# **Mistakes Parents Make While Helping Their Child Choose The Right Career Path**

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Do your children resist or feel unhappy about your career decisions for them? Find out how to help them choose the right career based on their skills.

 Monish is a second-year engineering student at one of the premier institutes in the country. To get admission into the college, he took special coaching classes from the age of 12. He wasn't given an option by his parents other than getting into the prestigious institute and becoming an engineer. Two years into the program, Monish realized he didn't want to become an engineer but a veterinarian. When he approached his parents to tell them about his career plans, they were extremely disappointed and angry with his 'childish whim'. To put it simply, Monish's father's dreams were shattered!

This is a common scenario in many homes in our country. Most children choose their field of study as per their parent's wishes rather than choosing the right stream based on their skills, aptitude, and core interests.

A survey by Timesjobs.com titled 'Job Satisfaction 2016' stated that 60 percent of employees were not satisfied with their jobs while 80 percent were looking to change jobs. Out of the total respondents, 30 percent stated 'meaningless work' as the reason for looking for a job change. So, it is important that your child chooses a career that interests him and is passionate about. As a parent, you need to guide him toward a career path most suited for him. In doing that, you need to be aware of and avoid the common mistakes parents make while guiding their children on how to choose a career.

## **10 common mistakes parents make:**

1. Parents are often eager to see their children settle down in a fruitful and economically viable careers. This often leads to decisions that can be shortsighted, where parents get advice from fellow parents or the Internet and insist that their children follow the same.
2. Many parents, while choosing a career for their children, see them as an extension of themselves. Therefore, they want to realize their dreams through their children and enforce their unfulfilled goals and ambitions on them.
3. Parents are often influenced by market trends rather than focusing on their child's aptitude or skills.
4. Some parents decide on career choices for their child and the subsequent academic training required even before their child reaches the age of 12. This restricts the child's exposure to various jobs and careers. Many children lose out on exploring great career options due to a lack of awareness.
5. Children must choose their careers based on their aptitude, skills, and passion. Many parents ignore these important attributes and jump into choosing careers for their children based on their academic performance.
6. Parents often ask their children to choose college courses based on the popularity of the institute or its geographical location. These factors take precedence over the actual course of study that may benefit the child.
7. Many children are burdened with unrealistic expectations of their parents and are forced to attend special coaching classes from as early as Grade 6. Some children may not have the necessary skills or aptitude for the course they are getting trained for.
8. Some parents tend to blatantly reject out-of-the-box career choices of children calling them 'childish', 'whimsical', or 'immature'. This demotivates the child and may have a negative impact on his mental health.
9. Often parents do not realize that they can seek the help of career guidance counselors in choosing the career path for their child. Career counseling for teens will go a long way in identifying their aptitude and matching it to the right career.
10. Parents often compare their child's career goals to his friend's professional aspirations and want him to follow the same career path as his peer. They need to remember that what works out for one child may not work for the other.

## **Tips on helping your child choose a suitable career:**

1. The first step toward helping your child is to let him discover his own strengths and interests. He could try out different kinds of tasks and summer internships and get feedback from his peers, friends, and mentors to help him identify what he is good at.
2. Expose your child to sports, arts, and other creative pursuits. See if she likes or dislikes a particular activity. While having her sign up for many extra-curricular activities is a good thing, make sure that she is not over-committed.
3. Let your child play a lot. Free play often gives us insights into the nature and abilities of our children. Some children turn out to be thoughtful and deliberate, while others are more emotional and dramatic.
4. Be an active listener to your child's likes and dislikes. Think about the suitability of a career path based on what he likes to do. For example, if he likes to conduct and create new games, he has good organizational abilities and can consider exploring careers that require these skills.
5. Learn about your child's aptitude and skill level. Don't decide on her abilities based entirely on the mark sheet. Keep in mind the multiple intelligence concept. Your child could be excelling in areas not related to academics. Some children may not learn in a formal classroom setting, but teaching those subjects in a practical setting will bring out the best in them. For example, she may not score well in physics but will excel in building machines with a mechanical set.
6. Taking a differential aptitude test conducted by a qualified psychologist, who has been trained to administer such tests, will help your child understand where his aptitudes lie, such as verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, mechanical reasoning, and spatial relations.
7. Identify the academic subject that your child takes interest in and encourage him to learn beyond the curriculum and textbooks.
8. Take your child to career counseling centers and seek guidance from a career counseling expert. Guidance from career experts and career consultants will help your teen explore various career options and choose from them. You can also interact with online career counselors.
9. Resist the urge to relate your child's efforts to your personal experiences. Guide her and offer good encouragement. Encourage her to believe in herself and follow her dreams and aspirations.
10. Above all, give your child the freedom to choose his career path with your guidance and support. It may be a traditional one such as medicine, engineering, law, or teaching, or an unconventional one such as robotics, social media, heritage preservation, theatre, or scientific journalism. Ultimately, your child should do what he loves.

A child's abilities and strengths will evolve as she grows and develops. Encourage your child to excel in various activities and try not to make a hasty career decision for her before she begins high school. Engage and communicate with her so she feels confident in approaching you for help and guidance.