

# Paramonos News



## How to Start a Teen Modeling Career

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Although a career as a teen model can offer lucrative work and glamorous settings, the industry is notoriously tough to break into. Long hours, stiff competition and big, impersonal casting calls are among the less-glitzy aspects of the business. And while many teen models can earn a healthy paycheck, very few make it to the big leagues and become household names. If you are interested in giving it a try, be prepared to work hard, stay focused and avoid taking rejection too personally. Confidence, a healthy attitude and supportive parents are crucial when launching a teen modeling career.

## GETTING PARENTAL APPROVAL

If you are under 18, you need parental approval before signing with an agency. Modeling can mean long shoots and last-minute assignments, so having your parents behind you can also reduce some of the stress and help you balance your modeling career with school responsibilities. Talk to your parents about your modeling goals and explain to them what their support means to you and to your modeling career.

## OBTAINING PHOTOGRAPHS

Professional photographs are essential for beginning a career as a teen model. Look for professional photographers who specialize in headshots or fashion editorial. If professional photography services are too expensive, consider hiring a photography school student. Since students are building their photography portfolios, they will often agree to photograph you for free. Instruct the photographer to take both headshots and full body shots in various settings. Bring several outfits to the shoot, but keep things simple and natural looking. Agents want to get a sense of what you actually look like and how well you photograph.

## CREATING A PORTFOLIO

Despite its fancy name, a modeling portfolio is just a bound book with plastic sleeve pages for displaying photographs. Insert several of the best photos from the photo shoot into the portfolio. If you are uncertain about a picture, don't include it. It's better to have a few great shots instead of dozens of mediocre ones. As your career moves forward, you will add photographs from modeling jobs to your portfolio.

## COMPOSITION CARDS

Known as "comp cards" or "zed cards," composition cards are printed on 8 1/2 in. by 5 1/2 in. cardstock and include both your photos and your vital statistics such as name, height, weight, age and hair color. Typically, a comp card has a headshot on the front and several smaller images on the reverse side. You can get comp cards printed at a printing company.

## FINDING AN AGENT

Contact modeling agencies in your area. Many agencies hold "open call" days when prospective models meet with scouts and present their composition cards and portfolios. If there aren't any modeling agencies in your area, you can also send your images by mail. Some of the top agencies, such as Ford Models and Elite Model Management, offer online application forms. Agencies post open call times and application instructions on their websites.

## SIGNING A CONTRACT

Sign a contract with an established, reputable agency. Before signing, read the contract carefully with your parents or guardian and ask questions about anything that's unclear. On receipt of your contract, the agency will sign you up for auditions and contact you about upcoming modeling calls. Since legitimate agents will take a commission from your modeling assignments, you should never pay upfront fees to join an agency. If an agency demands money from you, move on.

## CONSIDERATIONS

The modeling industry can offer great opportunities for money and travel, but it is not without risks. Illegitimate agencies or photographers, pressure to maintain a certain look or weight, and access to alcohol or drugs are some of the challenges teen models may run into. Keep your parent or guardian involved with your modeling career at all times, and find an agent you can trust who has experience working with teenagers.

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