JOURNEYING WITH OUR CHILDREN, ACHIEVING THEIR ASPIRATIONS
A Guide for Parents/Guardians in Education and Career Guidance (ECG)

A Note to Parents:

Do you know
• Your children’s dreams and aspirations?
• Your children’s interests, strengths, and what he or she is passionate about?
• What your children want to be when they grow up?

Everyone has a set of unique attributes, but some of our children may not have discovered theirs. As parents, we can help them make informed choices in their education and career explorations.

The more we know about what our children value, what they are interested in, and what they are good at, the more we will be able to guide them. And the best way to find out about our children’s aspirations is to communicate with them their education plans and career preferences.

This guide provides some suggestions on how you can support your children’s education and career journey. It aims to provide some tips on how you can be the central figure in your children’s education and career development.
7 Points to Note When Supporting Your Children’s Education and Career Journey

1. Show Love and Concern

2. Observe Your Children’s Strengths and Interests

3. Listen to Your Children
4. Provide a Window to the World of Work

5. Support Your Children’s Career Interests and Aspirations

6. Instil the Importance of Developing Transferable Skills

7. Model Lifelong Learning
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Show Love and Concern
It is important for your children to know how much you care about them and how willing you are to support them. Your children will have more confidence in making informed education and career decisions that match their interests, abilities and passion.
Always communicate freely with your children. Speak with them. Understand them.

Try these conversation starters:

1. Which industries and occupations are you curious about?
2. What are some tasks you enjoy or dislike doing?
3. Which are your favourite subjects and Co-Curricular Activities (CCA)?
4. What do you value most at home and in school?
5. If you can do any job in the world, what would it be?
6. What are some of the things about yourself that you are proud of?
7. How do you think you can go about achieving your aspirations?
Your children would probably not care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Be open-minded. Listen and find out the “whys” behind your children’s choices.

Avoid directing your children’s plans. Discuss the many possible pathways and help them develop an understanding about the world of work. Remember, many pathways are worth taking and there are opportunities for continuous learning and recognition. Guide them to make informed decisions and own them.
Observe Your Children’s Strengths and Interests
Your attention to your children’s world is important. By observing and discovering your children’s interests, abilities and passion through their various activities and interactions with different people, you will be better able to help them in their education and career explorations.
Help your children identify their preferences.

Do they prefer working with people, data, things or ideas?

**People:**
- Talking to and discovering more about people around them?
- Taking charge of and leading a group?
- Helping others through actions or by teaching them?

**Data:**
- Working with numbers and organising information?
- Researching and discovering more about a subject or an area of interest?

**Things:**
- Manipulating objects and operating machines or tools?
- Tinkering with models or items?
- Modelling things and building prototypes of their solutions to problems?

**Ideas:**
- Coming up with various ideas for a situation or problem?
- Having an active imagination and enjoying “What if” questions?
Suggested Activity:
Discuss some possible careers that are related to your children’s preferences.
Listen to Your Children
As your children progress along their education pathways, guide them in their decision-making by considering:

- Their interests, abilities and passion
- Their favourite/best subjects and the possible careers
- Their career aspirations
- The possible education options
- The environments of the different schools and education institutions available
Get your children to reflect on these questions. Discuss these important considerations with them and guide them to make informed decisions for their education and career pathways, and own them.

Who am I?

- What are my interests, abilities and passion? How would they affect my education and career choices?
- Which industries and occupations would I like to explore?
- What are my education and career goals?

The more I know about myself, the better I can make informed choices

Where can I go from here?

- There are many education and career options worth exploring

Continuing with Studies

- What are the education opportunities available?
- What are the types of education institutions that are suitable for me?
- Are the learning programmes offered by the institutions able to nurture my interests, abilities and passion?
- How can I utilise available resources to bring myself closer to my academic and career goals?
- What other factors could influence my decision?
Entering the Workforce

- Am I ready to enter the workforce?
- Which industry do I want to work in?
- Are there learning and training programmes offered by the organisations that can nurture my interests, abilities and passion?
- How can I find future opportunities to upgrade my knowledge and skills?
- What other factors could influence my decision?

How do I get there?

- I will take ownership of my goals, and take positive steps towards fulfilling them

- How can I find out more about the education and career options that I have in mind?
  - Visit open houses and education fairs.
  - Visit the official websites of interested organisations to gain a better understanding of the career development opportunities offered.
  - Seek internship opportunities in the industry that I am interested in.
  - Engage in part-time or contract job opportunities to explore and deepen my interests, abilities and passion.

