

Want your kids to listen to you? Talk to them about their future goals

Less than a quarter of parents help children determine future goals

MISSISSAUGA, ON (November 23, 2011) – An overwhelming 82 per cent of Canadian youth turn to their parents for guidance on making decisions about their education and careers, yet many parents don't take time to discuss educational goals with their children. Results of a recent Angus Reid study show that, of the 60 per cent of youth who plan to pursue science beyond grade 10, 75 per cent were influenced by their parents to do so.

While these statistics may not come as a surprise, what's curious is that only 23 per cent of parents take the time to discuss their children's goals when they clearly wield much influence in these decisions – especially when 74 per cent of parents agree that it is very important to be involved in their children's education.

"As parents, we have the potential to be the greatest outside influence of children's education and career decisions," says Alyson Schafer, psychotherapist, author, and one of Canada's leading parenting experts.

Schafer is an advocate for regular parent-child communication as it relates to education and science in particular. "We need to seize the opportunity to have informed, thoughtful discussions about their futures, cultivate an interest in science and technology, and let our children know what prospects exist for them," she says.

When asked, Canadians will tell you about the growing necessity for a background in science with 84 cent of parents believing that a basic understanding of math and science is useful to them in their jobs – and this includes people whose careers are not "science-related." Ninety-four per cent say science is useful for everyday life outside of work. Further, 62 per cent of parents surveyed believe jobs in Canada will require more training in science over the next 15 years.

"There are a huge number of jobs that require science knowledge, whether it's simply understanding the basics or having a more deep-rooted foundation," says Bonnie Schmidt, President and Founder of Let's Talk Science. "We need to engage youth in science at a young age, foster that curiosity throughout the school years, encourage them to keep doors open when making decisions about their education, and educate them about the many careers available to them when they do choose to pursue science."

Essential to pique youth's interest in science

Seven in 10 Canadian youth (70 per cent) said personal interests drive their decisions about higher education. As such, cultivating a passion for science at a young age is paramount in developing the next generation of science innovators. There are a wealth of activities families can do together that may not immediately strike one as science-based. Parents and children can cook and garden together; watch scientific current events programs; visit the zoo; and work on science projects together, to name a few.

Amgen Canada and Let's Talk Science are two organizations committed to raising science literacy levels and promoting the value of science education in Canada. Let's Talk Science develops programs for the same purpose – families can try out experiments from Let's Talk Science's [hands-on activities database](#), or visit [CurioCity.ca](#) to read science-related articles and watch videos.

“Amgen Canada is committed to working with Let's Talk Science as we continue to raise awareness of the fundamental importance and value of science education,” says Karen Burke, Director of Regulatory Affairs, Amgen Canada, and President of the Canadian Society of Chemistry. “Ultimately, our goals are for science to become ‘main stream,’ for people to recognize how science impacts their everyday lives and to attract bright young minds to the field for many years to come.”

About Let's Talk Science

Let's Talk Science is an award-winning, national, charitable, science outreach organization. Let's Talk Science creates and delivers science learning programs and services that turn kids on to science, keep them engaged in learning and develop their potential to become 21st century stewards, innovators and citizens. For more information about Let's Talk Science, please visit www.letstalkscience.ca.

About Amgen Canada

As a leader in innovation, Amgen Canada understands the value of science. With main operations located in Mississauga, Ont.'s vibrant biomedical cluster, and its research facility in Burnaby, B.C., Amgen Canada has been an important contributor to advancements in science and innovation in Canada since 1991. The company contributes to the development of new therapies or new uses for existing medicines in partnership with many of Canada's leading health-care, academic, research, government and patient organizations. To learn more about Amgen Canada, visit www.amgen.ca.

Survey Methodology

From July 12th to July 14th, 2011, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among a sample of 1,516 Canadian adults who have children between the ages of 7 and 18 who are Angus Reid Forum panel members. The margin of error on the full base — which measures sampling variability — is +/- 2.4%. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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