked into teaching and social work. Jobs in these fields seem to pay little but are still in the back of my mind. What kinds of careers should I consider?

Answer: Career interests and high earnings don't always go hand in hand. Finding a career that is meaningful, however, can spell the difference between a richly rewarding life and one that is simply rich in the pocketbook. Before you walk away from your longtime dream of working with children, consider the following alternatives to balance your career and monetary goals.

Identify all of the possible roles and work environments that address the needs of youth, and look into those that pay on the higher end of the scale. Research roles with schools, youth programs, recreation programs, hospitals and businesses that produce products for children (such as toy-design companies). A position that requires additional education, such as a child psychologist, will tend to pay at a correspondingly higher level of compensation.

Another way to realize your dream is to supplement your primary salary by generating a second revenue stream. If you choose to join the teaching profession, you could supplement your income by coaching a sport or taking on summer contract jobs. There are lots of teachers, for example, who paint houses during their time off in the summer.

And finally, if after you explore these options you decide to forgo youth work for the big bucks, use your discretionary time if you have any to volunteer to work with youth in community, educational, recreational or social programs.

See [The 10 Most Meaningful Careers](#) for more information.