

## Raising the participation age (RPA) – What does it mean for your child

Raising the Participation age came about from government legislation, introduced in 2013 to encourage young people to stay in 'education and training' until they are 18.

It's not quite the same as the school leaving age as it doesn't mean young people have to stay on at school. They will have a choice of what they can do.

Here are the options for young people that are defined as suitable 'education and training'.

One option is to study full-time at school, college or with a training provider. There has been a trend in recent years for many more young people to continue their studies. This further study has become important to get into further or higher education and the workforce, where higher skills are increasingly required.

The second option is full-time employment or volunteering (full-time is counted as more than 20 hours a week) but it must be combined with part-time study or training. This is where RPA is different from just raising the school leaving age. You can't just go and get any old job. It must be a job with training or the young person is not seen as fully participating.

The third option is an apprenticeship. Numbers of apprenticeships are increasing all the time and the government is committed to increasing the number of apprenticeships to 3 million by 2020.

You may think that apprenticeships are in traditional areas like engineering or catering at a fairly low level but there are many new apprenticeships at higher levels, some leading to degree level study such as the higher apprenticeship in legal services, finance, business, engineering and the media.

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