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# WITHIN REACH

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## Key Steps in Career Exploration

Career development is a life-long process that starts when your children learn to talk. Although certain activities need to happen at particular times, most of the activities and information sharing can occur throughout childhood. Here are some key career exploration activities where parents can help:

- Share information about the world of work. Learn about labor market trends, a good work ethic, job hunting and more. Discuss this information with your children when they can understand it, probably sometime in high school. Talk about it regularly!
- Help your children engage in self-assessment. This self-assessment needs to happen routinely because your children grow and change all the time. Each discussion you have will make the next one easier.
- Direct your children through career investigation. Your children should begin exploring occupations and careers early, often, and in depth. As early as elementary school, students can start looking at coloring and activity books to get the process started. Remember, in Idaho your children need to develop a Student Learning Plan by 8<sup>th</sup> grade and review the plan annually. So, the sooner they have a sense of what careers would suit them well, the better.
- Make sure your children understand the connection between work and education. It's important that your children appreciate the value of education and the importance of choosing a field of study (major) that promotes specific career goals.
- Help your children develop their own personal education/ training plans that will help them meet career goals. At the end of this publication, we provide a suggested timetable that helps your children through this process in a more structured way. Now let's discuss some strategies to keep the conversation going and highlight some tools to help your children through the process of exploring careers.