



SIGNPOST

Divine their true interest

Dr Sitara Vikram elucidates the importance of facilitating an understanding of careers among children

As students enter high school, overwhelming importance is given to scoring high marks in the board exams, cracking competitive

examinations and securing a place in prestigious institutions. However, what is often overlooked is the need to identify what career suits

the child. Children need to understand what it means to be a doctor, engineer, lawyer, banker, etc. before making an important life-long decision. Before engaging on the gruelling journey of preparing for entrance examinations, students should pause and think about the career that best suits them in terms of interest, skills and lifestyle.

Selecting what a student wants to do in the workplace is not about identifying what college the student goes to after STD XII – it is far more than that. A career is what you choose to do in real society – the course you take after STD XII is just a stepping stone to get to the end goal

of a successful career. Research has shown that the most successful people in the workplace are people who chose to do work that they loved. A US study of 1,000 students who chose careers on the basis of money vs interest found that the most successful people came from the group that chose interest over money.

How many of you (or your children)

have had any form of formal career guidance? What can schools do to help students identify their ideal career and help them succeed in the world of work? First, students need to really understand the working world – they need to know what the options are that are available to them. Work clubs where students can select different fields of work (architecture, energy, IT, Business services etc.) and have regular discussions and do projects and assignments are very helpful. These



can be supplemented by expert speakers who can bring practical knowledge into the school. Internships, where students can shadow different professionals during their holidays can be eye openers. Ideally, every school needs to have a full-fledged career guidance centre/program — where students can explore different career options, reflect and select what they want to pursue for the rest of their lives.



Parents need to play an active role too. A common mistake is to decide on a career too quickly without considering the various options available. Parents should have an open mind and listen to their child's ideas and engage in non-critical debate. They can also help organise internships with people from different walks of life – family friends and relatives can be requested to help. Given the importance of the decisions being made, students and parents need to set aside time to explore different career options and discover the student's passion - a key factor for future success.

The writer is a trained Psychiatrist, experienced in Child and Family therapy, with over 10 years working experience in London. She is the Executive Director of the CS Academy Schools at Coimbatore and Erode, Tamil Nadu.



T

