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# OPINION

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## Encourage children to form 'life plans'

**Rebecca M. Dedmond, Alexandria Center Director, School Counseling and Freshman Transition Initiative, George Washington University - Alexandria, Va.**

Who among us doesn't wish that we had been asked what our ambitions were when we were 13 or 14 years old ("Starting high school? What's your major?," Our view, Career-focused education debate, Tuesday)?

Asking high school students to envision and then plan for the future as productive adults not only equips them to navigate successfully through adolescence, but it also compels them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to one day contribute to their own lives, to their communities and to the future economy.

We have found in states across the country that when parents and schools support eighth- and ninth-grade students in developing quantitative and meaningful 10-year career and life plans, students are less likely to drop out and are more determined to take ownership of their educations and their futures.

Why? Because they come to understand the consequences that not getting a good education can have on their future life satisfaction.

Meaningful planning gives way to meaningful living, and that, let's hope, is also a fad in no certain danger of fading.

Posted at 12:09 AM/ET, September 10, 2007 in [Education - Letters](#), [Family - Letters](#), [Letter to the editor](#), [Lifestyle issues - Letters](#) | [Permalink](#)

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