JOURNEYING WITH OUR CHILDREN, SUPPORTING THEIR ASPIRATIONS

Education and Career Guidance
Tips for Parents

Education and Career Guidance (ECG)

ECG helps our children gain a better understanding of themselves so that they can make informed choices and develop their education and career goals. As a parent, you are one of the key decision influencers in your children's education and career aspirations. This handbook is written especially for you to help you understand how you can engage your children in conversations and activities to support them in their education and career decisions. Read on for more tips!

Your Role in ECG

What are some ways through which you can support your children as they discover and pursue their education and career aspirations?

Take some time to think about your personal beliefs and thoughts on how to support your children. These are some ways to get started.

	Yes	Not really, but I hope/try to
I see myself as a facilitator and supporter of my children's decisions.		
I recognise that my children are unique with their own purpose, values, interests, personality, skills, and strengths.		
I believe that my children's abilities can grow through dedication and hard work.		
I appreciate all professions and acknowledge their respective contributions to Singapore.		

Where do you go from here?

Now that you have thought about your own beliefs, it is time to get to know your children better too. This means talking to them about their values, interests, personality, skills, strengths, and education and career aspirations, as well as exploring platforms and opportunities to achieve these aspirations.

Not sure how to start? Here's a checklist of topics:

What I Know About My Children

Tick against all that apply.

I know my children's...

- [ ] Values
- [ ] Interests
- [ ] Personality
- [ ] Skills
- [ ] Strengths
- [ ] Aspirations
- [ ] Reasons which motivate them to seek growth in work and life

Now that you have gone over this checklist, it is now timely to start a conversation with your children.

When conversing with your children, do:

- **stay open to the possible education and career pathways that are available and be flexible in discussing these pathways with your children and,**
- **offer advice but avoid pressuring your children based on your own expectations and experiences.**

Read on for more tips!

3 Tips to Support Your Children's Education and Career Journey

1 Discovering Purpose

Guide your children to make informed decisions and own them

Pay attention to the values, interests, personality, skills, and strengths your children display in various activities and interactions and affirm them to build their confidence. Discuss important considerations with your children when they are making education and career decisions. Empower them to take ownership of their goals and contribute meaningfully at home, in school and in the community.

2 Exploring Opportunities

Encourage your children to find out more about education pathways and the world of work

Encourage and support your children in exploring different education and career pathways aligned to their values, interests, personality, skills, and strengths.

Help your children see that they can broaden their education and career possibilities and encourage them to be confident of the future as they pursue their goals and aspirations.

3 Staying Relevant

Embrace lifelong learning and develop your children's future-ready skills

Learning does not occur only in school, but throughout life. Journey with your children through triumphs and challenges in their education and career journey. Celebrate their efforts and resilience, and encourage them to reframe setbacks as learning opportunities.

Help them practise adaptability when facing changes. Encourage them to keep their minds open to new options and think of alternative plans, instead of being fixated on one option.

Help your children see that they can grow and improve with effort and perseverance, and that they can build on opportunities to develop themselves. As the world of work is rapidly changing with technological disruptions and new jobs increasingly becoming the norm, your children will need to be lifelong learners as they move towards leading a purposeful life.

1

Discovering Purpose

Guide your children to make informed decisions and own them

Understanding their Values, Interests, Personality, Skills, and Strengths

Conversation Starters

Set aside time and space where you can speak with, listen to and understand your children's thoughts and feelings. Use the following questions to encourage your children to find out more about themselves.

For your children in Primary School:

- What are three positive words that describe you?
- What types of activities do you enjoy doing both in and out of school?
- What are your goals and aspirations?

For your children in Secondary School:

- What are your favourite subjects and Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs)? What do you like about them?
- How would you want to contribute to our community to make a positive difference?
- What are your goals and aspirations?

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- Which industries and occupations are you curious about?
- What is important to you in your future career?
- How do you plan to go about achieving your aspirations?

