



JOURNEYING WITH OUR CHILDREN, SUPPORTING THEIR ASPIRATIONS

An Education & Career Guidance Handbook
for Parents

Education and Career Guidance (ECG)

ECG helps students gain a better understanding of themselves so that they can explore relevant education and career pathways that enable them to 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 and suggestions!



Your Role in Education and Career Guidance (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 and the possible ways to get started. Here are some prompts to guide you.

Questions	Yes	Not really, but I hope/try to
I see myself as a facilitator and supporter instead of the “director” of my children’s decisions.		
I recognise that all children are unique with their own values, interests, personality and skills.		
I believe that my children’s abilities can grow through dedication and hard work.		
I try to 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, 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 can speak to my children about their...

- Aspirations
- Interests
- Areas of strength
- Thoughts on what they consider important in life
- Knowledge of current trends and developments in the world of work
- Knowledge of platforms and opportunities to explore what they are good at and interested in
- Confidence in exploring their values, skills, interests and aspirations

Not many of us will be able to tick all the boxes, but you can always start now. 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
- ▶ manage your own expectations while being careful not to project your own expectations on them.

Read on for more tips!

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

1



Guide your children to make informed decisions and own them

Pay attention to the values, interests, personality and skills 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.

2

Encourage your children to explore the world of work

Encourage and support your children in exploring different industries and careers by allowing them to be exposed to a broad spectrum of industries and careers. This supports them in navigating future opportunities and gaining a better understanding of their values, interests, personality and skills.

When you encourage your children to take ownership of their goals and plans, they will be empowered to chart out their career aspirations.

3

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 challenges and triumphs in their education and career journey. Celebrate their efforts and encourage them to reframe setbacks as 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 for them to develop themselves as a lifelong learner, as they move towards living a purposeful life.



1

Guiding Your Children to Make Informed Decisions and Own Them

Understanding Your Children's Values, Interests, Personality and Skills

Observing the values, interests, personality and skills that your children display in their various activities and interactions, and sharing these observations with them help affirm and build their confidence.



Conversation Starters

Set aside time and space where you can speak with, listen to and understand your children's thoughts and feelings. Try using the following questions to get a conversation going.

For your children in Primary School:

- ▶ What are three positive words that describe you?
- ▶ What are you most proud of?
- ▶ What types of activities do you enjoy doing both in and out of school?



For your children in Secondary School:

- ▶ What are your favourite subjects and Co-Curricular Activities? What do you like about them?
- ▶ How would you want to contribute to our community to make a positive difference? What community/global challenges would you like to get involved in solving?
- ▶ What do you value most about life at home and in school?



For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

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



Suggested Activities

Try the following activities to observe your children's values, interests, personality and skills 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 *continuous learning, flexibility, persistence, optimism and adaptability*, which are essential for future-readiness.

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 Co-Curricular Activities, 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 teachers, an ECG Counsellor, 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.



*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 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 post-secondary education institution. Have discussions together about what your children have learnt.
- ▶ Encourage your children to have sustained conversations with teachers, lecturers, ECG counsellors, alumni and industry experts regarding information and opportunities in the education and career pathways that your children may be interested in.



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

Encourage Your Children to Explore the World of Work

Navigating Future Opportunities

Encouraging and supporting your children to explore different industries and careers will allow them to navigate future opportunities and understand their values, interests, personality and skills better. When you encourage your children to take ownership of their goals and plans, they will be empowered to chart out their career aspirations.



Conversation Starters

Try these to start a conversation on exploring the world of work with your children.

For your children in Primary School:

- ▶ What are some jobs that you have observed within your school or during learning journeys organised by your school?
- ▶ What are some jobs you have observed in the neighbourhood or amongst family members and relatives?
- ▶ What are some jobs that you like? Why do you like them?



For your children in Secondary School:

- ▶ Choosing a career path is not easy. What information have you found about the industries or careers you are interested in, including future possibilities and necessary subject requirements? What makes them interesting to you?
- ▶ How do you think you can get the relevant experience in the industries or careers you are interested in?
- ▶ How would you like me to support you?



For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- ▶ What research have you done on the industries or careers you are interested in?
- ▶ How do you think you can tap on online platforms such as social media, and on-campus or off-campus networking events with industry representatives to find out more about the industries or careers you are interested in?
- ▶ How would you like me to support you?





