

BECU, the largest not-for-profit credit union in Washington state, created parent resource guides and dispatched employees to Financial Reality Fairs at local high schools.

There's no doubt about it: It's not easy to talk to our kids about sex, alcohol, or other difficult yet important topics to help them become responsible adults.

Add one more to the list: Money. That's right, many of us simply don't want to get into that topic with our kids.

In fact a survey by BECU, the largest not-for-profit credit union in Washington state, found only 28% of parents talk with their kids about money.

Why? Most parents are uncomfortable and many are afraid to raise the topic.

They shouldn't be, says Stacey Black, a financial educator at BECU. "Teaching financial health to students before they start their adult lives helps teens develop awareness and make more educated saving and spending decisions."

Fortunately, Washington's 84 credit unions have stepped in where parents fear to tread by hosting Financial Reality Fairs designed to teach young people real-life lessons in budgeting and finance. In 2018, Washington state credit unions provided financial education to 76,287 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

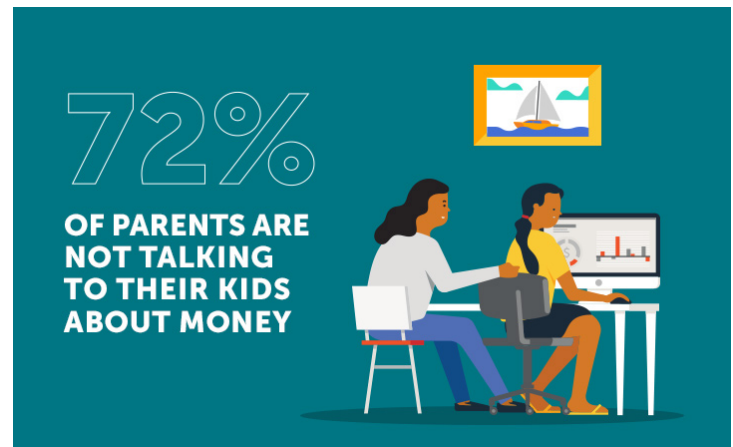
BECU has developed resource guides to help spark a conversation between parents and teens. The credit union also organizes an Annual Day of Service. On one day in October, for the past five years, BECU closes its doors and dispatches more than 2,000 employees to Financial Reality Fairs held at high schools in Spokane and the Puget Sound.

Using an app developed by the Northwest Credit Union Association, students attending Reality Fairs are assigned careers, monthly incomes, and even spouses and kids. Their challenge is to manage their budget while tempted to buy new cars, take exotic vacations, and indulge in a daily Starbucks purchase.

"Initially I went way over my budget and I couldn't take that trip to Hawaii, so I just went camping," Yair Diaz, a West Seattle high school junior [told King5 News](#) during a 2019 fair.

His classmate, Ella Richardson, says she learned the intended lesson: "This taught me you need to prioritize when spending your money."

To learn more about BECU's annual Day of Service, [click here](#). To access a guide to help you talk with your kids about budgeting and money, [click here](#).



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