



# Parents Make a Difference

## How can and do parents impact their children's career development?

- Help your child develop a positive self-concept.
- Be actively involved in your child's life.
- Emphasize the importance of education.
- Help your child develop meaningful work attitudes and habits.
- Encourage autonomy.
- Acknowledge and support your child's career aspirations.
- Help your child get along with others.
- Help your child acquire skills that could be useful in work.
- Foster specific values or beliefs in your child.
- Be aware of the phases of your child's career development.

Parents view themselves as central figures in their children's career development. They want to play an active role and view involvement as a significant parental function. (Young and Friesen, 1992.) In fact, parents do have a great influence on the career development of their children. (Leung, Wright, and Foster, 1987.) For example, parental involvement in high school students' educational and career development appears to be related to their child's achievement, behavior and attitudes.

Most parents believe they can lay the foundation for their child's career development by influencing them to become responsible and capable human beings. (Young and Friesen, 1992.) However, many of those same parents are concerned about imposing their aspirations and expectations for a career on their children. As a result, they are very cautious in their involvement with specific career development and planning activities. (Young, 1994).

The results from research studies support parents' beliefs about their role in laying the foundation for success in the workplace. Parents' influence is often indirect and is implemented through rewards, teaching and reasoning, and example. (Young and Friesen, 1992.) However, parents can play a more direct definer role in their child's career development without imposing their expectations. In the definer role parents are in an important position of influence because they have direct contact with their child. That direct contact affords parents the opportunity to provide information and assist the child with defining self and identifying preferences.

Children expect their parents to be an important influence and turn to them, more than anyone else, for help in career planning. (Alden and Seiferth, 1979; Basow and Howe, 1979; Davies and Kandel, 1981; Dillard and Campbell, 1981; Gregman and Killen, 1999.) High school students ranked parents as having the most influence on their career choice followed by friends, teachers, counselors, and siblings. (Alden and Seiferth, 1979.)

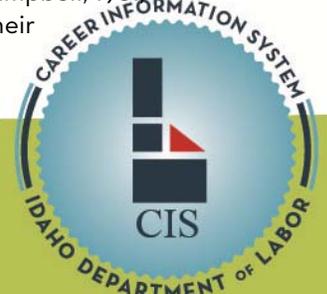
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# How Children Develop Occupational Aspirations

As children grow into adolescents and then adults, they develop different concepts related to occupations and work. Those concepts or constructs are integrated with self-concept to determine their occupational aspirations. (Gottfredson, 1981). The following are the main contributing factors that form the basis for determining occupational aspirations.

## Self-concept

- One's view of oneself.
- Who one would like to be.

## Occupational Images

- Generalizations about an occupation.
- Work people in those jobs do.
- Rewards and conditions of the work.
- Personalities of people in the jobs.
- The lives they lead.
- Appropriateness of the jobs.

## Map of Occupational World

- Similarities and differences among occupations.
- Level of work required of occupations.

- Organize occupational images into unified view of a field of work.
- Link occupational images in a coherent way.

## Occupational Preferences

- Determine compatibility of occupations with self-concept.
- Effort needed to work in an occupation.
- One's preferences or likes and dislikes.

## Perceived Accessibility of an Occupation

- Obstacles or opportunities that affect one's chances of getting into an occupation.

## Occupational Alternatives

- Preferences weighed against accessibility.

## Occupational Aspiration

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