Suggested Activities

Try the following activities to observe your children's values, interests, personality, skills, and strengths in action. Do remember to affirm your children for the positive efforts you spot.

Managing one's education and career journey is not a one-time decision but a series of decisions made over one's lifetime. Encourage your children to develop qualities such as *self-awareness, self-directedness, a passion for lifelong learning, adaptability and resilience,* which are essential for them to be future-ready.

For your children in Primary School:

- Explore the Career Quest feature in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Primary)* together with your children and discover their career interests and values.
- Encourage your children to develop a variety of interests and skills and cheer them on in these efforts, e.g., through their CCAs, community service and school programmes.
- Assist your children in activities that will help express their education and career aspirations, e.g., drawing a picture, writing a composition, making a poster or doing a presentation.

For your children in Secondary School:

- Encourage your children to explore the profiling tools in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary). Chat with your children about what they have discovered regarding their skills confidence, learning styles, work values and career interests.
- Encourage your children to speak with their teachers, as well as ECG counsellors, alumni and industry experts regarding information and opportunities in the education and career pathways that they may be interested in. Check in with your children on these conversations.
- Plan activities for your children to discover their values, interests, personality, skills, and strengths, and encourage them to engage in opportunities to express their education and career aspirations, e.g., participating in community service or CCAs.

*All students have a personal account from Primary 5 onwards.

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- Encourage your children to explore their values, interests, personality, skills, and strengths and the larger industry landscape in a deeper manner through the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Pre-University) or the MySkillsFuture Workforce Portal if your children are currently in a Pre-University or post-secondary education institution respectively. Have discussions about what your children have learnt.

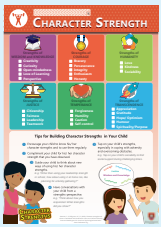
- Have discussions with your children about the education and career pathways they may be interested in and encourage them to have sustained conversations with teachers, lecturers, ECG counsellors, alumni and industry experts regarding information and opportunities in these education and career pathways.

Resources

Visit these links to find out more!

Use the **S.P.A.C.E tips** to guide your conversations with your children.
https://go.gov.sg/space-el

How do you **Praise Your Children?** Find tips on affirming your children's strengths effectively.
https://go.gov.sg/praise



Spot your children's **Character Strengths** and affirm them for demonstrating these strengths.
https://go.gov.sg/resil-boosters

2 Exploring Opportunities

Encourage your children to find out more about education pathways and the world of work

Exploring Education and Career Pathways with them

Conversation Starters

Start a conversation on exploring the various education and career pathways with your children.

For your children in Primary School:

- Which secondary schools are you curious to find out more about and why?
- What are some jobs that you have observed within your school or community?
- What are some jobs that you like? Why do you like them?

For your children in Secondary School:

- Which educational institutions are you curious to find out more about and why?
- What information have you found about the industries or careers that you are interested in, including the education pathways leading to them?
- How do you think you can find out more about the education or career pathways you are interested in?

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- Which educational institutions are you curious to find out more about? How will they help you achieve your aspirations?
- What research have you done on the industries or careers you are interested in?
- How do you think you can find out more about the education or career pathways you are interested in?

Further Tips

Do you prefer working with people, ideas, data or things?[1] What about your children? Use this list to help your children discover their interests and skills, and discuss possible careers related to these interests and skills. You can also use it to explore opportunities in which these interests and skills can be further developed in your children.

People

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

Ideas

- Coming up with various ideas for a situation or problem
- Having an active imagination
- Enjoying asking “What if” questions

Data

- Working with numbers
- Organising information
- Researching and discovering more about a subject or an area of interest

Things

- Operating machines or tools
- Tinkering with models or items
- Modelling things and building prototypes of their solutions to problems

Reference[1]: Prediger, D.J. (1982). Dimensions underlying Holland’s hexagon: Missing link between interests and occupations? *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 21*, 259-287.

Suggested Activities

Here are some activities for your children to learn more about the various education and career pathways. Be involved in the activities with your children where possible as these will help to create shared and meaningful experiences between you and your children.

