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**FAST
FACTS**

Career Exploration

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The purpose of career exploration is to help students investigate various occupational options and determine a career path.

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Career exploration typically occurs in middle school and early high school; however, some students may engage in career exploration throughout high school as their interests evolve.

3

Common career exploration activities include visiting local businesses, talking with employers about job expectations, attending career fairs, and learning from virtual career exploration websites. Students may also engage in self-assessments and other activities that help them to explore their values, beliefs, and strengths as they relate to work.

4

Transition personnel play a key role in helping students process what they are learning during career exploration. They do this by making connections between concepts learned at school and their application to work, and engaging students in discussions about what they are learning about themselves and their desired career path.

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It is important to encourage students to explore a variety of careers within each field of interest. Focusing on a broader field of interest (e.g., medical) rather than one occupation (e.g., doctor) may assist students to identify career interests they would not have otherwise considered.

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Information gathered from career exploration helps inform transition goals, which in turn guides decisions about a student's course of study and the types of work-based learning experiences they pursue prior to exiting school.

This fact sheet was developed by the Illinois Center for Transition and Work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign through a contract with the Illinois State Board of Education. Information presented may not reflect the position or policy of the Illinois State Board of Education.

