

Career & College Readiness Curriculum

The goal of the elementary career and college readiness curriculum is to inspire students to explore diverse career pathways, recognize their strengths and interests, and understand the importance of education in achieving future goals.

The ICAN program introduces students to a variety of careers, fosters curiosity about future opportunities, and develops foundational skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and goal-setting. By promoting self-awareness, exploration of personal interests, and the connection between education and future success, the program aims to empower students to envision bright futures and lay the groundwork for lifelong learning.

Through age-appropriate activities and lessons, the curriculum's early exposure to career and college concepts nurtures confidence, resilience, and a growth mindset, ensuring that every child begins building the attitudes and skills needed for informed decisions and success in middle school, high school, and beyond.

The following pages provide a summary of lesson goals, student outcomes, and lesson activities.

Curriculum Lessons

Grades K-2

- Community of Helpers
- Exploring Interests and Careers
- Career Exploration
- The Importance of Learning: Education Beyond High School

Grades 3-5

- Interest and Career Clusters
- Deep Dive into Career Clusters
- Exploring Life Beyond High School
- Basics of Spending and Saving
- Planning and Budgeting for the Future
- Long-Term Planning & Making Smart Choices



Community of Helpers

Introduction to Community Helpers

Grade: K

Lesson 1

Lesson Goal

Students will explore the concept of community helpers by learning about different jobs in the community, such as firefighters, teachers, doctors, and police officers. Through hands-on, interactive activities, they will recognize the importance of these workers and how they help keep the community safe and healthy.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Learn about various careers within their community
- Understand what these professionals do
- Understand how these professionals contribute to their community

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Introduction - What is a community discussion.
- Activity 2 - Career Study & Color
- Activity 3 - Community Helper Group Sharing

Student Target: I can...

- Learn about jobs in my community
- Learn about what workers in my community do
- Learn how workers help my community

Materials Needed:

- Community Helpers video
- Community Helpers Coloring Book
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint



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Exploring Interests & Careers

Discovering Interests Through Play

Grade: K

Lesson 2

Lesson Goal

Students will begin identifying their personal interests through playful, hands-on activities. They will participate in simple interest inventory activities to reflect on what they enjoy, like playing outside, drawing, or building with blocks. The lesson helps students recognize that their hobbies and preferences can connect to future careers.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Identify their interests
- Connect their interests to possible future careers

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Interest Hop Game
- Activity 2 - Interest Inventory
- Activity 3 - Interest Inventory Group Sharing

Student Target: I can...

- Name things I find interesting
- Match jobs to what I'm interested in

Materials Needed:

- Interest Posters
- I Like... Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will begin exploring a variety of careers by watching short career speaker videos, completing simple “I Want to Be” worksheets, and participating in group sharing activities. The focus is on introducing the idea that people have different jobs that help the community, encouraging students to think about what they might like to do when they grow up.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Explore different careers through interactive activities and presentations

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Introduction to Careers
- Activity 2 - What I Want to Be
- Activity 3 - What I Want to Be Group Share

Student Target: I can...

- Explore jobs by playing
- Listen and watch information to learn about jobs

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters
- I want to be Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint



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The Importance of Learning

Learning is Important for Future Goals

Grade: K
Lesson 4

Lesson Goal

Students will begin to understand the importance of learning by exploring how education helps people achieve their goals. Through stories and discussions, they will learn that people continue to learn new things throughout their lives, including after high school, to get jobs they enjoy. The lesson emphasizes that learning helps them grow and follow their dreams.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Understand the importance of education in achieving career goals

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Introduction to Job Skills
- Activity 2 - What I Want to Be
- Activity 3 - A Skill I Need Group Sharing

Student Target: I can...

- Share how learning new things can help me get the job I want in the future

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters
- I want to be Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint



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Community of Helpers

Understanding Roles of Community Workers

Grade 1

Lesson 1

Lesson Goal

Students will dive deeper into the roles and responsibilities of community workers, exploring how each job contributes to meeting different community needs. They will practice identifying tools used by various helpers, engage in interactive games, and discuss how cooperation helps a community function smoothly.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Learn about various careers within their community
- Understand what these professionals do
- Understand how these professionals contribute to their community

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Introduction to Careers - Review Kindergarten jobs with Charades
- Activity 2 - Introduction of New Careers

Student Target: I can...

