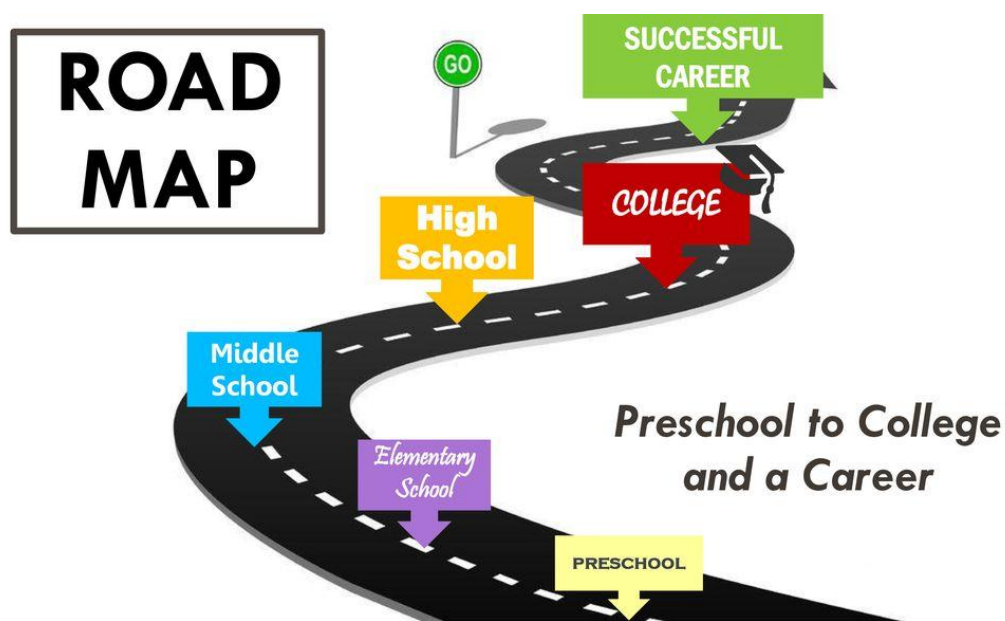


Unit 2: Guiding Youth Through College and Career Readiness

1. Engaging Elementary Aged Youth
2. Engaging Middle School Youth
3. Engaging High School Youth



1. Engaging Elementary School Youth

Background

Elementary age youth are curious and eager to play. This is a fantastic time to introduce conversations, play-based exploration, and learning about different jobs. Young people at this age who begin thinking about what they want to be when they grow up and are more likely to see college as an achievable goal. As adults, we can help youth prepare for their future by actively engaging with them early. America's Promise Alliance reminds us, how can adults expect young people to dream if they don't know what to dream about? Helping young people dream is a critically important job!

Elementary-aged youth also begin developing connections between self-awareness, academic achievement, future goals, and their ability to compete in future job markets. "The elementary school years are an ideal time to foster enthusiasm about 'what they want to be when they grow up,' to encourage excitement about their futures and to build the foundation for academic success" ("College and Career Readiness").

“One’s philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes.... And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.” Eleanor Roosevelt

The Benefits of CCR for Elementary Age Students

“Career development programs beginning at the elementary level effectively increase student’s knowledge of occupations, raise their desire to pursue post-secondary education, and learn more about themselves, their education, and the world of work” (Hudson). Six benefits of college and career readiness for younger youth include: articulated aspirations, reduced gender stereotyping, improved outcomes, better self-awareness, understanding of careers, and learning how to set goals.

Articulated aspirations	Children as young as five can share and express career dreams. This gives educators the opportunity to positively impact career readiness at a young age.
Reduced gender stereotyping	Research demonstrates that younger youth have more gender-specific expectations about career choices. In comparison, older youth seek occupations based on fantasies. Educators can expose their kids to non-traditional workers in many career fields, which will allow them to have a broader view of careers that are possible for them regardless of ‘norms.’
Improved outcomes	Introducing youth to concepts of college and career readiness will help youth be more informed about how career choices will affect their future.
Better self-awareness	Learning environments where youth participate in interest-driven activities will encourage their self-awareness, as it relates to post-secondary life. They can expand on their interests in new ways.
Understanding of careers	Help connect student interest to different careers. Offer information on job requirements, salaries, a day in the life type of details to help children draw a picture of various careers.
Learning how to set goals	Youth will learn to set goals with caring and trusted adults by creating measurable and age-appropriate benchmarks to track progress.

