

Independent Living, Community Living & Adult Skills Checklist

Subtitle: A comprehensive planning resource for developing independent living, community participation, employment, and adult life skills.

The following checklist provides a comprehensive collection of skills that may be considered when preparing adolescents and young adults for increased independence at home, in the community, employment, and throughout adult life. Every individual has unique strengths, needs, interests, preferences, and goals, so not every skill will be applicable or appropriate for every person.

This resource may be used by families, educators, service providers, case managers, transition coordinators, vocational rehabilitation staff, Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers, Community Living Supports (CLS) staff, and adult service agencies to identify areas of strength and need, prioritize instruction, develop measurable goals, guide transition planning, and support person-centered planning. It may also help identify skills that should be directly taught rather than assumed to develop naturally. Some skills may already be mastered, others may not yet be developmentally appropriate, and some may never be necessary depending on an individual's goals, preferences, living situation, and support needs.

The checklist spans a broad range of functional life skills, including self-determination, executive functioning, communication, social and relationship skills, financial literacy, home management, health care, transportation, employment readiness, community participation, safety, and postsecondary transition. It is intended to support planning during school-age transition services, including prevocational and pre-employment activities, as well as after exiting school as individuals move into higher education, employment, adult services, and independent or supported living.

These skills are not intended to be mastered all at once or completed in any particular order. Rather, this checklist serves as a starting point for identifying priorities, planning instruction and supports, monitoring progress over time, and building the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed for successful adult living.

Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Understanding disability and how it impacts daily life
- Understanding strengths, challenges, interests, preferences, and goals
- Recognizing support needs
- Identifying helpful accommodations
- Requesting accommodations
- Communicating wants, needs, and preferences
- Making informed decisions
- Problem solving
- Goal setting
- Self-monitoring progress
- Understanding rights and responsibilities
- Participating in IEP, transition, and adult planning meetings
- Self-advocacy at school, work, healthcare, and in the community
- Understanding guardianship, supported decision-making, and powers of attorney

Executive Functioning & Time Management

- Planning daily activities
- Establishing routines
- Morning and evening routines
- Waking independently
- Sleep hygiene
- Prioritizing tasks
- Breaking tasks into smaller steps
- Time estimation
- Time management
- Meeting deadlines
- Organizing responsibilities
- Using calendars and planners
- Reminder systems
- Remembering appointments
- Managing multiple responsibilities
- Flexible thinking
- Adapting to changes
- Completing tasks independently

Metacognition & Self-Awareness

- Understanding thoughts and emotions
- Recognizing strengths and challenges
- Understanding learning style
- Understanding disability-related needs
- Monitoring performance
- Self-reflection and learning from mistakes
- Understanding how behavior affects others
- Identifying effective strategies
- Recognizing when support is needed

Self-Regulation

- Emotional awareness
- Interoception
- Identifying emotional triggers
- Identifying sensory triggers
- Coping strategies
- Stress management
- Anxiety management
- Anger management
- Sensory regulation
- Requesting breaks
- Relaxation strategies
- Managing disappointment
- Managing frustration
- Conflict resolution
- Recovering after difficult situations

Communication Skills

- Greetings and introductions
- Conversation skills
- Active listening
- Asking questions
- Asking for clarification
- Professional phone calls
- Leaving voicemail
- Returning calls
- Scheduling appointments
- Professional emails
- Text etiquette
- Writing letters
- Completing forms
- Using the post office
- Public speaking
- Customer service interactions
- Communicating with employers
- Communicating with teachers and professors
- Communicating with healthcare providers
- Contacting landlords
- Contacting insurance companies
- Following up after appointments
- Contacting utility companies
- Contacting government agencies
- Completing online forms

Technology & Digital Literacy

- Computer skills
- Smartphone use
- Email management
- Calendar management
- Password management
- Two-factor authentication
- Internet safety
- Cybersecurity
- Recognizing scams
- Safe social media use
- Online reputation
- Word processing
- Cloud storage
- Online banking
- Online bill payment
- Online job applications
- Video conferencing
- GPS/navigation
- Patient portals
- Telehealth
- Assistive technology
- Online safety and privacy
- Completing online forms
- Electronic signatures
- File management
- Basic troubleshooting

Social Skills & Relationships

- Appropriate greetings
- Manners
- Personal space
- Boundaries
- Consent
- Reading social cues
- Perspective taking
- Building friendships
- Maintaining friendships
- Healthy relationships
- Dating safety
- Online friendships
- Joining clubs or groups
- Trying new hobbies
- Teamwork
- Workplace relationships
- Giving and receiving feedback

- Respecting differences
- Situational awareness
- Identifying unhealthy relationships
- Professional boundaries
- Appropriate workplace interactions
- Community etiquette

Budgeting & Financial Literacy

Banking

- Checking and savings accounts
- Debit cards
- Online banking
- Reading bank statements
- ATM safety
- Direct deposit

Budgeting

- Creating a budget
- Tracking expenses
- Needs vs. wants
- Saving money
- Emergency savings
- Cost of living
- Automatic bill payments

Credit

- Debit vs. credit
- Credit scores
- Building credit
- Loans
- Interest rates
- Payroll deductions
- Taxes
- Paychecks
- Identity theft
- Financial scams
- Predatory lending
- Subscriptions and free trials

Consumer Skills

- Comparing prices
- Coupons
- Unit pricing
- Shopping wisely
- Online shopping
- Sales tax
- Tipping
- Reading bills
- Utility bills

- Medical bills
- Explanation of Benefits (EOBs)
- Returns and warranties
- Lost or stolen credit/debit cards
- Emergency fund
- Understanding contracts before signing
- Understanding subscriptions and automatic renewals
- Protecting personal financial information

Insurance

Medical Insurance

- Insurance cards
- In-network providers
- Premiums
- Deductibles
- Copays
- Coinsurance
- Referrals
- Prior authorizations
- Explanation of Benefits (EOBs)
- Appeals
- Billing questions

Auto Insurance

- Liability
- Collision
- Comprehensive
- Deductibles
- Filing claims
- What to do after an accident

Other Insurance

- Renters insurance
- Life insurance
- Disability insurance
- Employer benefits

Personal Records & Document Management

- Birth certificate
- Social Security card
- State ID/driver's license
- Passport
- Insurance cards
- Medical records
- School records
- Employment records
- Tax records
- Banking records
- Organizing important documents
- Password management
- Emergency contacts
- Renewing important documents

Daily Living Routines

- Morning routine
- Evening routine
- Weekly cleaning
- Grocery routine
- Medication routine
- Appointment routine
- Household chores
- Balancing responsibilities

This checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion and planning and should be individualized based on the person's strengths, needs, goals, age, culture, living environment, and desired level of independence.

Disclaimer

This resource is provided by The Disability Advocate, LLC for educational and informational purposes only. It is not intended as legal, medical, financial, or other professional advice. The skills included are examples and are not an exhaustive list. Every individual has unique strengths, needs, interests, and goals, so skills and supports should always be individualized.

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