

# NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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The National Career Development Guidelines is a framework for thinking about the knowledge and skills young people and adults need to manage their careers effectively, from decisions about school to that first job and beyond.

## Development of the Framework

The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee first released the National Career Development Guidelines in 1989. NCDG included a framework of career development competencies and indicators of mastery, and a recommended strategy for implementing career development programs for youth or adults.

Since then, much has changed. The demands of a high performance workplace require workers to engage in lifelong learning to continually improve their academic, occupational and career management skills. It is important that NCDG remain dynamic as well, and continue to reflect the full scope of career development and career management skills required in today's workplace.

Accordingly, the US Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education commissioned the Guidelines Revision Project in 2003 to:

- update and revise the framework of competencies and indicators to align with the goals of *No Child Left Behind*;
- expand the target audiences to include K-12 students and their parents, teachers, counselors and administrators, postsecondary students and other adults and the business community;
- broaden the scope and application by providing the target audiences with easily accessible career development information, learning activities and strategies that lead to informed career decision-making and lifelong learning; and
- create a robust, career development Web site to deliver NCDG information, learning activities and strategies.

The materials in each updated component are designed to help youth and adults better manage their own careers or to help professionals design and deliver career development programs and services for youth and adults in many settings.

The three components of the new NCDG are:

Personal Social Development  
Educational Achievement and Lifelong Learning  
Career Management

Download the National Career Development Guidelines:  
**[www.acrnetwork.org/ncdg/documents/NCDG.pdf](http://www.acrnetwork.org/ncdg/documents/NCDG.pdf)**

Adapted from:  
America's Career Resource Network

# NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES, CONTINUED

## Personal Social Development

**GOAL: Develop understanding of yourself to build and maintain a positive self-concept.**

	INDICATORS	
Knowledge	Application	Reflection
Identify your interests, likes, and dislikes. [PS1.K1]	Demonstrate behavior and decisions that reflect your interests, likes, and dislikes. [PS1.A1]	Assess how your interests and preferences are reflected in your career goals. [PS1.R1]
Identify your abilities, strengths, skills, and talents. [PS1.K2]	Demonstrate use of your abilities, strengths, skills, and talents. [PS1.A2]	Assess the impact of your abilities, strengths, skills, and talents on your career development. [PS1.R2]
Identify your positive personal characteristics (e.g., honesty, dependability, responsibility, integrity, and loyalty). [PS1.K3]	Give examples of when you demonstrated positive personal characteristics (e.g., honesty, dependability, responsibility, integrity, and loyalty). [PS1.A3]	Assess the impact of your positive personal characteristics (e.g., honesty, dependability, responsibility, integrity, and loyalty) on your career development. [PS1.R3]
Identify your work values/needs. [PS1.K4]	Demonstrate behavior and decisions that reflect your work values/needs. [PS1.A4]	Assess how your work values/needs are reflected in your career goals. [PS1.R4]
Describe aspects of your self-concept. [PS1.K5]	Demonstrate a positive self-concept through your behaviors and attitudes. [PS1.A5]	Analyze the positive and negative aspects of your self-concept. [PS1.R5]
Identify behaviors and experiences that help to build and maintain a positive self-concept. [PS1.K6]	Show how you have adopted behaviors and sought experiences that build and maintain a positive self-concept. [PS1.A6]	Evaluate the affect of your behaviors and experiences on building and maintaining a positive self-concept. [PS1.R6]
Recognize that situations, attitudes, and the behaviors of others affect your self-concept. [PS1.K7]	Give personal examples of specific situations, attitudes, and behaviors of others that affected your self-concept. [PS1.A7]	Evaluate the effect of situations, attitudes, and the behaviors of others on your self-concept. [PS1.R7]
Recognize that your behaviors and attitudes affect the self-concept of others. [PS1.K8]	Show how you have adopted behavior and attitudes to positively affect the self-concept of others. [PS1.A8]	Analyze how your behaviors and attitudes might affect the self-concept of others. [PS1.R8]
Recognize that your self-concept can affect educational achievement (i.e., performance) and/or success at work. [PS1.K9]	Show how aspects of your self-concept could positively or negatively affect educational achievement (i.e., performance) and/or success at work. [PS1.A9]	Assess how your self-concept affects your educational achievement (performance) and/or success at work. [PS1.R9]
Recognize that educational achievement (performance) and/or success at work can affect your self-concept. [PS1.K10]	Give personal examples of how educational achievement (performance) and/or success at work affected your self-concept. [PS1.A10]	Assess how your educational achievement (performance) and/or success at work affect your self-concept. [PS1.R10]

## NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES, CONTINUED

### Educational Achievement and Lifelong Learning

**GOAL: Attain educational achievement and performance levels needed to reach your personal and career goals.**

	INDICATORS	
Knowledge	Application	Reflection
Recognize the importance of educational achievement and performance to the attainment of personal and career goals. [ED1.K1]	Demonstrate educational achievement and performance levels needed to attain your personal and career goals. [ED1.A1]	Evaluate how well you have attained educational achievement and performance levels needed to reach your personal and career goals. [ED1.R1]
Identify strategies for improving educational achievement and performance. [ED1.K2]	Demonstrate strategies you are using to improve educational achievement and performance. [ED1.A2]	Analyze your educational achievement and performance strategies to create a plan for growth and improvement. [ED1.R2]
Describe study skills and learning habits that promote educational achievement and performance. [ED1.K3]	Demonstrate acquisition of study skills and learning habits that promote educational achievement and performance. [ED1.A3]	Evaluate your study skills and learning habits to develop a plan for improving them. [ED1.R3]
Identify your learning style. [ED1.K4]	Show how you are using learning style information to improve educational achievement and performance. [ED1.A4]	Analyze your learning style to develop behaviors to maximize educational achievement and performance. [ED1.R4]
Describe the importance of having a plan to improve educational achievement and performance. [ED1.K5]	Show that you have a plan to improve educational achievement and performance. [ED1.A5]	Evaluate the results of your plan for improving educational achievement and performance. [ED1.R5]
Describe how personal attitudes and behaviors can impact educational achievement and performance. [ED1.K6]	Exhibit attitudes and behaviors that support educational achievement and performance. [ED1.A6]	Assess how well your attitudes and behaviors promote educational achievement and performance. [ED1.R6]
Recognize that your educational achievement and performance can lead to many workplace options. [ED1.K7]	Show how your educational achievement and performance can expand your workplace options. [ED1.A7]	Assess how well your educational achievement and performance will transfer to the workplace. [ED1.R7]
Recognize that the ability to acquire and use information contributes to educational achievement and performance. [ED1.K8]	Show how the ability to acquire and use information has affected your educational achievement and performance. [ED1.A8]	Assess your ability to acquire and use information in order to improve educational achievement and performance. [ED1.R8]

# NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES, CONTINUED

## Career Management

**GOAL: Create and manage a career plan that meets your career goals.**

	INDICATORS	
Knowledge	Application	Reflection
Recognize that career planning to attain your career goals is a life long process. [CM1.K1]	Give examples of how you use career-planning strategies to attain your career goals. [CM1.A1]	Assess how well your career planning strategies facilitate reaching your career goals. [CM1.R1]
Describe how to develop a career plan (e.g., steps and content). [CM1.K2]	Develop a career plan to meet your career goals. [CM1.A2]	Analyze your career plan and make adjustments to reflect ongoing career management needs. [CM1.R2]
Identify your short-term and long-term career goals (e.g., education, employment, and lifestyle goals). [CM1.K3]	Demonstrate actions taken to attain your short-term and long-term career goals (e.g., education, employment, and lifestyle goals). [CM1.A3]	Re-examine your career goals and adjust as needed. [CM1.R3]
Identify skills and personal traits needed to manage your career (e.g., resiliency, self-efficacy, ability to identify trends and changes, and flexibility). [CM1.K4]	Demonstrate career management skills and personal traits (e.g., resiliency, self-efficacy, ability to identify trends and changes, and flexibility). [CM1.A4]	Evaluate your career management skills and personal traits (e.g., resiliency, self-efficacy, ability to identify trends and changes, and flexibility). [CM1.R4]
Recognize that changes in you and the world of work can affect your career plans. [CM1.K5]	Give examples of how changes in you and the world of work have caused you to adjust your career plans. [CM1.A5]	Evaluate how well you integrate changes in you and the world of work into your career plans. [CM1.R5]

Source:  
America's Career Resource Network

# CAREER INVESTIGATION CONCEPTS & SKILLS



## The Exploration of Career Opportunities through Self-Discovery and Evaluation

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRIMARY LEVEL (K-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize personal strengths, likes and dislikes.</li> <li>• Identify personal feeling of self and others.</li> <li>• Identify how feelings impact performance.</li> <li>• Develop / demonstrate social skills through teamwork, cooperation, appreciation and respect of individual differences.</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of and recognize the importance of academic performance.</li> <li>• Explore decision-making processes related to making choices and setting goals.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERMEDIATE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine areas of individual interests.</li> <li>• Use appropriate self-management skills.</li> <li>• Use social skills through teamwork, cooperation, appreciation and respect for diversity.</li> <li>• Understand the importance of and strive for maximized academic performance.</li> <li>• Utilize a decision-making process as it relates to goal-setting for future choices.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDDLE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize how personal characteristics, skills, abilities, interests and learning styles relate to career possibilities.</li> <li>• Apply interpersonal skills effectively through teamwork while respecting diverse populations.</li> <li>• Identify future goals as they relate to future opportunities.</li> <li>• Connect current academics to future career possibilities.</li> <li>• Develop a career action plan using a decision-making process considering traditional and nontraditional careers.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze individual career related strengths, experiences, interests and learning styles that affect career choices.</li> <li>• Analyze one's own interpersonal skills to enhance career opportunities in diverse populations.</li> <li>• Pursue options that will lead to lifestyle goals.</li> <li>• Compare and evaluate current academic achievement to career choices.</li> <li>• Establish a viable career action plan and incorporate a decision-making process, as it relates to career and life goals.</li> </ul>

