

# About this Toolkit

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## Why Workplace Readiness Skills?

This resource is designed to provide activities to reinforce and embed Virginia's 21st Century Workplace Readiness Skills at home. Workplace readiness skills are personal qualities, people skills, and professional traits that are necessary to maintain employment. These skills are important because they are the most desirable skills employers are searching for in potential employees. Skills such as communication, teamwork, integrity, problem-solving, work ethic and initiative, are essential for workplace success.

These skills take time to develop and must be practiced and reinforced across various environments. Teachers partnering with families can help students develop these skills at home. This will further assist students in generalizing skills across various environments to better prepare them for competitive employment.

## Contents of Toolkit

This toolkit includes weekly activities to reinforce workplace readiness skills that have already been taught at school. Each activity sheet focuses on one specific workplace readiness skill that can easily be practiced at home, supplemented with technology, and varied with modifications to meet the needs of all students. Each skill learned builds upon the next skill and should continue to be reinforced at home, school, and community throughout the semester and school year. It is important to note, workplace readiness skills should not be taught or reinforced in isolation. They should be incorporated into the daily routine of a student. Teachers and families have the flexibility to modify the activities to meet the needs of each student and family.

### Each activity sheet includes:

- Introduction and definition of one workplace readiness skill
- Menu of activities to do as a family
- At least one activity that doesn't require technology
- Reflection questions for families to utilize to provide feedback to educators

### Activity sheets in this toolkit are available for the following workplace readiness skills:

1. Initiative and Self-Direction
  2. Work Ethic
  3. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
  4. Creativity and Innovation
  5. Integrity
  6. Listening and Speaking
  7. Conflict Resolution
  8. Customer Service
  9. Respect for Diversity
  10. Teamwork
  11. Efficiency and Productivity
  12. Professionalism
  13. Workplace Safety
  14. Information Literacy
  15. Information Technology
  16. Information Security
  17. Mathematics
  18. Reading and Writing
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## How to Use this Toolkit

As you begin using this toolkit, consider the roles and responsibilities of the teacher and the student's family in the process.

1. Teachers initially teach the 21st Century Workplace Readiness skills in the educational and community settings.
2. Teachers communicate with families about the skill, how it is taught in the classroom, and the ways in which families can reinforce the skill at home.
3. Teachers download or email weekly activity sheets to family.
4. Families use an activity sheet as a guide for reinforcement.
5. Family provides teacher feedback on student strengths and support needs.
6. Teacher provides additional resources and support if needed.
7. Teachers and families continue to reinforce student skill development within the home and classroom.

## Teacher Role

Teachers, as you are addressing these skills with students, their families can explore and reinforce these skills at home. Stress to families the important role they play in developing these essential employment skills. In order to gain their understanding and interest in collaborating to enhance these critical skills, engage with families in a manner that is most effective for them. Consider using virtual meetings, phone calls, flyers, texts, or emails to communicate with families before, during and after typical school hours.

### Role of the teacher

- Introduce the skill to the family member and discuss how it was taught in the classroom and how it can be enhanced in the home.
- Discuss the importance of learning the skill and how it impacts workplace performance.
- Support families in understanding their role in reinforcing these skills and how sharing their own experience with these skills can be beneficial to their students.
- Gather feedback from families on student performance and support needs.
- Provide additional resources as necessary.

### Educators can share these activities with families weekly during the semester in multiple ways:

- Have a virtual meeting or a phone conference with parents weekly to describe the value of the workplace readiness skill learned and how it might be part of the routine at home.
  - Develop a weekly class e-newsletter for families. The newsletter can include a link to the corresponding activity sheet for home use.
  - Email families on the same day each week, describing what was instructed and reinforced in school related to the workplace readiness skill. Attach the matching activity sheet.
  - Post information about the workplace readiness skill and a link to the at-home activity sheet on the school's learning management system to be accessed by the students and families.
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Please be sensitive to the needs of each family and encourage participation as much as possible. Ask families and students for feedback on activities and information gathered each week that might better inform students' education and career planning.

## Family Role

The activities in this toolkit are meant to provide an opportunity for families to reinforce workplace readiness skills at home. This will occur in collaboration with teachers on student understanding and attainment of the skills. These activities will generate purposeful discussions about work, careers, and identifying one's strengths, interests, and preferences.

### Role of the family

- Reinforce the workplace readiness skills at home and in the community to help students generalize skills across various environments.
- Identify students' skills, strengths and support needs.
- Discuss resource needs with the teacher.
- Communicate with the teacher on student's performance while demonstrating skills at home. Also discuss areas of need for future educational planning.

### Suggestions for families

- Spend a little time reviewing the work readiness skill together as a family.
- Share some examples of your experiences with the targeted work readiness skill. Discuss how you demonstrated this skill at home or at your job.
- As a family, select at least one of the activities and determine a good time to complete the activity.
- Once you have completed the activity, share the information gathered with your child's case manager.
- Identify opportunities within the home and community to reinforce each skill.

The information gathered through these activities will help inform your child's transition planning activities while providing them with vital skills for employment.

## Additional Resources

For additional resources on workplace readiness skills, visit

- [VDOE's 21st Century Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth](http://doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/workplace_readiness) (doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career\_technical/workplace\_readiness)
- [Virginia's Educational Resources System Online \(VERSO\)](http://cteresource.org/wrs) (cteresource.org/wrs)
- [ODEP's Skills to Pay the Bill's](http://dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills) (dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills)