

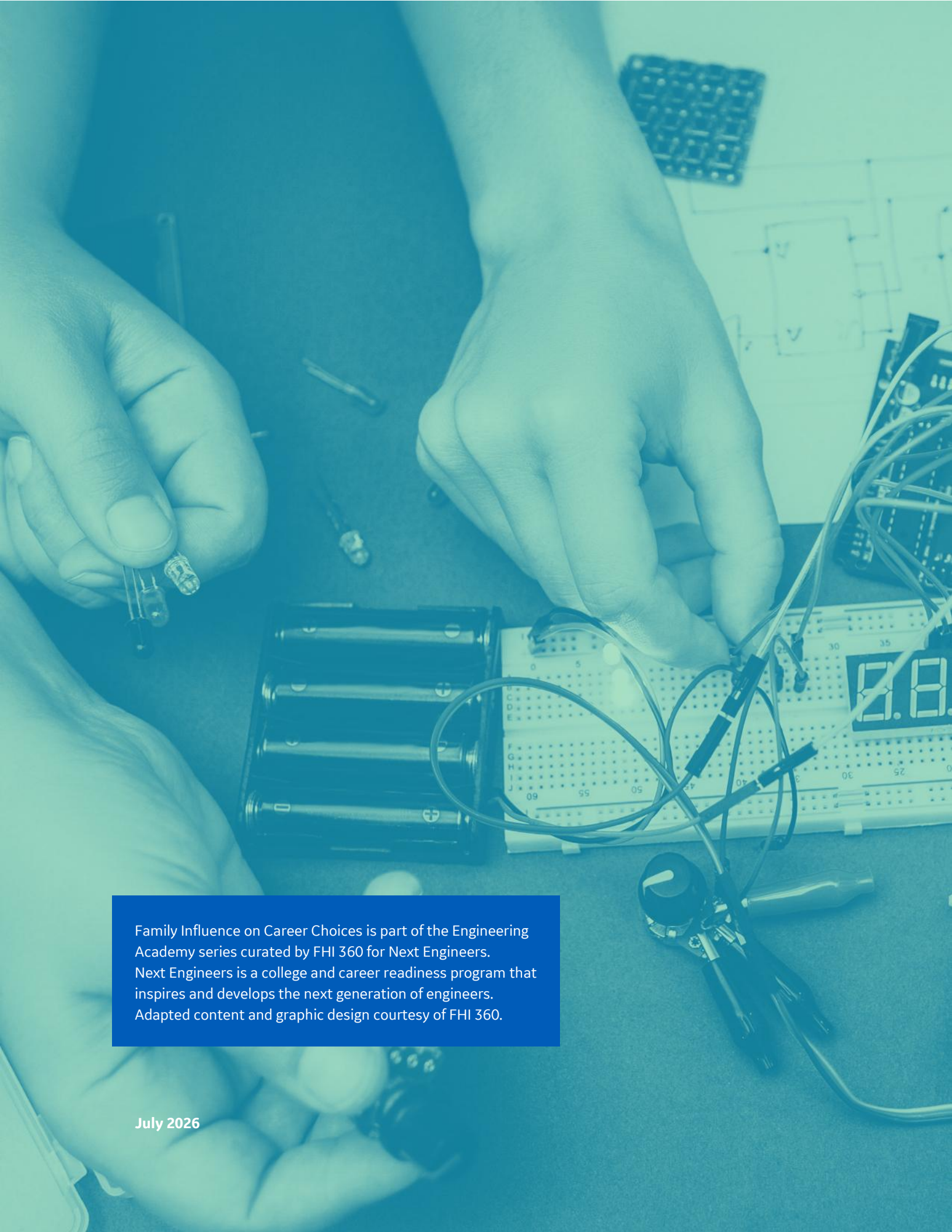
NEXT ENGINEERS



ENGINEERING ACADEMY
Family Influence
on Career Choices



NEXT ENGINEERS



Family Influence on Career Choices is part of the Engineering Academy series curated by FHI 360 for Next Engineers. Next Engineers is a college and career readiness program that inspires and develops the next generation of engineers. Adapted content and graphic design courtesy of FHI 360.

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Family Influence on Career Choices

Time	Ages	Cost	Group size
60 minutes	15 to 18	Low	Individual

Overview

Students will create a *genogram* – a pictorial display of family history – to track themes of education and work in their family. Students will then reflect on the stories and messages that emerge from their family career genogram. Through this activity students can discuss the various influences on their academic and career choices which can lead to a greater understanding of their goals and motivations.

Note: For the purposes of this activity, “family” is not limited to immediate or biological relatives. It is used as an inclusive term for individuals that have a significant or memorable role in the student’s life. As discussions of family may elicit strong emotions in some individuals, consider alternative ways for students to participate – such as written reflections rather than verbal discussions. Consider offering follow-up resources for students who may desire additional support regarding family relationships.

