



THE CONVERSATION

The Kitchen Table Guide

You don't have to have all the answers. You just have to ask better questions.

- Ask, then listen. ● Plan on several short talks, not one big one. ● Nothing here is a one-way door.

1 Six questions to ask your child

- 1 When do you lose track of time?**
Listen for fixing, building, figuring things out.
- 2 Would you rather sit, stand, or move all day?**
Technician work is mostly on your feet.
- 3 Do you like seeing results right away?**
A machine starting back up is the daily reward.
- 4 What problem did you solve that you were proud of?**
Listen for patience and curiosity.
- 5 How would you feel about getting paid while you learn?**
- 6 Whose job do you know that you'd actually want?**

3 Four questions to ask any program

- 1 Where do your graduates work?**
Names, not percentages.
- 2 Which employers help build or hire from this program?**
- 3 What's the total cost, in writing?**
- 4 What credential do I leave with, and does it count toward a degree later?**

Red flags: a guaranteed job, pressure to sign today, no employer names.

2 What they'll ask you

"Does it pay?"

\$63,380

median, DFW industrial machinery mechanics¹

\$75,580

median, DFW electrical and electronic engineering technicians¹

"Is anyone hiring?"

6,380

openings a year in Texas²

+22%

growth by 2034²

"Will I be stuck?"

No. Lead technician, planner, trainer, and manager come next.³

"How do I pay for it?"

Ask each college for the **total cost in writing**, then ask its financial aid office what you qualify for. Start with the federal student aid application (FAFSA). Fees, books, and tools add up.⁴

4 If they're leaning in and you're nervous

Name the worry. Then go see it together at a plant tour or open house, and ask a technician how they got in.

5 If they have no idea

That's normal. Take the 10-question fit check together, then try one small step: a tour, a job shadow, or work-based learning. Texas high schools offer paid and unpaid placements through CTE courses such as Career Preparation and Practicum. Ask the school's CTE office.⁵