- How can I find out more about scholarship and financial assistance schemes?
  - Scholarships
    Visit MOE website or the official website of each organisation offering scholarships for more information.
  - Financial Assistance
    Check out the different types of bursaries and financial assistance schemes available from MOE website or the website of each education institution.
Provide a Window to the World of Work
Help Your Children Learn More About The World Of Work.

You may want to:

- **START** by talking about your own industry and career, and bringing your children to your workplace

- **EXPLORE** the Education and Career Guidance (ECG) portal with your children for related information (all students have a personal account from Primary 5 onwards)

- **SEIZE** teachable moments and discuss the different jobs required in a variety of settings (e.g. when visiting restaurants, banks, or during a holiday)

- **EXPLAIN** how different occupations contribute towards the society to show that all jobs are valuable

- **CHECK** print and online media for more information on the variety of industries and related careers

- **SPEAK** with your children’s teachers, Education and Career Guidance (ECG) Counsellor, School Counsellor, relatives or experts in the various fields
Your attention to your children’s world is important. By observing and discovering your children’s interests, abilities and passions through their various activities and interactions with different people, you will be better able to help them in their education and career explorations.

Suggested Activity:

Discuss the possible education pathways that can lead to your children’s career aspirations.

Introduce a variety of industries and careers to your children for exposure.
Remember:

It is important to stay updated with the workforce changes to stay connected with your children. Avoid relying only on your own past experiences alone as education policies have changed and new pathways have been created.

Stay positive. We can take pride in and add value to any job. Appreciate that each one of us can make the choice to perform our jobs to a high professional standard, and contribute to the bigger outcome.
As your children share their career aspirations, help them clarify further using the following questions:

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Support Your Children’s Career Interests and Aspirations
As your children share their career aspirations, help them clarify further using the following questions:

1. What qualifications and skills do you need for the job?
2. What triggered your interest in the particular industry and job?
3. What do you like and dislike about the job?
4. How do you think a day in the job would be like?
5. What are the opportunities for continual learning and growth in the job?
Your attention to your children’s world is important. By observing and discovering your children’s interests, abilities and passions through their various activities and interactions with different people, you will be better able to help them in their education and career explorations.

Provide work experience/shadowing opportunities for your children through:

- Internship
- Volunteer work
- Work experience
- Community service
- Education/Career fairs
- Visits to different workplaces
When your children are older,

Encourage them to find out more about different industries and related careers. A good understanding of the work requirements and environment can help them make better decisions.

Help your children make informed decisions by using data and trends on future possibilities in specific industries.

Work with them on their possible education and career plans. Encourage them to take ownership of their goals and take positive steps towards fulfilling them.

Review your children’s decisions and plans periodically to keep them motivated and on-track. You may need to guide them to adapt and make adjustments along the way.

Often, children only have knowledge about industries and careers in their immediate environment.

Ensure your children are exposed to a broad spectrum of industries and careers as they consider their career interests.
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Instil the Importance of Developing Transferable Skills
Help your children develop 21st Century Competencies*, values, and workplace readiness skills to be adaptable and resilient.

Transferable soft skills are needed to get a job and be successful in a career. These include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Communication Skills
- Time Management
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving Skills

* For more information on 21st Century Competencies, please refer to https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/education-system/21st-century-competencies
Some Suggested Ways to Develop Communication Skills

- **Demonstrate effective communication skills**
  - Pay close attention to what you say and how you say it
  - Include appropriate non-verbal cues (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact) to delivery your message clearly

- **Encourage good listening skills**
  Listen beyond the words spoken. Techniques such as rephrasing, clarification and reflection can help to avoid misunderstanding and confusion of the intended message.

- ** Explain the power of non-verbal language**
  Non-verbal communication, also known as body language, is an essential element. Our gestures, posture, tone, pitch, proximity and eye contact demonstrate our level of interest, trust and desire to stay connected.

- **Promote cross-cultural communication skills**
  Cross-cultural communication skills are increasingly important in today’s global environment.

  The basic guidelines for cross-cultural communication are:
  - Keep message and intent simple
  - Exercise respect and cultural sensitivity
  - Seek clarification if needed
Time management is life management.

Robin Sharma

Many recognise the importance of time management to success and work-life harmony. However, it can be difficult for individuals to practise it.

While the mastery of time management skills is related to our executive functioning, which takes time to develop, time management is a fundamental workplace skill.

You can use tools and strategies to heighten your children’s concept of time. Hence, it will lead to the development of time management skills.

**DO**

- Teach your children to create a daily plan or to-do list. This helps to develop the habit of prioritising their work and working independently.

- Guide your children to organise and prioritise their tasks. Being organised helps children to keep track of their progress and the resources required.
Teamwork is an essential skill set for children of all ages as it helps them develop other competencies such as social awareness, cooperation, negotiation and self-reflection.