For your children in Primary School:

- Explore the secondary schools available for your children by going to schools' open houses together. Do research on schools together with your children using the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Primary) or SchoolFinder.
- Read books with your children about the jobs that different people do and discuss these jobs with them.
- Explore the different jobs around you and your children using the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Primary) and explain how all jobs are valuable in contributing to Singapore. Encourage your children to talk about the jobs that interest them.

For your children in Secondary School:

- Do research on post-secondary education institutions together with your children using the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary) or SchoolFinder.
- Assist your children in identifying projects that they can embark on as part of portfolio building for their next education journey. Encourage your children to create artefacts and pursue hobbies that can be featured as a part of a portfolio.
- Support your children's participation in community service, learning journeys and education and career fairs as these are opportunities to expose them to different education and career pathways.

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- Discuss how your children are developing and refining their values, interests, personality, skills, and strengths through the exciting array of school activities available.
- Encourage your children to participate in meaningful engagements with different communities to hone their skills and build a portfolio on leadership, project management, community collaboration and other Critical Core Skills. (page 18).
- Encourage your children to participate in a wide range of experiences, e.g., career workshops, fairs, learning journeys to industries, internships or work experience programmes and ECG counselling offered by schools/Career Centres in polytechnics and ITE colleges. They can also speak with their teachers or assigned personal mentor (in polytechnics/ITE).

Resources

Visit these links to find out more!

Resources for parents to stay updated on **developments in education:**

- MOE Facebook (www.facebook.com/moesingapore/)
- Schoolbag (www.schoolbag.edu.sg)

Resource for parents to stay updated on **changes in the workforce:**

- MySkillsFuture portal (for adults; polytechnic, ITE and tertiary students) (https://go.gov.sg/changesinworkforce)

3

Staying Relevant

Embrace lifelong learning and develop your children's future-ready skills

Encouraging them to continuously pursue opportunities for learning

Conversation Starters

Kickstart a meaningful conversation with your children on embracing lifelong learning.

For your children in Primary School:

- What do you think a day in the life of a/an _____ *(job name)* would be like? What kind of training do you think this person would have gone through to do the job well?
- Tell me about a time when you tried to do something you found difficult, or a time when you felt discouraged. What was that like? How did you get through that challenge? What do you think you can do differently the next time?
- How do you tell when you are doing your best work? When you are not doing your best, what can you change so that you can do better?

For your children in Secondary School:

- What are the setbacks/failures you have faced that taught you something? Can I share about a setback I experienced that helped me grow?
- What did you try that was difficult for you this week? What will you do to challenge yourself this month? *(You can make this a family challenge and get your children to ask you these questions too.)*
- As you consider your aspirations, which post-secondary pathways have you explored? How can we find out more? *(Refer to the Useful Links and Resources section [page 24] for more information on post-secondary pathways.)*

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- What are the opportunities for continual learning and growth in the education and career pathways you are interested in?
- Industries and careers constantly face changes. How can you prepare yourself to enter into the world of work?
- What are some skills and competencies which would prepare you for the ever-changing future?

Critical Core Skills for the World of Work

To respond to changing industry trends, technology adoption and new business models, your children will need to acquire relevant skills in new and emerging areas. These are known as Critical Core Skills[2], as illustrated below. Share these skills with your children and get them to explore opportunities to develop them.

16 Critical Core Skills (CCS)
for a Learning, Agile and Sustainable Workforce

Reference[2]: SkillsFuture Singapore
Retrieved from https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skills-framework/criticalcoreskills

Suggested Activities

Reflecting on meaningful experiences, such as transitions, setbacks and achievements, is something you can do together with your children. Encourage your children to document experiences, skills and accomplishments regularly (e.g., in their ePortfolio in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal), as this will help your children chart out their own process of lifelong learning and personal growth.

