

# Career Development Needs of K-12 Students

## Early Years Students

Early Years students are just beginning to develop decision-making, communication, and overall life skills, as well as character values. They are acquiring attitudes toward school, self, peers, social groups, and family. These students are also beginning to develop a sense of belonging and a growing awareness of how they fit and relate to the complex and changing society around them. Broad-based knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired during this time will ultimately serve as a foundation for their future success.

In this context, Early Years career development focuses primarily on building student self-confidence and self-esteem, along with the related developmental characteristics of children in this age group. Self-confidence and self-esteem are two key career management skills that are a core part of the National Life/Work Centre's *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* (see Appendix B, Part 1).

Career guidance for Early Years students is not intended to pressure them into choosing premature career paths, but to help them discover their talents and interests while becoming aware of the broad scope of occupational opportunities that offer significant career prospects.

Parental involvement is a major influence on children's career exploration processes – even more so than the involvement of career counsellors and educators. Therefore, motivating parental engagement should be a key consideration in any career development programming in the Early Years.

For examples of career development practices and resources in the Early Years, please visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/resources.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/resources.html).

“Staff should work collaboratively to create a career development plan for their school. This should have a wide scope, and not just focus on learning about different jobs.”

– Manitoba Division Superintendent



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(continued)

## Middle Years Students

Middle Years is a critical time when students begin to explore who they are and how their interests, strengths, and abilities fit with their life and learning both inside and outside of school. It is a time of rapid growth and development when young adolescents seek to understand their unique personal identity while becoming more independent at home and at school. Quality of friendships, peer acceptance, and development of personal values affect how Middle Years students view themselves and the world around them.

For these reasons, Middle Years career development programs are exceptionally engaging to adolescents, providing them with opportunities to learn about and develop their strengths, interests, abilities, as well as their personal beliefs and values. Middle Years students are most engaged when they see connections between what they learn in school and life in the real world. Quality career development programming offers many opportunities for students to make these life/learning connections. Inviting community members as occupational presenters, volunteers/mentors, as well as field trip

hosts to community workplaces helps Middle Years students understand and apply career development concepts over the long term. Being exposed to role models helps them gain insight into possible choices for their futures. These role models can include anyone from community volunteers to business leaders

who can make presentations or act as hosts of field trips to local workplaces.

Effective Middle Years career development programming

- encourages student participation and positive interaction with peers and adults
- exposes students to a wide variety of role models
- enhances career exploration and engagement through direct, hands-on activities
- develops students' core career-related skills (e.g., literacy/numeracy, oral communications, etc.)
- improves student self-esteem and self-confidence through opportunities for achievement
- increases student independence through learning experiences outside of home and school
- provides students with a greater awareness of educational options and career opportunities
- teaches students how to make suitable school/work/post-secondary choices that have positive career-related consequences later in life
- helps students understand and utilize key employability skills, such as the *Career Management Skills* (see Appendix B), that cover the broad scope of competencies necessary for success in the world of learning and work
- helps students establish a school/work/life balance
- builds awareness of how ongoing parental involvement continues to have a significant impact on students' career development



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For examples of career development practices and resources in the Middle Years, visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/my\\_foundation/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/my_foundation/index.html) and [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/resources.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/resources.html).

## Senior Years Students

During the Senior Years, students are much closer to transitioning to the workforce or post-secondary education and training. By this point, they should have acquired the broad scope of competencies from the *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* (see Appendix B, Part 1) that are needed to make the career development process self-directed and personally meaningful. They are more focused on developing and galvanizing core *Employability Skills* and *Essential Skills* (see Appendix B, Parts 2 & 3). In essence, these skills centre largely around supporting the transition to post-secondary education and training, as well as the world of work.

In the Senior Years, students

- have varied career development needs
- assume more individual responsibility for decision making
- must understand and manage the broad-based transition from high school to the independence of young adulthood
- are beginning to plan immediate, intermediate, and future educational and occupational choices after high school

- require career development learning opportunities that focus on developing/ implementing an individual career plan/ portfolio to help them successfully transition to post-secondary learning and/ or work
- benefit significantly from parental involvement/ support with post-secondary decisions, educational requirements, student financial assistance, and relocating for training and work
- benefit from group or individual mentoring from qualified adults

For examples of career development practices and resources in the Senior Years, visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/resources.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/resources.html).

