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Childhood Passions Point to Career Paths

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Published: 03/01/2012 by Elizabeth Venturini
» Talk About It

"Dancing is my life . . . I live to Dance."

These are not the words of some 20 year-old professional dancer, but the passionate statement of my 7-year-old nephew who performed for me his own improvised dance to the hit song "Moves Like Jagger."

Ask any child of that age what they want to be when they grow up. Behind every answer lies a passion that could lead to a variety of rewarding careers. Their answers are precious insights into what might motivate them to succeed as adults. Parents need to know what their child's inner vision is so they can help them develop it, rather than project their own dreams into their child's future.



Elizabeth Venturini is a college career strategist at Scholasticus.

Starting as early as grade school, parents can begin developing the interests and talents of their children to help turn them toward a possible future career. "What?" you may be thinking. "Shouldn't a child just enjoy being a child, experiencing life, learning new things and playing with friends? After all, what is the rush? Adulthood will come soon enough." Well of course! While grade school may be too young to cement the career aspirations of a child, it is nevertheless the ideal time for parents to observe the interests and activities their child naturally enjoys and gravitates to. Parents can follow and encourage their child's progress with the activities they already are enthusiastic about as they approach middle and high school.

There are many different ways to discover interests and explore careers with children and teenagers. These may include observations, questionnaires, and simple structured interviews. Some methods require more formal training than others. Ask about the credentials of the administrator, how the assessments are performed, how they are interpreted, and how many times they can be given. Need more convincing that grade school is not too young to start thinking about possible careers for children? Read any self-help book on finding a new job or starting a new career. The author usually requires the reader to think and write about the activities they enjoyed when they were young. By doing so, the reader finds the correlation between his or her interests, talents, abilities, values, and a satisfying career.

So why not work backwards and start to assess the interests and possible career aspirations as a child, instead of waiting until one becomes a teenager or adult? Parents and their child can use the information to make better academic decisions while in middle and high school. These can lead to better choices for a college major, selection of a college, and, after graduation, a focused, satisfying career. Listen to the dreams of your child! He or she may be expressing their passion for their future career to you. Who knows? Maybe, you have your own future dance superstar waiting in the wings!

Elizabeth Venturini, a college career strategist at Scholasticus makes the college admissions process easier for high achievers, late-blooming seniors and all the stressed-out parents who love them. Follow Elizabeth at www.Scholasticus.net, or contact her at Elizabeth@Scholasticus.net.

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