How to:

What Does CCR Look Like for Elementary Age Youth?

Jennifer Albro's five principles for college and career readiness and goal setting might spark some creative ideas for program implementation. They encourage elementary age youth to discover career interests, explore future possibilities, and dream!

1. Build Career Awareness Through Read-Alouds, Games, and Discussion

College and career ready youth have a foundation of knowledge across a range of topics and disciplines. In elementary school, activities such as group (popcorn) reading, interactive career games, peer-to-peer conversations, and career research help youth gain insight and knowledge into many types of careers. Specifically, youth read descriptions of a career out loud and their peers attempt to guess the career based on the description. Games that invite youth to practice vocabulary based on college and career readiness will help youth envision and understand language related to careers of interest.

[Take a look at this list of books curated for elementary age youth that explore careers](#) with young learners.

2. Represent Careers Through Community Speakers

Guest speakers who represent different careers offer opportunities for youth see different jobs first-hand. Speakers can inspire young people's curiosity and interest through conversation, question and answer, and discussions about day-to-day responsibilities. "When students are immersed in authentic career experiences, they develop career-oriented vocabulary and knowledge that advances their understanding of career-specific skills and the possible pathways toward achieving those careers" (Albro).

For sample interview questions and prompts, [check out indeed's career guide](#). This list offers a variety of questions, you know your youth- choose what might best fit their interests. And, ensure they get a chance to ask what they're keen to know.

3. Promote Writing About Youths' Career Interests

"Writing is especially important for college and career readiness because communication is a foundational workforce skill, and professionals in many industries write a range of nonfiction texts: reports, bills, statements, safety manuals, memos, and other documents" (Albro).

Use the following prompts to explore with elementary youth:

- What would you like to be when you grow up?

- Who will help you achieve your career?
- What skills do you think you will need for your future career?

Student reflection on these questions connects the dots from their dreams to a map or plan for the future. The key concept is to get youth reflecting and connecting.

Also consider [lesson 3 Developing Your Brand](#) in this series of lessons provided by Workforce Solutions. It’s a creative and fun way to get even the youngest future leaders thinking about who they are and what they bring to the table. Some of the content might need to be read aloud or modified based on reading abilities.

4. Encourage Youth to Research Careers

“Implementing research projects supports students’ college and career readiness because students work to synthesize the information they gathered from multiple sources and create a product that showcases the most important information from the texts they reviewed” (Albro).

[Career Kids](#) offers videos, age appropriate links to research about different careers, and fun ways to engage with ideas. They provide a good starting point for diving into the future through research.

5. Host Opportunities for Youth to Present and Share their Learning About Careers

Youth learn about and practice communication and literacy skills, which help promote college and career readiness, when presenting to peers. It is a great way to celebrate their learning and future careers. Consider hosting a future career day in which your youth present on their dream job, imagine them 30 years into the future and encourage them to creatively explain what they do, why, and how they do it.

Activities for College and Career Readiness in Elementary School

Age Range	Topics/Activities
Youth ages five to seven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children can come up with a list of jobs for every letter of the alphabet, an inspiring example is our friend, Sam and his You Can Be Anything ABCs ● Provide youth with old magazines. Encourage them to explore and cut out a few pictures of individuals with different jobs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have children write a few sentences about why they chose the specific jobs and why they would want to work this job. ○ Encourage children to share their results with the class.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take youth to different job sites to help stimulate curiosity about different occupations. ● Ask local professionals to come into your class or program to discuss what a day in their life looks like. ● Make a word wall of common terms used to explain college and career readiness. ● Youth create an upcycled self-portrait out of different materials (clay, pipe cleaners, legos, etc.) with a career in mind. Check out the WYAA Summer Activity Guide for more information. (page 3) ● Send youth on a photo scavenger hunt to explore and take pictures to identify interests and qualities about themselves. Check out the WYAA Summer Activity Guide for more information. (page 4) ● Youth create a life-size cutout and decorate it with materials and ideas related to a career and college in mind. ● A volunteer college student comes in and reads a book relating to college readiness. Have the college student talk about the importance of educational aspirations and share their interests from college (relating to their major and extracurriculars). Click here for a list of relevant career-focused books. ● Youth create a map of Wyoming and pinpoint all the colleges around the state. ● Youth create a bookmark for a college or university they would want to attend. ● San Juan Public Schools compiled a number of great workbooks and activities for elementary grades - scroll down the page to find links to different tools here.
<p>Youth age eight to ten</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage young people continue expanding on their traits and skills associated with college and career readiness. ● Encourage youth to explore diverse carers through the Career Kids website. ● Teach youth about the importance of setting goals. Encourage them to fill out this worksheet. ● Help youth explore different career options below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.myplan.com/index.php ○ http://web.archive.org/web/20040404215729/www.whatdotheydo.com/ ○ https://www.knowitall.org/subject/career-education ○ https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/careers.html ○ https://climatekids.nasa.gov/menu/dream/ ○ https://www.engineergirl.org/ ○ https://theartcareerproject.com/careers/ ○ https://www.myplan.com/index.php ● Create journey maps of careers to visualize the process of engaging in specific work. ● Encourage youth to participate in a college fair (similar idea to a science fair) and search a college or university, and display their findings on a board to present to their peers and caring adults. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include information like location, cost, entry requirements, majors/minors offered, campus features, athletic teams, etc. ● Provide opportunities to visit a local college campus and attend a tour.

