

Parents as Career Coaches

Parents help us discover the gifts and the callings that God has for our lives. Parents help children and teens discover their vocational interests and the motivational gifts. Parents identify the steps and resources that are necessary to develop the qualities and talents that children and teens possess.

Parents know that children and teens receive the vocational interests, abilities, skills, and talents in a seed form. These seeds will develop into careers, jobs, tasks, assignments, or ministries. Then, the talents and gifts will produce earnings, wages, and spiritual rewards as the children receive pleasure from knowing that they are fulfilling the callings that God has placed on their lives.

The Goal of a Parent

A parent receives direction from Proverbs 18:16, Proverbs 22:6, and 1 Peter 4:10.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

1 Peter 4:10 As every man has received a gift, even so minister the same gift one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Proverbs 18:16 A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.

To learn about abilities, interests, and motivational gifts, parents have many tasks:

Assess children's and teens' vocational interests, abilities, skills, beliefs, and values.

Discover potential careers that are linked to children's and teens' identified interests.

Help children and teens choose the suitable post-secondary education and training.

Provide resources that help children and teens utilize their vocational interests, abilities, skills, beliefs, and values.

Understand the relationship between education, training, and specific occupations.

Introduce experiences that meet career, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral goals.

Present information on the current and future labor market.

Introduce problem-solving and decision-making strategies, and

Solve career issues, conflicts, and concerns.

The Steps Towards Completing Career Exploration Process

Step One: Preliminary Assessment

Parents must gain access to computerized, online, or paper/pencil career assessments. From these assessments, parents, teens, and children gain knowledge and understanding of our abilities, ambitions, aptitudes, identities, interests, life goals, resources, skills, and values. During this assessment period, parents will evaluate children's and teens' readiness for career planning.

Gary W. Peterson and others of the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development University Center, discussed the differences in career planning readiness. Children, teen, and adults can be categorized as:

Decided

Decided yet needing a confirmation

Decided yet not knowing how to implement their decisions

Decided choosing to avoid conflict or stress

Undecided

Undecided with a deferred choice

Undecided yet developmental unable to commit to a decision

Undecided and unable to make a decision because the individual is multi-talented

Children, teen, and adults transition from indecision to decisiveness when they complete the following steps in the career decision making and planning process.

Step Two: Educational and Occupational Exploration

Parents, children, and teens gather information about:

Educational choices

The benefits of educational achievement

The economy or labor market

Occupational choices

Specific occupations and programs of study

Training opportunities

The relationship between work and learning

Positive attitudes towards work and learning

Personal responsibility and good work habits

A typical working day for a specific occupation

Career exploration systems

Step Three: Problem solving

Parents, children, and teens solve career problems by:

Identifying educational and career planning obstacles

Creating solutions or courses of action

Setting achievable goals

Resolving conflict and tension

Making a commitment to reach our God-given potential

Problem solving should take into consideration personal values, interests, skills, and financial resources. Big problems are broken down into smaller, more manageable steps. Achievable goals result in the production of new competencies, attitudes, solutions, as well as educational and training opportunities.

Step Four: Goal Setting and Decision Making

As individuals, parents, children, and teens:

Set, formulate, prioritize, and rank goals

Clearly state our vocational interests, abilities, and values

Derive plans or strategies to implement the solutions

Make a commitment to complete the plans

Understand decision-making processes

Evaluate the primary choice

Consider a secondary occupational choice, if necessary

Decision-making processes include:

Developing learning and career plans

Identifying suitable occupations

Selecting appropriate educational programs

Figuring the costs of educational training

Considering the impact of career decisions.

Step Five: Implementation

While implementing and executing our learning and career plans, parents, children, and teens translate vocational interests, abilities, and skills into occupational possibilities. Parents, children, and teens do reality testing through interviewing current workers, job shadowing, part-time employment, full-time employment, and volunteer work. Parents, children, and teens obtain skill training, for example, social skills, resume writing, networking, and

preparations for interviews.

Career Planning Resources

In order to assess gifts, talents, and abilities, parents, children, and teens need career resources. Career planning resources include books, videotapes, audio-tapes, games, workshops, self-assessment inventories, career exploration web-sites, and computer-assisted career guidance programs. These resources are found at libraries, community colleges, and resource centers.

The basis for most of the resources is the National Career Development Guidelines. In 1987, the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) developed The National Career Development Guidelines. The guidelines were organized into three areas: Self-knowledge, Educational and Occupational Exploration, and Career Planning.

Self-knowledge deals with our self-concept, interpersonal skills, growth, and development.

Educational and occupational exploration reveals the relationships between learning, work, career information skills, job seeking, skill development, and the labor market.

Career planning includes self-assessment, career exploration, decision making, life role formation, goal setting, and the implementation of career choices.

Conclusion

We are each significant, different, and special. Yet, God knows our gifts, talents, and abilities. God has chosen us for special positions and tasks. Our occupations should reflect the callings that God has placed in our lives. Our vocations represent the gifts given to us by God. Our destinies come from God. Parents help children and teens discover God-given talents, abilities, and interests so that children and teens can fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

As parents, we will use prayer, the Word of God, other books, videotapes, audio-tapes, games, workshops, training materials, self-assessment inventories, career web-sites, computer-assisted career guidance programs, and resource centers to assist us in helping our children, and teens.

References

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Peterson, G., W., Sampson, J., P., Jr., Reardon, R., C., and Lenz, J., G. (1996) A Cognitive Approach to Career Development and Services, Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development, University Center, Suite A4100, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 32306-1035, <http://www.fsu.edu/~career/techcenter/html>

About the Author

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