For your children in Primary School:

- Talk to your children about your own industry and career, and the skills and lessons you have picked up through your work.
- Seize moments where you can discuss the different jobs and skills required in the places you and your children visit, by asking: "Think about a day in the life of a/an _____ *(job name)*. What might be something difficult that people with this job have to do? What do you think they can do to get better at what they do?"
- Identify ways in which your children can cope with change and transitions. Share your personal experiences on how you have managed such moments.

For your children in Secondary School:

- Work with your children to develop possible education and career plans. Share your personal lifelong learning journey with your children. Encourage your children to set self-development goals, review these goals regularly and document their learning experiences and reflections through the My Goals, My Reflections and My Journey features in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary).
- Support your children in identifying ways to take positive steps towards fulfilling their plans and goals. Ask your children to identify trusted adults who can be mentors to help them achieve their education and career plans.
- Encourage your children to find out more about the school programmes and resources available that will allow them to develop skills and learn continuously.

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- Guide your children through periodic reviews of their education and career plans, and in making appropriate revisions and adjustments along the way.
- Share your personal experiences where mistakes and failures have been opportunities to build your resilience and personal growth. Advise your children on how to tap on setbacks as opportunities for further growth.
- Assist your children in identifying activities and projects that will help develop future-ready skills.

Resources

Visit these links to find out more!

For your children in Primary School:

Information on the **different education pathways** available in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Primary):

- https://go.gov.sg/educationlandscape-Pri

Resources on nurturing your children's **social and emotional competencies**:

- https://go.gov.sg/selresforparents

For your children in Secondary School:

Information on the **different education pathways** available in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary):

- https://go.gov.sg/educationlandscape-Sec

Information on **different job roles** and the **Singapore Industry Landscape** in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary):

- https://go.gov.sg/industrylandscape-Sec

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

Information on the **different education pathways** available in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Pre-University):

- https://go.gov.sg/educationlandscape-PreU

Information on **different job roles**, the **Singapore Industry Landscape** in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Pre-University):

- https://go.gov.sg/industrylandscape-PreU

Information on **SkillsFuture Work-Study Programmes**:

- https://go.gov.sg/workstudyprogramme

Resources for **Lifelong Learning**:

- SkillsFuture Singapore (https://go.gov.sg/programmesforyou)
- SkillsFuture Series (https://go.gov.sg/sfsgseries)

From One Parent to Another

Guiding your children on the journey to achieving their aspirations may not be easy, but you are not alone. Here are some parent-children stories on what this journey looks like for various individuals.

Stories for parents with children in:

Primary School

https://go.gov.sg/parentstories-pri

Secondary School

https://go.gov.sg/parentstories-sec

Post-Secondary Education Institutions

https://go.gov.sg/parentstories-postsec

Useful Links and Resources on ECG

Resources for parents with children in:

Primary School

MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Primary)	https://go.gov.sg/MySFPri
Courses and Subjects for Secondary Schools	https://go.gov.sg/secocourses
Secondary 1 Posting Process	https://go.gov.sg/sec1posting
What's Next (After PSLE)	https://go.gov.sg/whats-next-psle
Tips on Coping with the Transition to Secondary School	Schoolbag article: https://go.gov.sg/supportingaspirations Resource: https://go.gov.sg/transitionsupportel

Secondary School

MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary)	https://go.gov.sg/MySFSec
What's Next (After N-level)	https://go.gov.sg/whats-next-nlevel
What's Next (After O-level)	https://go.gov.sg/whats-next-olevel
Post-Secondary Education	https://go.gov.sg/postsecondary
Tips on Coping with Transition through Upper Secondary/ Post-Secondary Education	Resource: https://go.gov.sg/transitionsupportel

Post-Secondary Education Institutions

MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Pre-University)	https://go.gov.sg/MySFPreU	
What's Next (After A-Level)	https://go.gov.sg/whats-next-alevel	
Overview of Post-Secondary Education Institutions (Including autonomous universities, arts institutions, government-affiliated educational institutes and polytechnics)	https://go.gov.sg/overview-pseis	

Ministry of Education
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