- Learn about jobs in my community
- Learn about what workers in my community do
- Learn how workers help my community

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters - K
- Job Posters - 1st
- Charades Cards
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will explore how personal interests relate to different community jobs. They will engage in interest inventory activities, where they reflect on what they enjoy (e.g., helping others or working with animals) and match these interests with careers such as veterinarians, artists, or doctors. The lesson encourages students to see how what they enjoy now can inspire future career paths.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Identify their interests
- Connect their interests to possible future careers

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Would You Rather Game
- Activity 2 - Interest Inventory
- Activity 3 - Career Interest Connections

Student Target: I can...

- Name things I find interesting
- Match jobs to what I'm interested in

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters - K&1st
- Would You Rather game cards
- Interest Inventory Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will explore different career roles by engaging with career interest videos, participating in interactive games, and creating an interest poster. They will reflect on jobs that interest them and begin recognizing how their personal preferences relate to various careers. The lesson encourages students to imagine themselves in different careers and see the connection between their interests and future possibilities.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Explore different careers through interactive activities and presentations

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Career Videos by Interest
- Activity 2 - Create an Interest Poster

Student Target: I can...

- Explore jobs by talking with others and creating art
- Listen and watch information to learn about jobs

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters
- Career Videos (portal)
- Interest Poster Template
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint



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The Importance of Learning

How Education Helps People Do Jobs They Love

Grade 1
Lesson 4

Lesson Goal

Students will explore how different types of jobs require learning and practice beyond high school. Through discussions and fun activities, they will understand that people attend college, trade schools, or special programs to prepare for the jobs they want. The lesson encourages students to think about how learning can help them do things they enjoy and make a difference in their community.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Understand the importance of education in achieving career goals

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Job Skills Brainstorm
- Activity 2 - Interest Poster Project
- Activity 3 - Group Sharing or Gallery Walk

Student Target: I can...

- Share how learning new things can help me get the job I want in the future

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters
- Interest Poster Project
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint



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Community of Helpers

Exploring Careers & the Impact of Community Helpers

Grade 2
Lesson 1

Lesson Goal

Students will expand their understanding of careers by learning about a broader range of community workers. They will analyze how workers solve problems and provide essential services, exploring careers they may be interested in. The lesson will highlight teamwork, responsibility, and how different jobs work together to build a strong, thriving community.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Learn about various careers within their community
- Understand what these professionals do
- Understand how these professionals contribute to their community

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - K-1 Memory Review - Review Kindergarten & First Grade Jobs
- Activity 2 - Introduction of New Careers
- Activity 3 - K-2 Memory Game

Student Target: I can...

- Learn about jobs in my community
- Learn about what workers in my community do
- Learn how workers help my community

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters (K, 1st, 2nd)
- Memory Cards
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will deepen their understanding of careers by identifying connections between their personal interests and different professions. Through interest inventory activities, they will reflect on their hobbies (e.g., reading, building things, or solving puzzles) and explore related jobs like teachers, engineers, or scientists. The lesson encourages students to think creatively about how their unique interests can guide future opportunities.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Identify their interests
- Connect their interests to possible future careers

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Interest Survey
- Activity 2 - Career Category Connections
- Activity 3 - Career Videos

Student Target: I can...

- Name things I find interesting
- Match jobs to what I'm interested in

Materials Needed:

- Interest Survey
- Category Posters
- Career Videos (portal)
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will reflect more deeply on the types of careers that interest them, considering the skills and tasks involved, and the benefit to the community. The lesson aims to help students begin setting aspirations for the future and understand that their interests and strengths can shape their career paths.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Explore different careers through interactive activities and presentations

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Introduction to Jobs Choice Board
- Activity 2 - Work Time - Choice Board Project

Student Target: I can...

- Explore jobs by playing
- Listen and watch information to learn about jobs

Materials Needed:

- Choice Board Template
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will learn about different ways people continue their education after high school, such as college, technical programs, and apprenticeships. Through activities and discussions, they will explore how different careers require different types of learning. The lesson emphasizes the value of education and practice in achieving goals, helping students see that continuous learning leads to meaningful opportunities and success.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Understand the importance of education in achieving career goals

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Exploring Education for a Career
- Activity 2 - Finish Choice Board Project
- Activity 3 - Choice Board Presentation

Student Target: I can...

