

Helicopter parents in job hunting

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'Helicopter' parents hover when kids job hunt

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By **Stephanie Armour, USA TODAY**

Employers are finding that parents are increasingly involved in their children's job choices, as "helicopter parenting" extends to the workplace.

As Generation Y enters the job force, parents of new hires are calling employers to negotiate salary and benefits, and some are even showing up at job fairs.

It's a new dynamic that has some employers responding by training recruiters and managers how to handle "helicopter parents," who hover over their children's lives.

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•At Hewlett-Packard, parents have gone as far as contacting the company after their child gets a job offer. They want to talk about their son's or daughter's salary, relocation packages and scholarship programs.

"Parents are contacting us directly," says Betty Smith, a university recruiting manager at HP. "This generation is not embarrassed by it. They're asking for parents' involvement."

She recalls one job fair in Texas "where the parent was there at our booth asking about benefits." The company has trained recruiters in how to handle parents.

•At Weber Shandwick, a global public relations firm, a father recently called the company to inquire about how his son could apply for its Atlanta internship program.

"I was very surprised. I answered my phone, and he said he had a son interested in internships," says Jennifer Seymour, who runs the intern program at the Atlanta office, where two full-time internships are offered every summer. They largely go to recent college graduates. She says helicopter parents create a negative view among hiring managers. "It hurts. Absolutely."

•At insurance provider Chubb, employees have helped their children get jobs at the company. Mary Troianello, 56, a senior administrative assistant, who has worked in human resources and other jobs for Chubb for about 16 years, helped her daughter Leah, 25, tweak her résumé, submitted it to the human resources department and helped her pick an interview suit and prepare for the interview. Leah got the job in accounts payable.

"I didn't feel the colleges were doing enough in that area," Mary says. "The (graduates) really don't have a clue. They're lost."

But too much parental involvement can backfire: Employers may shy away from job candidates because they don't want to deal with parents.

"Psychologically, it's somewhat eroding. When an employer is hiring someone, they're hiring an adult for an adult job, and then they have to deal with a parent," says Charles Wardell in New York, the managing director and head of the northeast region at Korn/Ferry. "There comes a time when you've prepared children, and you need to let go."

How involved should parents be in the lives of their adult children?