

Grandparents' guide to career learning for kids

How grandparents influence kids' career choices

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|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| jobs | careers | <i>occupations</i> | strengths | INTERESTS | skills | TRADES |
| <i>professions</i> | | <i>industries</i> | labour market | CURIOSITY | reliable | |
| | EDUCATION | training | <i>aspirations</i> | explore | <i>beliefs</i> | |
| | choices | motivation | confidence | <i>resilience</i> | <i>creative</i> | learner |
| | problem solver | | flexible | initiative | responsible | SOCIAL |
| SKILLS | courteous | INDEPENDENCE | | honesty | EQUALITY | <i>respect</i> |
| | <i>self-reflection</i> | <i>creativity</i> | tolerance | COOPERATION | | self-control |
| | empathy | | <i>persistence</i> | social justice | | |

Your life's wisdom + current career-related knowledge = inspiring impact

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1. Why a book for grandparents?

Grandparents can have a big impact on kids – their beliefs, attitudes, choices. And nowhere are these more important than in the area of careers.

Children form their beliefs about jobs very early, including what they might aspire to be and do, and what is relevant and appropriate. Depending on circumstances, these beliefs may expand options or limit choices, thereby having a lifelong impact. For children growing up in a changing and uncertain world, this is a serious matter.

Research indicates that childhood experiences affect identity, attitudes and ideas about work, available occupations and appropriate options. Plus, there is evidence that young people's career expectations are often unrealistic, poorly informed, and heavily shaped by gender.

[Australian researchers](#) have found that preschool children understand much about careers. Children as young as five years express occupational dreams. Having narrow, biased aspirations influences children's academic effort, the subjects they choose to study and the jobs they pursue. Research has shown that exposing children to wider information at an early age can change children's perceptions and choices.

In recognition of parents' influence on their children, plenty of resources are now offered to help them assist their children to make important career decisions. These decisions include subject, course and educational institution choices, and whether to take a gap year. Yet there are few resources available for grandparents. While much of what is directed at parents is relevant to, and useful for, grandparents, the roles differ significantly. The relationship is different, as is the time spent with grandchildren.

This ebook is designed to fill that gap. It is for those people who care for grandchildren on an ad hoc basis, rather than full-time carers, and who wish to influence their beliefs and interests about the vast opportunities the world offers. They may care for grandchildren for full or part days and for extended periods during holidays.

This ebook is broadly designed for young grandchildren, in the pre-school to primary school years. The suggestions offered are general, rather than targeted at a specific age or set of circumstances. This means you can adapt them to your circumstances, taking into account the many factors that make your situation unique. Given the vast range of circumstances grandparents may be in, with varying access to resources and facilities, the ideas offered are largely cost-free, requiring only some thought and effort.

The working world of the baby boomer is different from what grandchildren will experience. There's a risk that the suggestions you make, based on your experience, will not match today's reality. This ebook provides a summary of the contemporary working world and of research that hints at what the future may be like.

Career development research and literature points out that there are skills needed to effectively navigate the world of work. While your grandchildren may not be old enough to

consider paid work, they will still be exposed to a wealth of information and ideas about work. What grandparents can do is consciously think about the career-related learning that happens when they spend time with grandchildren.

Career-related learning refers to early childhood activities that give children from an early age a wide range of experiences of, and exposure to, work and learning. This learning is part of the career development process that involves developing the skills and knowledge that equip children for the next stage of their lives as well as enabling them to plan and make informed decisions and choices about their education, training and career.

While children are exploring their world with you, there are attributes, skills and behaviours that can be encouraged and developed with the aim of broadening horizons and raising aspirations. Such experiences help children explore a wider range of work and develop skills that will benefit them and others across the lifespan.

[UK research](#) has found that the extent to which young people can secure good-quality work, housing and relationships is shaped by whether or not they had four specific 'assets' to make a successful transition to adulthood. These four assets are:

- Appropriate skills and qualifications for their preferred career.
- Personal confidence and connections to help navigate the adult world.
- Financial and practical support to achieve goals.
- Emotional support from people they can be open and honest with.

Having some or all of these assets makes it easier for young people to make a smooth transition into adulthood. With this in mind, grandparents can contribute to some or all four of these assets.

I bring to this ebook knowledge and experience of the world of work, career decision-making, and the influences that can either limit or expand people's options and aspirations.

I don't have any grandchildren. I don't even have kids. So what would I know about grandparenting, you may ask?

A person doesn't need to have direct, lived experience to know something about a subject. Observation reveals a lot. So while this ebook is not based on actual grandparenting experience, it does draw on observations of what grandparents say and do, combined with knowledge and experience of career development and factors that influence a child's career beliefs, choices and interests.

This ebook is informed by these three perspectives:

- *Mental Nutrition*[®]: understanding our 'mental pantry' and its impact on what we think and say.
- Career development: understanding the importance of managing our careers and how to do that.

- Gender equity: understanding that gender is a social construct and believing that women are human beings equal to men.

I have drawn on both Australian and international research that informs these three perspectives.

There is one common thread across these three perspectives: respectful relationships. Social skills are critical for future work. Assessing the validity of information and how it is used is a vital skill in this digital age. And gender equity relies on respectful behaviour.

The material is deliberately presented in a general fashion so that you can adapt it to your personal circumstances. By considering this material you can play a role in broadening and raising your grandchildren's aspirations, building confidence and motivation, countering stereotypes, building an understanding of the value of education, and improving social-emotional skills. You can help them identify positive things about themselves and their achievements, what they are good at, how to make judgements about who to listen to when making choices, and how to compare the pros and cons of different choices so that they can make progress.

I have inserted into the text source material links and listed them under Source Material at the end of this ebook.

At the end of some chapters I've included photo boxes with questions (**Q**) inviting you to observe what's around you and explore the world with your grandchildren. There are also some resource boxes (**R**) with links to websites that provide information about topics of interest to you and your grandchildren.

I start with a brief explanation of some career terms, as some of these may be unfamiliar. Knowing what these terms mean will help with gaining the most value from this ebook.