- Share how learning new things can help me get the job I want in the future

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters
- I want to be Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will take part in simple interest surveys to identify activities they enjoy and areas they are curious about. They will be introduced to career clusters—groups of jobs that share common themes, like healthcare or arts. Through discussions and matching games, students will connect their interests to specific career clusters, helping them see how their hobbies and passions relate to future job opportunities.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Introduce students to the concept of career clusters and provide an overview of the career clusters
- Delve deeper into the career clusters, two at a time, to help students understand specific jobs within each cluster
- Help students identify their interests and how these can relate to potential careers

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Introduction to Career Vocabulary and Clusters
- Activity 2 - Cluster Drag and Drop
- Activity 3 - Interest Inventory
- Activity 4 - Journal - Lesson 1 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Match jobs to different clusters
- Identify my interests and how they relate to different clusters

Materials Needed:

- Career Cluster Posters
- Interest Inventory
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will explore career clusters, learning about jobs within each. Through interactive activities like drag and drop games and videos, they will discover the types of tasks workers do in these careers. The lesson encourages students to reflect on which clusters interest them and how their skills and hobbies connect to different job roles.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Introduce students to the concept of career clusters and provide an overview of career clusters.
- Delve deeper into the career clusters, two at a time, to help students understand specific jobs within each cluster.

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Clusters Drag & Drop
- Activity 2 - Career Videos
- Activity 3 - Journal - Lesson 2 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Match jobs to different career clusters
- Learn about careers from different professionals

Materials Needed:

- Cluster Posters
- Career Videos (portal)
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will explore learning beyond high school and what it means to go to college or take part in an apprenticeship or career training program. They will learn that people choose different paths based on their interests, such as studying at a university or learning skills through hands-on training. The lesson encourages students to imagine how education and training can help them pursue their future dreams.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Understand the importance of education in achieving career goals

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Introduction of College Vocabulary
- Activity 2 - “This is What it Means to Go to College” video
- Activity 3 - Choose Your Path - Exploring Apprenticeships, Colleges & Universities
- Activity 4 - Journal - Lesson 3 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Share how learning new things can help me get the job I want in the future

Materials Needed:

- College Vocabulary Cards
- “This is What it Means to Go to College” video (portal)
- Choose Your Path Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will be introduced to financial concepts through interactive, hands-on activities, helping them grasp the importance of saving, budgeting, and planning for the future. Students will be introduced to fundamental financial concepts like money, saving, and budgeting.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Understand needs vs wants and how to make smart spending decisions
- Learn the value of saving and how to set short-term goals

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - The Shopping Spree
- Activity 2 - Piggy Bank Savings Goal
- Activity 3 - Journal - Lesson 4 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Tell the difference between my needs and my wants
- Put my needs first
- Understand how savings adds up over time

Materials Needed:

- Shopping Catalog
- Shopping Spree Worksheet
- Classroom Piggy Bank Poster
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will complete interest surveys to reflect on what they enjoy doing and discover how these interests connect to career clusters. They will explore various clusters—such as science, business, and education—and identify careers that align with their strengths and interests. Through interactive activities, students will gain a deeper understanding of how interests can guide career exploration and future opportunities.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Introduce students to the concept of career clusters and provide overview of career clusters.
- Delve deeper into career clusters, two at a time, to help students understand specific jobs within each cluster.
- Help students identify their interests and how these can relate to potential careers.

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Career Vocabulary
- Activity 2 - Career Cluster Sort
- Activity 3 - Interest Inventory
- Activity 4 - Journal - Lesson 1 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Match jobs to different clusters
- Identify my interests and how they relate to different clusters

Materials Needed:

- Cluster Posters
- Career Vocabulary Cards
- Interest Inventory
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will take a closer look at career clusters, exploring the types of jobs and skills needed within each. Through group activities, career speakers, and virtual tours, students will understand how workers contribute to their field and what education or training may be required. The lesson aims to help students discover clusters that align with their talents and interests.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Introduce students to the concept of career pathways and provide an overview of career clusters
- Delve deeper into the career clusters, two at a time, to help students understand specific jobs within each cluster

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Cluster Sort & Interest Connections
- Activity 2 - Career Videos
- Activity 3 - Journal - Lesson 2 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Match jobs to different career clusters
- Learn about careers from different professionals

Materials Needed:

- Cluster Posters
- Interest Inventory Survey
- Career Videos (portal)
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will dive deeper into the variety of educational paths available after high school, including colleges, technical schools, apprenticeships, and career training programs. They will explore how different careers require specific types of education or hands-on learning. Through interactive activities, they will explore a college campus and learn about different paths through college degrees..