Mizzen activities for elementary students

[When I grow up](#): The answer to the age-old question, “what do you want to do when you grow up?” is one that can change many times in a youth’s life. Children will think about their strengths, skills, and interests to help them decide what they might want to be when they grow up.

[How can my college major lead to a dream job?](#) Students identify their dream job, investigate a college major that could prepare them for this career, and learn what courses they need to earn their degree (3-5)

[Career bingo!](#) Students learn about a wide variety of careers as they play a version of bingo

[Jobs on the move!](#) Children read and discuss picture books to learn about a variety of vehicles and the people who operate them (K-2)

More details about engaging elementary age youth in college and career readiness can be found here:

College and Career Awareness Activities for Elementary and Middle School Students, American Council on Education

2. Engaging Middle School Aged Youth

Background:

The process of making decisions about whether or not to attend college, which college to attend, and future careers can be overwhelming, intimidating, and daunting. We ask youth to make these huge decisions when they are still very young and, likely, have had very limited exposure to potential jobs and the wide variety of options available.

Providing a variety of college and career readiness activities and experiences to youth during middle school helps make the path to adulthood clearer. Getting curious about youth's interests, skills they may notice in themselves and friends, and any aspirations is a great start, especially in out of school group settings. There are a number of assessments and surveys that make this process a little easier, as middle school is a fantastic time for exploration. "Career exploration offers an opportunity to make certain that a student's aspiration and educational expectation are aligned, and this alignment has proven to be an important influence on a student's future. An opportunity exists to help young students identify their aspirations and their educational goals to achieve those aspirations" ("Career Exploration in Middle School: Helping Students Dream Big, While Giving Them The Tools To Succeed").

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration has helpful resources to assist youth explore and identify career pathways. [CareerOneStop](#) is a website with a range of exploration help.

What Does CCR Look Like for Middle School Students? - how to

1. Host or Attend Career Fairs

Participating in career fairs is an excellent opportunity to expose middle-school-aged youth to a variety of careers. Encourage family participation, when and where appropriate. As most parents work, invite them to share about their job and experiences. Career fairs are also a great way to get the community

involved by bringing in local businesses and making an early appearance in schools to promote their business. In addition to in-person career events, as educators, you can also set up a virtual meet and greet with professionals from around the world. For example, suppose you are working in a program that focuses on science. In that case, you could zoom in a marine biologist from a zoo or aquarium to talk with your students.

2. Visit Campuses

Getting familiar with university, community college, and trade school campuses in middle school can help youth see themselves participating in college. Often, these organizations have great outreach resources. At this point in their development, middle school aged youth are driven by a sense of belonging and if a campus feels welcome that feeling goes a long way towards positive notions about post high school education. Trade school campus visits can be especially engaging if youth have the chance to see hands-on work. Also, consider visiting the high school campus!

3. Connect Youth with Mentors

Mentoring ensures that young people have someone who cares about them and supports their growth and development. Ultimately, it is a statement to a young person, that they matter. Research confirms that quality mentoring relationships have powerful positive effects on young people in a variety of personal, academic, and professional situations. Ultimately, mentoring connects a young person to personal growth and development, and emotional support in navigating the future.

