

# Career Planning

Career: Career Planning

## Ingredients of Career Planning

First, let's be clear about what career planning is not! Career planning is not answering the question, "What do I want to be when I grow up?"

- Career planning is a lifelong process.
- Career planning involves using a set of career planning skills that must be learned.
- Career planning helps organize one's thinking about one's self, education, work, and other life roles.
- Career planning is proactive even in the face of unplanned events.

Career plans answer these questions:

1. **Who am I?**

The more your children know about themselves, the better choices they will make. Help them imagine their dreams and reflect on their beliefs. Encourage them to express their talents and explore their interests. Support them in learning more about themselves as they experience new things.

2. **Where am I going?**

As your children articulate their dreams, help them connect those dreams to reality and their future. This means learning more about the world of work and setting goals that will help them test out their dreams. As they learn more, their dreams may change. Change is an important aspect of the career development process.

3. **How do I get there?**

School is an important time for developing talents and skills into valuable assets. Assist your children in understanding how they can reach their goals and why school is important. Learn together about the requirements for occupations and career paths they are interested in. Consider how these requirements are supported through required academic coursework, elective classes, extracurricular activities, career-related learning, and work experiences.

4. **What are my next steps?**

A career plan looks at all possible avenues for achieving one's goals. Help your children create a plan, with specific activities and actions, to work toward their goals. Encourage your children to be thoughtful about all of their experiences and reflect on how they reinforce or detract from their goals.

5. **Where am I now?**

Career planning is a process, a cycle. Unplanned events will affect choices and possibilities. Your children need to consider their progress regularly along the way and make adjustments as needed. This may lead them to learn more about themselves, have new aspirations, set new goals, and research new dreams. With each change, they should return to these five questions and make sure their goals and action plans are on target.