

Self-Knowledge

Knowing one's self well is important for satisfaction and success in life. Helping your children understand and reflect on their unique, personal characteristics allows them to answer the first question in their career plan - Who am I?

Interests, values, skills, personality type, and career beliefs are the personal characteristics most frequently discussed by career professionals.

- **Interests** = what do I like to do?
- **Values** = what is important to me?
- **Skills** = what do I do well?
- **Personality type** = what traits and qualities best describe me?
- **Career beliefs** = what ways of thinking affect my career choices?

These personal characteristics are often measured by using formal career assessment inventories. Your child might use one of these instruments as early as middle school. Formal instruments are very specific in what they can tell you and your child. If a formal instrument is used, make sure you understand the purpose of the assessment and what the results mean. Formal instruments NEVER tell your child what he or she should be!

These and other facets of self-understanding can be also gleaned through everyday experiences. Children actively display their talents, strengths, and passions in play, in social interactions, and in school. They demonstrate how confident they are in various situations - how much they believe in themselves and their capabilities. Asking your child the following types of questions can help them develop self-knowledge:

- What are your dreams?
- Why do you like to do that?
- What do you feel you are good at?
- How might your talents be developed and be useful in your future?
- What is important to you, and how do these values affect your choices?

Helping your children learn more about themselves is a part of your everyday interaction.