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Introduce students to the concept of higher education and familiarize them with colleges and universities.

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - College Vocabulary
- Activity 2 - College Quest Adventure
- Activity 3 - Journal - Lesson 3 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Share how learning new things can help me get the job I want in the future

Materials Needed:

- College Vocabulary Cards
- College Quest Adventure
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will be introduced to financial concepts through interactive, hands-on activities, helping them grasp the importance of saving, budgeting, and planning for the future. Students will develop basic budgeting and decision-making skills, building on the foundation begun in third grade. This gradual approach ensures readiness for the financial decisions they'll encounter throughout their educational journey and careers.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- How to create a simple budget for a class field trip
- Understand how different jobs affect earnings

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Field Trip Budget Adventure
- Activity 2 - Job Day: Earn, Save, Spend
- Activity 3 - Journal - Lesson 4 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Balance my spending on fun and practical needs
- Make thoughtful financial decisions in life

Materials Needed:

- Field Trip Worksheet
- PayDay Envelopes
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will engage in detailed interest surveys to explore their preferences and learn about career clusters that match their interests. They will analyze how different careers within clusters require unique skills and levels of education or training. Through activities like group discussions and research projects, students will reflect on how understanding their interests can help guide future educational and career decisions.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Help students understand how jobs are categorized into clusters
- Help students identify their interests and how interests can relate to potential careers

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Career Vocabulary
- Activity 2 - Career Cluster Slides Project - Part 1
- Activity 3 - Interest Inventory

Student Target: I can...

- Produce jobs that match different career clusters by creating a PowerPoint
- Identify my interests and how they relate to careers

Materials Needed:

- Career Vocabulary Cards
- Interest Inventory
- Computer
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint

Lesson Goal

Students will take a closer look at career clusters, exploring the types of jobs and skills needed within each. Through personal activities and group sharing students will understand how workers contribute to their field and what education or training may be required. The lesson aims to help students discover clusters that align with their talents and interests.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Introduce students to the concept of career pathways and provide an overview of career clusters
- Delve deeper into the career clusters, two at a time, to help students understand specific jobs within each cluster

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Career Cluster Deep Dive
- Activity 2 - Career Cluster Slides Project - Part 2
- Activity 3 - Career Cluster Gallery Walk
- Activity 4 - Journal - Lesson 1/2 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Produce jobs that match different career clusters by creating a PowerPoint
- Identify my interests and how they relate to careers

Materials Needed:

- Cluster Posters
- Interest Inventory
- I Can Conversation Cards
- Lesson PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will dive deeper into the variety of educational paths available after high school and discuss the cost of pursuing different forms of education and training. They will explore how different careers require specific types of education or hands-on learning. Students will engage in discussion around self-investment, scholarships, and earn while you learn programs, and compare these options and reflect on how different paths align with their personal interests and strengths.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Introduce students to the concept of higher education and familiarize them with colleges costs.
- Students will learn about earn while you learn training programs

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - College Vocabulary
- Activity 2 - Scholarship Exploration
- Activity 3 - Journal - Lesson 3 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Share how learning new things can help me get the job I want in the future

Materials Needed:

- College Vocabulary Cards
- Scholarship Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- Lesson PowerPoint
- Journal

Lesson Goal

Students will be introduced to financial concepts through interactive, hands-on activities, helping them grasp the importance of saving, budgeting, and planning for the future. Students will build on prior budgeting experience from third and fourth grade with an emphasis on college, career, and financial planning. This gradual approach ensures readiness for the financial decisions they'll encounter throughout their educational journey and careers.

What should student learn from the lesson?

- Explore how income from a chosen career impacts lifestyle choices
- Understand college-related costs and distinguish essential expenses

What is the activity?

- Activity 1 - Dream Career Budget
- Activity 2 - Need vs. Wants College Edition
- Activity 3 - Journal - Lesson 4 Reflection

Student Target: I can...

- Connect career decisions to financial realities
- Make thoughtful financial decisions in life

Materials Needed:

- Job Posters
- Salary Cards
- Monthly Budget Worksheet
- College Checklist Worksheet
- College Budget Worksheet
- I Can Conversation Cards
- PowerPoint
- Journal