

Careering towards dollars in your p

'Tis not just the season to spend, Christmas can also be a real money-earner for teens, writes **Karina Barrymore**



Gemma Gray, 16, works at a Supre fashion outlet. Picture: Stephen Cooper

AS THE final days of the school year tick over, now's the time for those budding entrepreneurs to line up a summer job. Fast-food outlets, supermarkets, restaurants, even the local car-wash or play centre are all big employers of young people, especially during the peak summer period. Part-time and casual work are big business for organisations and great cash for kids during the holidays. Most teenagers can earn between \$10 and \$15 an hour, depending on the job. However, now is also the time school leavers who are not heading for tertiary education, or who are taking a break first, can get a head-start on a permanent job,

traineeship or apprenticeship. According to specialist job company teenjobs.com.au we're heading into the peak teenage job market, as school holidays kick in and consumer demand picks up for the Christmas-New Year season. "Most jobs are casual and part-time and typically cover employers like supermarkets, restaurants, cafes and general retail work," [teenjobs](http://teenjobs.com.au) director John Saadie says. "We also get a lot of inquiries from young kids wanting to try out certain jobs during the holidays to see if it suits them in the long-term. "We also have quite a lot of traineeships and apprenticeships should they want to move in to a career now."

LOCAL JOBS

"Probably the biggest issue with teen jobs is location. Most teenagers don't have transport so they need to have a job in their local area," Saadie says. "We basically organise the website based on location because

that is usually the most important thing for both the employer and the teenager. "Many of our jobs are the sort of thing that years ago the local shop or company would have put a sign in the window, advertising help wanted. These days teenagers aren't out and around in the local area, they're more likely to be surfing the net so that's where we are too." According to Saadie, girls are more keen as job hunters than boys. "Boys are out at the beach, mucking around," he says. "By far, the greatest number of teen job hunters are girls." One of teenjobs.com.au's successful job seekers is Sydney high school student Gemma Gray. Gemma, 16, has been working part time for more than a year at retailer Supre and had also previously earned money through babysitting. "I like earning my own money. It means I'm able to go out on the weekends, buy clothes and stuff that I choose," Gray says. "I don't actually save any of it - I seem to spend all of it always." The highest-paying jobs for teenagers are typically with large corporations such as supermarket or retail chains, which pay about \$15 an hour, followed by fast-food or restaurant and cafe work. It drops to about \$10 an hour for a "walker" which is someone who delivers leaflets and junk mail to letterboxes.

NO EXPERIENCE

Finding your first job can be really difficult, especially when you are in your teens and without any experience to offer. But most employers are willing to give inexperienced people a go, according to CareerOne.com.au editor Kate Southam. "Just gaining experience with working is highly valuable," Southam says. "Any future employers like to see that a young candidate has formed good work habits such as punctuality, reliability, experience working in teams, ability to take direction and possessing basic problem-solving skills.

TOP TEN INTERVIEW TIPS

Ten steps to make you shine during an interview:

- 1 Find out everything you can about the company in advance, including who its customers are.
- 2 Read the job description carefully. In an interview, your job is to sell yourself so analyse your own strengths and see how you can apply that to the job description.
- 3 Practise for your interview. Ask mum or dad, sibling, or friend to be the interviewer, with a sample list of questions.
- 4 First impressions count. Clean clothes, hair and nails. Dress

- 5 appropriately. Limit the amount of piercings and body art on display - no need to hide them, just don't make them a distraction.
- 5 Body language is very important. Hand and arm movements shouldn't be too large. Don't fiddle. Your posture should be relaxed but alert. Don't slouch!
- 6 Arrive 15-20 minutes before the interview and organise your thoughts.
- 7 Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and maintain eye contact. Be courteous. Use Mr or Ms unless told otherwise.

- 8 When answering questions during the interview:
 - Give short answers.
 - Look the interviewer in the eye.
 - Think about the question before answering.
 - A little humour never hurts.
- 9 You'll usually be given a chance to ask any questions. Ask anything you are unsure about but also find out what the next steps are. Will they contact you? When do they think they will do that?
- 10 Your interview isn't over when you walk out the door. As soon as you get home, send a short thank-you email. Courtesy goes a long way.

Source: teenjobs.com.au and CareerOne.com.au

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Even if the company is not advertising for someone, you can still just walk in and ask if they have a job available. If they say no, leave your resume anyway and say you'd be keen to come back any time when they do need someone.

YOUR RIGHTS

Another major issue for first-time employees is being aware of their workplace rights, CareerOne's Southam says. These are the major websites and authorities to get help with any workplace or pay rights you may be concerned about. Saadie says: "Then when you go for an interview, it is very important to look presentable. This doesn't mean you need to wear a suit but remember to be well-groomed, well-dressed and to smile."

Infoline on 131 394 will give you someone to talk to and explain any difficult issues. Some of the basic rights teenage workers have include:

- you must be paid for all the hours you work
- you're entitled to a minimum rate of pay.
- you can ask someone to help you negotiate a workplace agreement.
- you must have a parent or guardian sign any agreement if you're under 18.

MORE HELP?

The Federal Government's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations looks after young workers and has a lot of resources to help on its www.jobguide.deewr.gov.au website and the following related sites:

- [career information service myfuture.edu.au](http://careerinformation.service.myfuture.edu.au)
- a guide for year 12 students to plan their post-school education and training, year12whatnext.gov.au
- The department's *Job Guide* (www.jobguide.deewr.gov.au) contains many occupational profiles. It is produced for a year 10 audience and distributed annually to schools.