

How can parents contribute positively to their children's career choices?

As their children's first teachers, parents contribute to their academic and professional development. While parental engagement is crucial to children's well-being and positive development, parents can also have a negative impact by failing to meet children's fundamental psychological needs, which are essential to academic and professional success.

THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN ARE:

Autonomy	Feeling like they're making their own choices (e.g. choosing high school and post-secondary classes that interest them).
Competence	Understanding that their actions have consequences (e.g. feeling capable of passing a class in order to take a more advanced course or be admitted to post-secondary programs).
Relatedness	Developing positive relationships with important people in their lives (e.g. getting along well with teachers or their parents).

TO MEET THESE NEEDS, HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT PARENTS SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT DO TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN CHOOSE A CAREER:

Things to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support your children's sense of autonomy by acknowledging their opinions and feelings, trusting their judgement, showing empathy, explaining the reasons behind your expectations, and entrusting them with age-appropriate responsibilities (e.g. household chores). • Get involved by showing your children that they are important: listen to them, show your affection, be available when they need you, and be receptive to their questions, interests, and the options they explore. • Provide a structured, predictable environment by clearly communicating and explaining family rules, your expectations, and the consequences associated with respecting them. It's important to be consistent when applying your rules and expectations, to maintain supervision, and give feedback, when needed.
Things to avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling your child by imposing your own choices and opinions, telling them what to think or feel, neglecting to explain the reasons behind your expectations, or using punishments and rewards to control their behaviour or choices. • Rejecting your child by withholding affection, acting indifferent, failing to participate in activities they're involved in, or leaving them to their own devices with no guidance or support when they need it. • Creating confusion by setting unclear expectations, constantly changing rules without clear communication, and failing to offer children an opportunity to meet your expectations.

Research demonstrates that children generally perceive their parents as being supportive of their psychological needs. It's important for parents to recognize that they can have a significant impact – positive or negative – on their children's development. Therefore, parents hoping to guide the positive development of their children are well advised to meet their fundamental psychological needs, thereby encouraging greater academic and professional success.

For online resources and references please visit:
www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education

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