The Demonstration of **POSITIVE**  
Work-Based behaviors



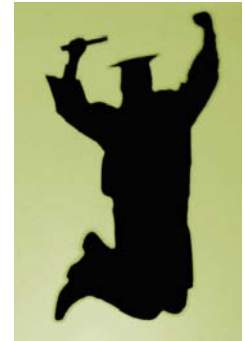
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRIMARY LEVEL (K-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop communication skills, personal qualities, interpersonal skills and thinking skills as they relate to work responsibilities.</li> <li>• Become aware of decision-making skills as they relate to appropriate work-based behaviors.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERMEDIATE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and practice communication skills, personal qualities, interpersonal skills and thinking skills as they relate to work responsibilities.</li> <li>• Practice and utilize a decision-making process as it relates to appropriate work-based behaviors.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDDLE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore, clarify and apply communication skills, personal qualities, interpersonal skills and thinking skills as they relate to work responsibilities.</li> <li>• Apply a decision-making model as it relates to work-based behaviors.</li> <li>• Understand how appropriate work-based behaviors contribute to an individual's well being encompassing studies, extra-curricular activities, leisure time, family life, community and career successes.</li> <li>• Explore the consequences of inappropriate work-based behaviors and the effect on self and others as part of the learning process.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze, assess and implement communication skills, personal qualities, interpersonal skills and thinking skills as they relate to work responsibilities.</li> <li>• Use a decision making process to model positive work-based behaviors.</li> <li>• Demonstrate appropriate work-based behaviors as they relate to the ability to balance all aspects of life.</li> <li>• Identify and evaluate the consequences of inappropriate work-based behaviors and the effect on self and others as part of the learning process.</li> </ul>



## The Exploration and Understanding of Career Opportunities in a Changing World

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRIMARY LEVEL (K-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of and observe a variety of traditional and nontraditional careers.</li> <li>• Become aware of decision-making skills as they relate to exploring and understanding career opportunities in a changing world.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERMEDIATE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather information on a variety of careers.</li> <li>• Demonstrate how a career might affect personal, family and community life.</li> <li>• Practice and utilize a decision-making process as it relates to exploring and understanding career opportunities in a changing world.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDDLE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research, compare and evaluate information on a variety of traditional and nontraditional careers based on individual needs.</li> <li>• Apply employability and job readiness skills in mentoring and job shadowing experiences.</li> <li>• Evaluate career choices in relationship to the effect on personal, family and community life.</li> <li>• Describe how the type and amount of education needed for different careers varies (i.e., apprenticeships, technical college, community, 4-year, military, business, trade).</li> <li>• Understand how changing technology and societal needs influence the nature and structure of careers in the future.</li> <li>• Understand the duties, responsibilities and industry standards involved in particular career choices.</li> <li>• Apply a decision-making model as it relates to career choices in a changing world.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research, compare and evaluate information on a variety of traditional and nontraditional careers based on individual needs.</li> <li>• Apply knowledge of career in authentic situations (job shadowing, career mentorship, service learning, youth entrepreneurship, practicum, youth internships, cooperative work experience, youth apprenticeship).</li> <li>• Evaluate and revise career choices in relationship to its effect on personal, family and community life.</li> <li>• Utilize educational opportunities working toward achievement of career goals.</li> <li>• Understand all the aspects of selected career fields (agriculture and natural resources; arts, humanities and communications; business, management and administration; engineering, manufacturing and technologies; health services and human services) including industry standards.</li> <li>• Demonstrate how the changing workplace requires life-long learning and new skills acquisition.</li> <li>• Apply a decision-making process to research a career goal.</li> </ul>

