**Supporting your child’s career development**

Support from family and key people in their life is important in helping young people through the process of thinking about and planning for their career.

As a parent or carer, four areas where you can provide practical support are self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision making and transition support.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness entails understanding our interests, abilities, values and personal or context factors that may influence future career choices. You can help your child to develop self-awareness for career decision making by:

* encouraging them to participate in extra-curricular activities to learn what activities they like and dislike
* suggesting occupations and courses related to their interests
* asking what attracts them to occupations and courses of interest
* identifying themes in the activities they enjoy
* discussing results of career assessment activities they complete
* giving positive feedback to help them recognise their strengths
* encouraging exploration of occupations and courses related to their abilities
* helping them to identify [what is important in life](https://myfuture.edu.au/career-insight/details?id=career-decision-making-through-self-awareness#/) and implications for career choices
* discussing personal or contextual factors that may have an influence on their choices. For example, there may be limited opportunities for an apprenticeship that appeals to your child in your local area or your child may not want to leave home for tertiary study after Year 12.

Opportunity awareness

Your child’s career development and progression will depend in part on their ability to identify and explore opportunities, such as course and career options. You can provide practical support to your child that helps them to identify opportunities by:

* discussing career options with them in general conversation when the opportunity arises, eg talking about people you both know who are in specific jobs
* arranging opportunities for them to observe and interview people in different jobs
* attending career information events
* helping them to learn about different ways of entering the workforce, eg apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate programs
* encouraging them to [talk to people in the workforce](https://myfuture.edu.au/career-insight/details?id=4-steps-to-a-successful-information-interview#/) about their occupation or courses
* encouraging them to use a variety of internet, print and people resources to investigate options.

You can enhance your child’s ability to identify opportunities by encouraging them to relate what they discover about themselves to the opportunities they find by talking about what liking or not liking certain activities and interests could mean for different professions..

Decision making

Decision making is a critical part of career planning. Just like any other skill, it needs time and practice to master. You can help your child to build confidence to make future career decisions by:

* encouraging them to anticipate decisions that have career implications (eg choosing school subjects)
* helping them to [make informed and careful career and educational decisions](https://myfuture.edu.au/career-insight/details?id=how-to-make-good-career-decisions#/)
* assisting them to develop a flexible plan with action steps and timelines for completing various elements of their plan, leading to the implementation of their preferred career or course goals (for now).

Transition support

Your child will face many transitions throughout their career, as they move in an out of different life roles. As a parent or carer, you can provide support to help them manage both current and future transitions.

For current transitions, consider acting in a personal assistant role for your child. This may entail locating needed information or identifying and monitoring key dates, such as the closing dates for applications.

We can all face setbacks during a transition, whether moving from school to work, school to TAFE or university, university to work, or job to job. To prepare your child for future setbacks that occur, you can help them to build self-confidence and resilience. Such help will support your child to bounce back after setbacks such as missing out on a course they were focusing on or facing several interviews before landing an apprenticeship.

About the author



Cathy Hughes

Catherine is a school-based Career Practitioner with 30 years experience, Founder of [Grow Careers](https://www.growcareers.com.au/index.php?id=1), Consultant, International Adviser to CareerMe in Sri Lanka and Author of books on careers work in schools. Catherine’s research and careers practice has been recognised with national awards, published in academic and career practitioner journals and presented at state, national and international conferences.

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