

CAREER PLANNER

GUIDE TO CAREER EDUCATION AND CAREER PLANNING

HOW CAN YOU HELP:

The part you play in the process of career planning is vital. Your children will look to you for advice and support. Making career choices has never been easy, but the 'world of work' is now so complex that you and your children need to do careful investigation so that their career can be properly planned.

Research shows that parents and guardians have the greatest influence on their children's career choice. This is not to deny the strong influence that peer groups, the media, and people in the school environment may have. The difference is that you are probably going to be the most anxious participant in these career decisions. Some strategies you might consider to help your children in their career planning include:

Remain positive

No matter how complex and daunting the area of career planning and job search may be, the majority of young people do find a place in work and / or training.

Help build a positive self image for them

Build on their achievements so far – but not just in school work. Congratulate them for looking after a pet successfully, competing well at sports, being kind to someone, setting themselves a goal and achieving it, settling into a new neighbourhood without a fuss. Believe in them!

Allow for a change in direction

Some students choose a career from a very early age and never waiver in their choice. This is unusual. Be prepared for students to change direction, but encourage them to explore other options. Encourage your children to make a yearly plan and keep it as a record.

Encourage them to learn from their mistakes

Even if you feel uncertain about their choice, remain positive as they take their first steps towards their career. It isn't the end of the world if they choose a work experience or a subject level that is not for them. Discovering that a previous career interest is not for them is a positive step in the decision making process. It helps them focus on careers that will suit them better.

Encourage them to find an industry mentor

When your children begin to express an interest in a particular career, if it is possible, help them establish links with an adult (an industry mentor) in that career. Such a mentor can provide a very immediate way of learning about a particular work situation.

Share your experiences

Talk to your children about your own experiences of work and study. It is often helpful for them to understand the problems you have faced and how you dealt with them.

Respect their feelings and their privacy

Do they have someone special, perhaps not always you, to confide in? A relative, family or professional friend or someone who is interested in young people like a church or sports group leader can provide a sympathetic ear. Each child is special and needs someone to listen in a special way. No matter how strongly you may feel about what your children are doing, there may be times when you need to be able to step back from the situation.

WHEN CAN CAREER EDUCATION START:

It is not too early for your children to start thinking about career options in late primary school or the first year of high school. To help in this process, discussions about the wide variety of jobs available can be a good starting point.

Try to avoid the "What are you going to do/be when you grow up?" type of questions. Such questions are often very confronting. Instead, take the opportunity to talk about career choices whenever possible, for example, when you are passing a building site or visiting a hospital.

THE BIG PICTURE:

There are lots of resources available if you and your children want to be able to see the big picture about career planning options. Encourage your children to seek assistance and information on as wide a scale as possible. Some sources of information include;

- Careers information available at school

- Career Reference Centres

- Defence Force Career Reference Centres

- Local TAFE colleges or TAFE Information Centre

- Local community agencies

- Universities
- Handbooks on private training courses
- Professional associations
- Careers fairs

THE RATE OF CHANGE:

There is no doubt that our world is changing very rapidly and that this has an enormous impact on the way we work. Many of the information sources listed above encourage parents to be involved in their children's career planning. It is important to be aware that the world of work for your children will be different from that which you have experienced.

A person leaving school today can expect to:

- have 6 to 10 changes of job
- spend time unemployed
- be involved in formal education throughout their lifetime
- move away from the area or country they were born in
- be involved in jobs / careers that don't yet exist
- have at least 3 or 4 different occupations during a lifetime.

Other matters you could discuss include:

- Any single issue of the Weekend Australian contains more information than the average person came across in a lifetime in 17th century England.
- The amount of information in the world doubles every 2.5 years

- Today's graduates, in their first year of study, will have been exposed in that year to more information than their grandparents were in a lifetime.

The impact of these developments may never be able to be assessed. What is important for your children is that you encourage them to learn about their own capabilities and how they can link these to their interests. In this way the decisions they make that lead to a career will be realistically based.