## The Connection of Goal Setting to Learning and Life Work



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRIMARY LEVEL (K-3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and identify goals.</li> <li>• Explore decision-making processes relating to making choices and goal setting.</li> <li>• Define community and work roles within the community.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTERMEDIATE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define and set short and long term goals.</li> <li>• Utilize a decision-making process as it relates to goal-setting for future choices.</li> <li>• Discover and explore how individual goals contribute to the community.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDDLE LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply a decision-making process to evaluate and revise short-and long-term goals and determine how goals will affect future lifestyle (including career plan and standard of living).</li> <li>• Identify possible challenges and use problem-solving skills to achieve goals.</li> <li>• Analyze and understand the consequences of choices as they relate to career goals.</li> <li>• Develop a sense of community responsibility through active participation.</li> <li>• Develop an educational plan to support career goals.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply a decision-making process to revise, implement and follow through on short-and long-term goals that affect future career and life style.</li> <li>• Analyze and evaluate challenges, apply problem-solving skills and use appropriate tools needed to achieve goals.</li> <li>• Analyze and understand the consequences of career choices with regard to balancing work, family, leisure and community.</li> <li>• Participate as an active member contributing to the community.</li> <li>• Revise, implement and maintain an educational plan to support careers goals.</li> </ul>

Adapted from:  
***Career Investigation: A Guide for Curriculum Development to Support Minnesota's High Standards***  
 [Minnesota Department of Education]

## Why is career decision-making important?



"Most people don't plan to fail; they fail to plan."  
— Author unknown

## FACTS ABOUT CAREER DECISION-MAKING

- Career decision-making is a process.
- Career decision-making is a skill that can and should be taught.
- The goal of career decision-making is to help participants organize their thinking about topics important in choosing a career.
- It's important to assess one's style of decision-making to help overcome obstacles that might inhibit the process.
- Students should not expect to make a final career decision lightly.

**The goal of career planning is to link academic knowledge and real-world experience to determine the path of one's future professional life.**

Adapted from:

***Career Choices in North Carolina, 2005-2006 Career Development and User's Guide, Youth edition***  
[State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee]

# CAREER DECISION CHECKLIST

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**KNOW YOURSELF.** Keep a current assessment list of personal skills, interests, strengths, weaknesses, goals and values.



**RESEARCH.** Investigate and explore occupational information regarding the career you are considering. Learn whether it's a growing or stable field to go into, what the average worker earns and if it's good match for you.



**LABOR MARKET INFORMATION.** Become aware of different labor market information — like up-to-date wages or employment projections — for various career paths.




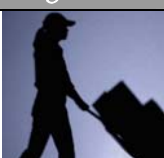






**REALITY TESTING.** Talk to experts, interview people, perform volunteer work, job shadow or take a part-time job in the career field you are considering. If you enjoy doing a job for a few days or months, that's a sign that the job might be a good match for your skills and personality.



**REVIEW.** Periodically review your decisions and revise as necessary. Make sure to keep your skills up to date and your options open for new opportunities.

## CAREER PLANNING MYTHS

Myth:	<b>There is one right job just for me ...</b>
	<i>This is an age-old myth. There are numerous occupations for multi-faceted individuals where multiple talents can be applied. The nature of such possibilities only expands as work experience grows.</i>
Myth:	<b>You must have experience to find a job ...</b>
	<i>Not everyone needs experience to find a job. Most people are hired for their aptitude or potential to learn and advance within an organization.</i>
Myth:	<b>Everyone starts their careers at age 21 and proceeds in a straight line toward their career goals.</b>
	<i>It's rare that this will happen. Sure, some people's career paths lead down the straight and narrow, but most paths require changes of direction. In fact, the majority of people change jobs a minimum of 6 or 7 times over the course of their lifetime.</i>
Myth:	<b>Career planning is an irreversible process.</b>
	<i>Simply not so. Career plans are revisited and refined all the time. You can change career directions whenever your talents, needs or resources dictate or allow.</i>
Myth:	<b>There is a particular set of job responsibilities for every occupation.</b>
	<i>Job duties are the result of the individual's capabilities and the needs of the individual's employer. People in positions that have the same or similar job title very often perform different tasks.</i>
Myth:	<b>Choosing an occupation is difficult.</b>
	<i>Choosing an occupation is a complex process that takes time, patience and research. It can be a satisfying experience. The guidance of family, teachers and counselors can help.</i>
Myth:	<b>If I'm smart, I'll go to college, study hard and graduate. Then I'll get a good-paying job in my chosen profession.</b>
	<i>Unfortunately, this is not always true. Getting a good-paying job in your chosen occupation depends on many factors, some of which you have no control over, like the economy, downsizing, competition or advancements in technology.</i>
Myth:	<b>A 4-year college degree guarantees a good-paying job.</b>
	<i>The truth is that no amount of education or type of degree "guarantees" a stable, good paying job. Community colleges and tech schools offer training for jobs that pay just as well, if not more, than jobs that require a 4-year degree. The technical skills, education or training you need depends on the type of job and what those employers are looking for.</i>