You can help your children develop teamwork at home by

- **SETTING COOPERATIVE TASKS**
  such as doing household chores and planning family outings. Getting them to contribute to the common good of the family helps them value the spirit of togetherness.

- **PRAISING THEIR EFFORTS**
  Praise your children when they demonstrate efforts to carry out their assigned tasks. At the same time, encourage your children to show gratitude and affirm the strengths of each family member.

- **MAKING TEAM DECISIONS**
  Where possible, involve your children in decision making. Guide them to weigh the pros and cons, and consider the feelings of other family members.

- **DEMONSTRATING WHAT TEAMWORK MEANS**
  You can be a role model to demonstrate how you work as a team with others and how the required skills are applied. When children witness your role modelling, they will see the value of teamwork and be more willing to be a team player.
Children are natural problem solvers. Offer opportunities for your children to grow their problem-solving abilities.

Some Suggested Ways to Develop Problem-solving Skills:

- Provide constructive feedback and share problem-solving techniques (Plan-Do-Check-Act) with them.
- Challenge your children to practice critical and logical thinking by asking open-ended questions.
- Break larger problems into smaller issues so your children can understand them easily and are motivated to solve them.
- Encourage your children to problem-solve starting from daily encounters at home.
- Engage your children with problem-solving activities such as brain teasers.
- Use scenarios and discuss with your children possible solutions to them.
Model Lifelong Learning
Children, from a tender age, learn largely by observation and expectations. Their aspirations, beliefs, attitudes and motivation to succeed are often influenced by their immediate environment; which includes you – their parents!

Embrace lifelong learning. Demonstrate how you continually strive towards excellence through knowledge and experience. Show your child that learning does not happen only in school, but throughout life.

Tell them more about SkillsFuture, the national movement to provide Singaporeans with the opportunities to develop their fullest potential throughout life, regardless of their starting points.

Explain how SkillsFuture believes that the skills, passion and contributions of every individual will drive Singapore’s next phase of development towards an advanced economy and inclusive society, and how your children will play a key role in our future.
Key ECG Messages for Students

DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE

1. Continually develop your interests, abilities, and passion; and use them to contribute meaningfully to society through your future professions.
   
   - Everyone has a set of unique attributes. The more you know about what you value, what you are interested in, and what you are good at, the more likely you will be able to make good choices in your education and career explorations.

NAVIGATE PATHWAYS WITH CONFIDENCE

2. Learn more about the world of work, education, and career pathways that you can choose. Many pathways are worth taking, and there are opportunities for continuous learning and recognition.
   
   - Explore the many possible pathways and develop an understanding about the world of work during the schooling years. There are no dead ends; through CET, you can continue to pursue your aspirations.

3. You can take pride in and add value to any job.
   
   - Appreciate that each one of us can make the choice to perform our jobs to a high professional standard, and contribute to the bigger outcome.
MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS AND OWN THEM

4. Make considered decisions about your education and career plans, and take positive steps to embark on them.

   o Make decisions based on your interests, attributes, and aspirations, while considering current and future career opportunities. Take ownership of your goals, and take steps towards fulfilling them.

KEEP LEARNING. BE RESILIENT.

5. Develop 21st Century Competencies, values, and workplace readiness skills to be adaptable and resilient.

   o To thrive in a globalised economy and navigate meaningfully through life, you must:

   • Establish sound values;
   • Seize every opportunity to develop transferrable soft skills such as: cross-cultural communication skills, problem-solving skills, and team work;
   • Inculcate an appreciation for the value of all occupations and how they contribute to the well-functioning of society;
   • Continually develop workplace readiness skills such as literacy, numeracy, and technical skills throughout life.

For more information, please refer to https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/programmes/social-and-emotional-learning/education-and-career-guidance
Useful Links and Resources

General Information

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Information on Secondary Education

Considerations when choosing schools and making Secondary One options


Secondary School Education Booklet

Information on Post-Secondary and Pre-University Education Options

Post-Secondary Education Options
www.moe.gov.sg/education/post-secondary

Post-Secondary Education Booklet

Pre-University Education
www.moe.gov.sg/education/pre-university

Framework of GCE ‘A’ Level Curriculum
www.moe.gov.sg/microsites/cpdd/alevel2006/

Financial Assistance Information for IHLS
www.moe.gov.sg/education/financial-assistance/financial-assistance-information-for-ihls
If we are learning something we are interested in, we are more likely to stay curious and engaged. And if we can stay curious, we are likely to make that subject a lifetime pursuit. If we make it a lifetime pursuit, we achieve mastery.

- Mr Ong Ye Kung
Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) & Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence