

Why Employment Matters

Job Exploration Counseling Benchmark:

Explore why employment matters to the student

Note to those providing this service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on the learner's strengths and needs.



Extended Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or postsecondary education, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and postsecondary education are identified as extended activities and pathways.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Know the student's knowledge or awareness regarding career paths (this helps with knowing how much time may need to be spent on an activity)
- Prepare needed assistive technologies and/or accommodations (ex. communication supports (visual, objects, pictures, voice output devices, etc.), physical supports/space access needs, vision supports, hearing supports, sensory needs/supports)
- Computer with internet (if not available, prepare to have printed copies of materials). The Extended Activity may use poster board, magazines, scissors, glue, tape.



Print

- [Reasons to Work \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Work Values \(Printable\)](#)
- [Student Career Profile](#)



Activities to Meet Benchmark

Activity 1: Employment Matters: Discovering Your Why

This activity aims to help students understand different reasons why people work



Discuss: It is important to know and understand why people work. There are many reasons why, and knowing what reasons are important to you is helpful as you consider career options.

This is what is going to motivate you to find a career path that fits your unique circumstances. Whether you have never had a job, or you are working towards a certificate or a degree, understanding your WHY behind employment is going to serve as a key motivator in gaining or maintaining a job.



Watch: [Why We Work \(2:22\)](#)



Reflect: In the video you learned about many different reasons people work. People often work for money to buy things they need like food, clothes and a place to live. People can work for other reasons too, like learning new skills, making friends, helping others, and to feel proud of what they do. You may be at an age where you are just starting to talk about what work might mean to you or you may already know what you want to do and why.

- What are your reasons to work?



Resource: Add to Your [Student Career Profile](#) - Discovering Your Why.

Activity 2: Work and Its Benefits: More Than Just a Job

This activity aims to help students recognize the different benefits of employment including financial, community, social, and personal growth.



Discuss: There are many benefits to working. The reasons you work may be the same or different from other people. Let's talk through the financial (money), personal, social, community and other benefits of working. Use the [Reasons to Work Powerpoint](#) to lead a discussion about why people work. After learning about other people's reasons, let's think about why you would want to work.

- What reasons are important to you to work?
- If you have not considered working before, would you now?
- If you have worked before, was it a good match? What were your reasons for working?



Resource: [Reasons to Work \(PowerPoint\)](#)



Reflect

To explore what motivates you to work, here are some Work Values quizzes to help you better understand and know yourself.

- [Work Values](#) (Printable) Printable option that shows options for work values and ways to organize what is most important to you.
- [Career OneStop - Work Values \(Online\)](#) This assessment assists students clarify values to match with careers. Students drag and drop 20 values cards into a graphic organizer based on the level of importance. Results will match values to careers/jobs.

A work values quiz will help you determine and understand your core personal values related to work and employment. This helps you understand what is most important to you.



Resource: Add to Your [Student Career Profile](#) - What Motivates You.

Activity 3: Work in Action: How Jobs Shape Our Community

This activity aims to help students identify how employment impacts individuals and communities.



Discuss: We want to start thinking about the work we already know about around us. What jobs do people in our school do and what jobs do the people we live with do?

Let's list these jobs out. It's ok if you are not sure about the job that some people do, maybe you can describe what you do know about their work.



Interactive Opportunity: Schedule a walking or driving field trip around the school/campus to identify jobs/careers that students may not know is a job.



Discuss: We have listed some jobs that we know of but I'm sure we can think of more. This can be other people in our lives like family, friends, or in our community (e.g., sports, church, activities, etc.).

Let's think about these people and list out more jobs or careers these people have.



Interactive Opportunity: Schedule a walking or driving field trip of nearby places in the community or pull up the streetview of the local community in digital maps (e.g., Google Maps or MapQuest).



Discuss: We have a list of different jobs that we know people do in our school, home, and community. Jobs help our community in different ways.

How do some of these jobs help people in our community? (For example, a teacher helps others learn or cashiers help customers with purchases.)

[Note to Instructors: Ask "What do you see?" or "What do you think they do?" to help keep students engaged and help them observe what is around them.]



Review: It can interesting to identify and list all of the different jobs and careers in our building, neighborhood, and community. Nearly everyone we encounter is working and helps make our community better or helps people in our community accomplish big and small tasks.



Extending the Conversation


If you already have some careers in mind, what jobs do they relate to? How does that job shape your community? Ask others how they see that career/job and how it impacts community.

Activity 4: The Value of Work

This activity aims to help students recognize and categorize different types of work, such as chores, volunteering, internships, apprenticeships, and paid employment



Review: Vocabulary list is arranged from foundational to more detailed. Feel free to modify the vocabulary list to meet the student's needs.



Personal Work: these daily living tasks are activities you do to care for yourself. Examples might be washing your clothes, cleaning dishes, cooking, making your bed, brushing your teeth, shower or bath, haircare, pet care, and more

Volunteering: helping others by giving your time or effort or skills without being paid to make a difference in your community.

Apprenticeships: A way to learn a job or trade by working with experienced professionals. You participate in hands-on-learning (learn by doing the actual work) while also taking some classes. These help you learn skills needed to work and build connections with others.

Internship: A temporary position where you gain experience in a specific field while still in school, or just starting a career. It typically involves working on real projects and may or may not be paid.

Paid Work: When you do a job and get money for it. Examples might be working at a store and earning money for your time there doing job tasks.



Discuss: While most people would prefer paid work, there are times when volunteering or personal work is valuable or important. Let's discuss how!

Chores at home and personal tasks help keep you healthy and build or strengthen your skills. These skills can help you when looking for work or if you want to live independently. What type of chores or tasks are you responsible for at home? How might these skills help you in a job?

Helping a friend or volunteering in your community is a way to help others and a way to contribute. There is also a personal satisfaction, helping others makes us feel good and proud of ourselves. Have you ever volunteered? What kind of tasks did you complete? What skills did you use?



Extending the Conversation

Work like chores, personal tasks, volunteering, internships, and apprenticeships, help us learn and build specific skills that will help us in our jobs and careers in the future.

Through all of the work examples, you are still gaining skills!

- What are some volunteering or personal tasks you currently do?
- Is there a chore or volunteer opportunity you want to try to build skills and relationships?
- How can you see an internship or apprenticeship being helpful for a career?



Extended Pathways

Activity: Why Employment Matters to Me

In this activity, students will use and share what they have learned about why employment matters to them.



Discuss: Now you can share why employment or career interest matters to you. If you haven't already, make sure this part of your Student Career Profile is completed. In this activity, you will use what you have learned throughout about why employment matters to you. Afterwards we will share what we made. Here are examples of how you can do this activity:

- Building a physical (poster) or digital presentation for a Career Collage or Vision Board. This can include magazines, drawings, printed images, data, charts, bullet points. It can focus on independently living, career, community involvement, social benefits, and/or education.
- Create a word cloud with words and phrases explaining why employment matters
- Write, type, or dictate a personal summary.



Reflect: Use the information you learned today to share what you have learned about your reasons to work and what motivates you. People you can share this with are your guardian(s), academic advisors, guidance counselors, IEP team, etc.

Discuss with your team how these activities might influence your educational or career plans moving forward.



Wrap-Up:

We have explored why employment is so important. Even if we already had ideas why employment matters, we learned there are even more opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and social connections. Employment gives us a sense of accomplishment and helps us contribute to our communities. As we move forward, think about how these benefits of work can play a role in your own life and future goals. Remember, finding a job that fits your interests and values can lead to a fulfilling and successful career.