Learning outcomes

As a result of this activity, students will be able to:

- Examine family members’ occupations and educational pursuits and reflect on any themes or patterns.
- Explore how family and heritage can influence academic and career decisions.

Materials

- Laptop or computer with Internet access and projector
- PowerPoint Presentation: Family Influence on Career Choices
- Student Handout 1: Family Career Genogram, *1 per student*
- Student Handout 2: Tips for Discussing Career Plans with Family, *1 per student*
- Paper and pen/pencil, *1 per student*

Preparation

1. Print copies of the student worksheet for each student or share a digital version.
2. Preview resources to ensure they are appropriate for your students. You may choose to create a sample genogram to share with students.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

These are the sets of skills necessary for students to succeed in postsecondary education and work settings as determined by universities and employers.

The employability skills addressed by this activity:

- Academic and Career Development skills



KEY VOCABULARY

Genogram: A diagram that is similar to a family tree that also includes information about relationships and interactions between family members.



- **How to Discuss Career Plans with Your Family**

<https://alis.alberta.ca/plan-your-career/how-to-discuss-career-plans-with-your-family/>

- **Talking to parents about careers**

<https://youtu.be/GN7aKQCd6A0>

What to do

Introduction (10 minutes)

- **Slides 1-2:** Welcome students and lead a brief discussion about the following topics that will be covered in this activity. Provide or ask students to provide various examples of each:
 - Different family structures
 - Education levels
 - Family values

Remind students that the purpose of this activity is not to judge their own or another student's family structure, education, and values, but to reflect on the **impact** of family on our choices.

- Continue the discussion with the idea that families can affect our educational and career decisions, and we may not notice how another person can have a positive or negative effect on our decisions.
- **Slides 3-4:** Ask students to think of a recent decision they made that was influenced by a family member. Call on a few volunteers to share examples aloud or share some prepared examples:
 - Gabriel decides to apply to University X because he has an older cousin that graduated from there and he always spoke about how much fun it was to attend parties.
 - Pradeep signs up for a carpentry class at school instead of a cooking class because his stepdad told him that construction is more appropriate work for a man.
 - Charisma starts volunteering at a local hospital because her mom and aunt are both nurses and she's familiar with visiting a hospital.
- Ask students to consider the influence of family members in the examples shared. How might it affect the students' choices in the short term? In the long term?
- **Slide 5:** Explain to students that they will use a diagram called a genogram to explore the impact of their family on the way they think about work and education. Ask, what patterns do they notice on the sample genogram?

Creating a Family Career Genogram (20 minutes)

- Share the first student handout with the sample genograms and explain that each student will be drawing their own genogram on blank piece of paper. Students will not be asked to show their genograms to anyone else, but they are welcome to do so if they feel comfortable.
- **Slide 6:** Review the directions and allow time for students to create their own family and career genograms. They can include the education and/or career choices of their parents, guardians, siblings, extended family, and close family friends.
 - Encourage students to include at least six people, including multiple generations if possible.



- Students should focus on individuals that are emotionally close to them. They do not need to be biological relatives.
- If students do not know someone's name or job right now, they can leave that space blank. Students may also complete genograms later with their families' assistance.
- Ask students to reflect on their families' attitudes and values towards education and work. They should write down some words or phrases that represent these attitudes on the their genogram.

Conclusion (20 minutes)

- **Slide 7:** Lead a group discussion using some of the following questions. Alternatively, students can choose to write responses to the questions in their journals.
 - Do you notice a pattern of level of education?
 - Do you notice a pattern of career types or industry?
 - Do you think that you are more likely to pursue a career that someone in your family already has? Why or why not?
 - Are there any careers that your family wishes you would pursue? What is their reason for this? How does it make you feel?
 - What are some barriers that your parents or relatives faced that impacted their education or career choices?
 - Do you think that children are influenced by whether or not their parents or relatives go to university? Why or why not?
- **Slides 8-9:** Show the 3-minute video [Talking to parents about careers](#) and review the second student handout with tips for career discussions with family.
- Wrap up the discussion by reminding students that the purpose of this activity is to be more aware of the impact of others on our education and career choices. Families can be a good source of support when pursuing career goals, but we may also need to look for role models and support outside of our family.
- **Slide 10:** Answer any questions students may have as time permits.

Extension

If desired, students can complete their genogram by interviewing a family member to learn more about their background. Sample interview questions are included on Student Handout 1: Family Career Genogram.

This activity is based on **Genogram Lesson Plan and Sample** from the Postsecondary Success Toolkit originally created by **Network for College Success** and available at <https://ncs.uchicago.edu/tool-set/supporting-student-identity>.