Activities for College and Career Readiness in Middle School

Grade Level	Topics/Activities
6th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage youth to participate in aptitude tests and surveys about identifying personality traits and interests. A great Wyoming-based career coach tool offers a variety of assessments that can help youth begin exploring their interests. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use these tests and surveys to help students make connections between interests and careers. ● Suggest youth participate in this career cluster activity to find careers that align with their skills. ● Help youth learn about degrees that connect to different jobs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth can create lists of jobs and categorize them. (STEM, arts, architecture, social services, etc.) ○ Categorize jobs that need an Associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree. ● Encourage youth to choose one career of interest and create a mock resume that includes the skills, experience, degree, and college they plan to attain to reach that career. ● This Is Me activity by the MOST network helps unpack youth interests.

7th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take youth on a tour of a local college campus. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schedule an admissions presentation ○ Allow youth to each lunch in the dining hall to get a real-life college experience. ● Teach youth about the different types of college such as universities, liberal arts, technical institutes, professional skills, tribal colleges, etc. ● Teach youth about the different college requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have youth create a diagram to compare different colleges. ● Show youth college admissions videos. ● Help youth understand their preferred learning style through assessments. ● Encourage youth to complete the MOST Network School Alignment activity.
8th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth create a plan that outlines their four years of high school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The plan should include key milestones, goals, required courses, elective courses, the number of courses needed to graduate, predicated GPA, extracurriculars, and community service. ● Help youth calculate their GPA. ● Encourage youth to create an outline with the steps they will take to stay on track for high school graduation. ● Bring in high school alumni to your programs to present how to best prepare for high school and college. ● Youth can check out the Hathaway Scholarship website and learn the requirements for each scholarship tier.

Mizzen by Mott CCR Activities Middle School

[Match the college and celebrity](#): Fame is often seen as a replacement for or an alternative to education> Students in this are range may believe that the money and recognition tht typically come with fame make education less valuable or unnecessary. This activity will give students the opportunity to discover that celebrities may be college graduates as well.

[What should my college major be?](#) In this activity, students research college majors based on likes and skills.

[A logo for you](#): Today, logos define all sorts of organizations, including commercial products, large businesses, schools and government organizations. In this activity, students explore the kind of logo they would present to the world

Additional resources for guiding middle school age youth through college and career decisions:

[Career Exploration in Middle School: Setting Students on the Path to Success](#), ACTE Online

[College and Career Planning Worksheet](#), EverFi

[K-12 Student Resources](#), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

3. Engaging High School Aged Youth

Background

High school brings youth whole new adventures in development, interest in future, and individuation. As with each individual, it's helpful to begin these conversations from a strength's based approach to careers and college readiness in general. GO TIME isn't far away, no matter the path a high school student takes.

The focus in high school shifts from exploration to preparation and decision-making. Youth become more reflective and want to make sense of their experiences, emotions, and further explore their personal identity. High school aged youth are looking to find meaning in their lives. Continue to explore individuals different professional interests and integrate opportunities to flex the hands-on application based muscles so that when young people move on from high school, they've got some experience to lean on!

What Does CCR Look Like for High School Aged Youth?

Continue exploring questions about the future in open ended way, responses will be more sophisticated and centered. Journaling can be a great way to support youth at this age reflect and dream about their future. At this phase of life, youth might really benefit from a mentor or group of near peers who can offer their experiences, listen to questions, and reflect along with the young person/people on building an exciting and interesting future.

1. Create a safe space for youth to learn about themselves

Throughout high school, encourage youth to explore their interests, skills, and hobbies. Encourage them to reflect on what motivates them and why. If students struggle in this arena, encourage them to ask peers or family members. Call out their strengths and talents! This can be a fantastic way for a young person to learn about how they navigate the world outside. When young people better know their interests and motivations, that information can guide career conversations, encourage dreaming, and imagination about careers in new and curious ways.

2. Explore academic strengths

In addition to knowing about themselves, youth benefit from time spent exploring their academic strengths, what comes easy to them? What do they enjoy learning about? Can youth imagine a career path that involves their academic strengths? If so, backwards design a road map with them - encourage informational interviews, internships, shadowing that involves these strengths to try them on for size. If these no longer inspire youth, encourage them to explore other directions. It's important to remind young people that this is a big step, and there are several opportunities to learn about themselves and different fields along the way. These experiences will inform their career trajectory, which often changes with more information.

3. Work, volunteer, or otherwise gain experience

Career passions or interests may emerge in real-world experiences, outside of the school day. The more diverse activities a young person engages in the more options they may think about for college and

career. If internships exist in the communities where youth live, encourage them! These not only look good on an application, but also weave the community together in important ways. Youth can explore experience that lines up with their interests and academic strengths, for example someone that really enjoys the outdoors could volunteer at the local parks and recreation program.

4. Offer Opportunities for Youth to Become Emotionally Ready for Life

Whether on- or off-campus, the college experience requires maturity, confidence, and perseverance. As does life when entering straight into the workforce. Some ways to be ready for these demands can begin early, encourage youth to build relationships that will support them through the challenges. Find safe spaces for youth to try new experiences. Help them build resiliency and curiosity about the world around them!

5. Help Youth Prepare Social Skills

While communication skills are good to have in high school, they are essential in college. "Much of your social skill development is a work in progress as you enter college, but you can shorten the learning curve by getting involved in as many school-related activities – academic clubs, sororities & fraternities and more – as possible" ("College Readiness: The Importance of Preparing for College While in High School").

Activities for College and Career Readiness with High School Aged Youth

Grade Level	Activities
9th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth can participate in a detailed college tour where they listen to presentations about programs of interest, hear about highlighted activities that the college offers, and the requirements for admission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide youth with the opportunity to ask questions and interview students who are currently attending the college. ○ Take youth to a campus event like a football or basketball game, musical, art showcase, or campus lecture. ● Encourage youth to research different career technical education (CTE) pathways to connect their interests and strengths to other options than typical colleges. ● The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides this list of the 20 fastest growing occupations, it could be a fun way to explore and imagine future career trends. ● Youth identify one career and create a resume that includes the college, degree, skills, and experience they plan to attain to reach their goals. ● Youth perform an interview of a person who works in their chosen career. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summarize the interviewees' responses. ● Develop SMART goals using this worksheet. ● Interest Inventory activity from the Maryland Out of School Time (MOST) Network can help youth discover their interests ● This Wyoming specific career coach site offers a number of fantastic resources for exploration

<p>10th Grade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce youth to college essays, provide specific examples and practice writing. ● Guide youth through the Wyoming Community Foundation scholarship page. ● Work with youth to complete the Wyoming Community Foundation common college application found here. ● Help youth recognize the importance of AP courses. ● Introduce dual enrollment opportunities. ● Take a practice SAT here. ● Take a practice ACT here. ● The MOST Network Pathway Profile activity is helpful in exploring different directions.
<p>11th Grade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer one-on-one time with youth to learn how to access information about college options. ● Youth explore the cost of college, financial aid options, scholarships, grants, and loans. A great place to begin is at the WY Community Foundation scholarship page. ● Walk youth through the Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) website and teach them how to complete the application. ● Bring youth to visit the College and Career center at a local college. ● Teach youth the components that make up the cost to attend colleges like tuition, housing, transportation, food, and books and supplies, again these resources are available at the Wyoming Community Foundation scholarship page. ● Support youth to identify two scholarships and write the scholarship essays included in the application. ● Encourage educators, peers, and community members to tell their college stories to youth. ● Help youth navigate through the ACT website to help learn everything they need to know for the ACT.
<p>12th Grade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sit alongside youth to explore post-secondary programs that match student qualifications, career interests, and future goals. ● Host office hours or informal opportunities for youth to assist in their college application process. ● Help youth create checklists for application deadlines. ● Work with youth to prepare a personal overview that includes their grades, activities, community service, and personal characteristics. ● Help youth write emails/scripts to help request letters of recommendation. ● Help youth complete the FAFSA application. ● Help youth analyze college acceptance letters by highlighting important deadlines, housing information, financial aid, and orientation. ● Help youth choose a few scholarships on the WYCF scholarship page, and fill out the applications.

Mizzen activities for high school youth:

[College major report](#), students research and report on a wide variety of college majors by identifying details of subject(s) studied for the major, the requirements for a degree, and the jobs or opportunities that the major may support.

[Career match](#), when making a difficult personal decision, it sometimes helps to have an anonymous, objective opinion from a peer. In this activity, students brainstorm a list of careers they might consider for themselves and then the group reviews the inventories anonymously and suggests possible careers that match.

[Skills for 21st century workers](#), in this activity, youth research the skills that 21st century workers need. First they pick three careers from an included handout, then they learn about necessary skills associated with their selections

Additional readings, activities, links, and tools for guiding high school age youth through the college and career research and decision process:

- [How to Choose a Career](#), College Factual
- [Teen Career Exploration: Resources for High School Students](#), Career Vision
- [10 Things for High School Students to Remember](#), Live Career

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