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 where 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 by teaching them



Ideas

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



Data

- Working with numbers and 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

Suggested Activities

Here are some activities for your children to learn more about the world of work. 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:

- ▶ Read books with your children about the jobs that different people do. Discuss the jobs that are mentioned in your children’s favourite stories.
- ▶ Explore the different jobs around you and your children and explain how all jobs are valuable in contributing to Singapore. Assist your children in making art and craft items that represent the different jobs. Encourage your children to talk about the jobs that interest them.
- ▶ Explore the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Primary) with your children for related information on the world of work.



For your children in Secondary School:

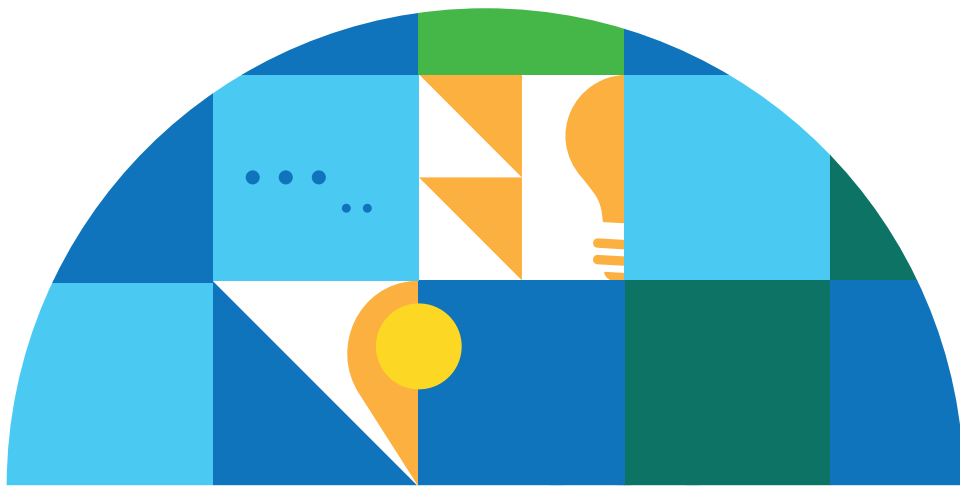
- ▶ Support your children’s participation in community service, learning journeys and education and career fairs as these are opportunities to expose them to different industries and careers.
- ▶ Assist your children in identifying projects that they can embark on as part of portfolio building. Encourage your children to create artefacts (e.g., Science/Technology/Mathematics/Art/Language artefacts) and pursue hobbies that can be featured as a part of a portfolio.
- ▶ Encourage your children to explore the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary). Your children can find out more about the work requirements and environment in a range of industries and related careers by watching the many industry-related videos and also research online for more industry-related information from various official sources.



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

For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- ▶ Discuss how your children are developing and refining their values, interests, personality and skills 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 future-ready 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)

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

- MySkillsFuture portal (for adults; polytechnic, ITE and tertiary students) (www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/portal/en/index.html)

3

Embrace Lifelong Learning and Develop Your Children's Future-Ready Skills

Being Future-Ready

Learning does not occur only in school but throughout life. Developing values and workplace-ready skills helps your children to be adaptable and resilient.



Conversation Starters

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

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?
- ▶ What makes learning fun for you? If you could learn about anything, what would you like to learn and why?
- ▶ 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 career you are interested in? What kinds of training opportunities and exposure are going to help you build the career you want?
- ▶ Industries and careers constantly face challenges and changes. How can you prepare yourself to enter into this challenging world of work?
- ▶ What are some skills and competencies which would prepare you for the ever-changing future?



Key Future-Ready Skills

Here are some skills recognised by employers as being key for employment in the future². Speak with your children about opportunities to develop these skills.

Emotion Management & Communication Skills

- Effective listening
- Cross-cultural communication
- Understanding emotions of self and others



Adaptability and Flexibility

- Learning and relearning
- Applying one's learning
- Growth mindset



Teamwork

- Respecting different perspectives
- Cooperating with others
- Negotiating with others



Decision-making & Problem-solving Skills

- Critical and logical thinking
- Creativity and innovation
- Evaluating options
- Sorting priorities
- Time management



Technology & Information Processing Skills

- Understanding and utilising data
- Using technological applications

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 or place of volunteering (if applicable), and the skills and lessons you have picked up through your work or volunteering.
- ▶ Seize teachable moments to 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 and to review them regularly through the My Goals and My Reflections features in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary).
- ▶ Support your children in identifying tangible 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.



Reference: ² Bughin, J., Hazan, E., Lund, S., Dahlstrom, P. Wiesinger, A., & Subramaniam, A. (2018, May 23). Skill Shift: Automation and the Future of the Workforce. McKinsey Global Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/skill-shift-automation-and-the-future-of-the-workforce>

For your children in Secondary School:

- ▶ Encourage your children to find out more about the school programmes and resources available that will allow them to develop skills and learn continuously, such as:

- Applied Learning Programmes
- Advanced Elective Modules and Elective Modules
- Co-Curricular Activities
- Interest Groups
- Learning for Life Programmes
- Lesson Resources on Student Learning Space
- MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary)

Please note that this list is non-exhaustive.



For your children in Post-Secondary Education Institutions:

- ▶ Guide your children through periodic reviews of their education and career decisions and 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** and the **labour market** in the MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Pre-University):

- <https://go.gov.sg/MySFPreU>

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

- <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/workstudy>

Resources for **Lifelong Learning**:

- SkillsFuture Singapore (<https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/ProgrammesForYou#section1>)
- SkillsFuture for Digital Workplace (<https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/digitalworkplace>)
- SkillsFuture Series (<https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/series>)

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>



Secondary School
Education Booklet

<https://go.gov.sg/sseb>



Secondary 1
Posting Process
and Information
Booklet

<https://go.gov.sg/sec1posting>



What's Next
(After PSLE)

<https://go.gov.sg/whats-next>



Tips on Coping with
the Transition to
Secondary School







Schoolbag article:
[Supporting Your Child's
Aspirations is No Child's Play](#)






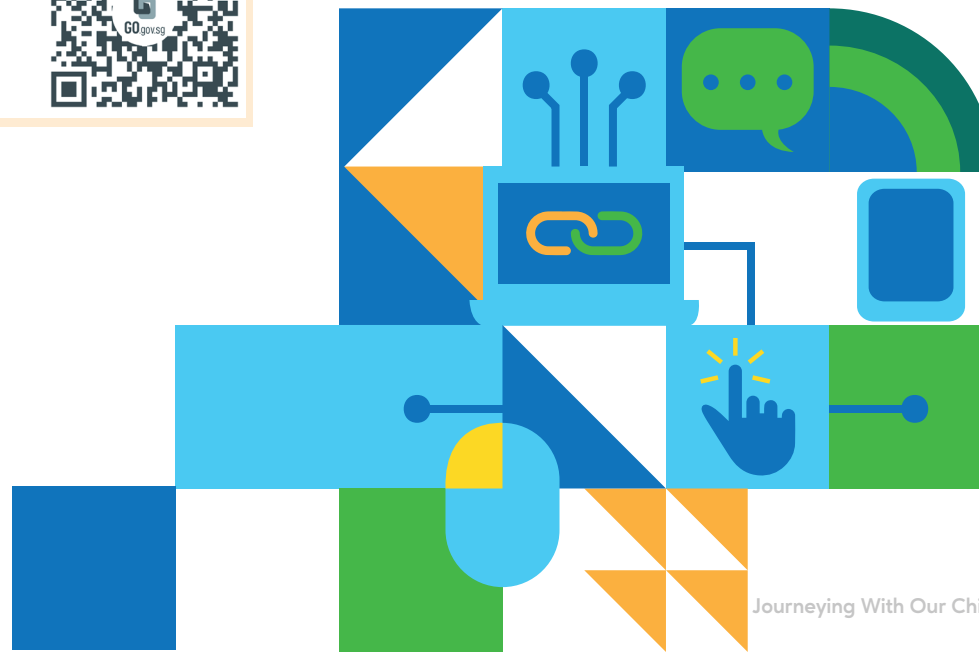
Resource: [Supporting Your
Child's Transition Through
Secondary School](#)

Secondary School

<p>MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Secondary)</p>	<p>https://go.gov.sg/MySFSec</p>	
<p>What's Next (After N/O-levels)</p>	<p>https://go.gov.sg/whats-next</p>	
<p>Post-Secondary Education</p>	<p>https://go.gov.sg/postsecondary</p>	
<p>Tips on Coping with Transition through Upper Secondary/ Post-Secondary Education</p>	<p>Resource: Supporting Your Child's Transition Through Upper Secondary/ Post-Secondary Education</p>	

Post-Secondary Education Institutions

<p>MySkillsFuture Student Portal (Pre-University)</p>	<p>https://go.gov.sg/MySFPreU</p>	
<p>What's Next (After A-Levels)</p>	<p>https://go.gov.sg/whats-next</p>	
<p>Overview of Post-Secondary Education Institutions</p>	<p>https://go.gov.sg/overview-pseis</p>	





Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

© 2020 Guidance Branch, Student Development Curriculum Division (SDCD),
Ministry of Education, Singapore

Nothing in here shall be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means,
electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any other information
storage and retrieval system, without written permission from SDCD,
Ministry of Education, Singapore.