

# Middle Years to Careers



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY GUIDE

*for Middle School Career Development*

---

### Guide 1: Promoting Student Self-Awareness

PRESENTED BY



Ohio Statewide  
**Family  
Engagement  
Center**  
— at The Ohio State University —

# Guide 1: Promoting Student Self-Awareness

GRADES:



Career Awareness

Career Exploration

Career Planning

## Student self-awareness is a step towards their future careers

As a middle school teacher or counselor, there are many things you can do to support students and their families when it comes to exploring students' interests and strengths. It is a journey of discovery!

This guide, the first of three, will help you connect with families and students about career-related self-awareness activities they can try out during middle school. The second guide provides ideas for engaging with families to support students exploring a wide range of careers, and the third guide helps you connect families with community resources such as job shadowing opportunities.

## Why is self-awareness important for middle school career exploration?

Middle school marks the starting point for many of the academic plans and decisions students and their families will make throughout the course of their studies. Ideally, students choose electives and courses that align with their interests and skills and build on those choices as they go through middle and high school. To make

these academic decisions and plan for the future, middle school students should develop self-awareness around their interests, strengths, skills, and abilities. Middle schoolers should be wondering: what are their natural abilities, how do they align with their interests, and how does this relate to both career and academic planning? Families are allies and valuable sources of knowledge regarding each child's interests and skills. Their experiences, beliefs, and expectations should be considered and valued by those who are leading the career development process within your school.

## How to use this guide

You can use this guide for ideas and to capture notes about your next steps, to ensure you are engaging families every step of the way towards supporting student career development! When schools, families, and members of the community form partnerships to support students in career development, all students have opportunities to succeed. To see our latest "Middle Years to Careers" resources, visit: <https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/middle-years-to-careers/>.

*Image above borrowed from the Ohio Department of Education's [Career Connections Framework](#)*

# Family Engagement Activities Promoting Student Self-Awareness

1

**IDEA:**

**Get to know how your school’s families support their child’s self-awareness and career development at home.**

**EXAMPLES:**

Plan to have conversations with families to get to know them and how they think about career development for their child (in-person, text, email, quick surveys, or phone calls – whatever works!).

*Ask families: “We’re doing a career development unit next week at school. What are some strengths and interests you have noticed in your child as they have grown and entered middle school? Are there certain careers you talk about often at home?”*

---

Incorporate career-related survey items in communications sent to families each year to gather a baseline of their understanding and expectations of the career development process.

*Try these survey questions: “I talk to my child about how their coursework connects to future careers.”*

*Or “I feel comfortable talking with my child about their future college, career, and other life opportunities.”*

---

When meeting with families to discuss course planning, help them connect the dots between courses and future opportunities! Be sure to ask them about their aspirations for their child.

*Ask families: “Knowing all you know about your child’s strengths and interests, what type of future do you envision for your child after high school? Which middle and high school courses do you think would be a good fit for your child in the coming years?”*

---

**NOTES:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Family Engagement Activities Promoting Student Self-Awareness

2

**IDEA:**

**Share information on the types of self-awareness inventories used in your school as part of career exploration programming.**

**EXAMPLES:**

Send emails or other notices with information about the self-awareness inventories – this can be created as a template that is sent each year.

---

Encourage conversations at home about their child’s experience taking the inventories and what they learned from it.

Offer conversation starters to families such as *“Were you surprised by any of the results? What did you see that you already knew about yourself?”*

---

Record a video that describes the inventories and how results can be interpreted and used at home to explore possible careers. Providing multiple ways for families to learn about resources is a way your school provides an equitable education experience for students!

---

**NOTES:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Family Engagement Activities Promoting Student Self-Awareness

3

**IDEA:**

**Schools can share with families how their child’s interests and strengths relate to their academic achievements and career planning.**

**EXAMPLES:**

Direct families to resources on [career pathways](#) and course selections.

---

Support families in understanding the relationship between self-awareness, identity development, goal setting, and the power of high aspirations.

---

Remind families that they are the biggest influence on their child's future career choices, and that you’re their partner every step of the way in middle school.

---

Provide all families with powerful tools to help them “[Chart the LifeCourse](#)” whether their child is receiving only general education services or general and special education services.

---

**NOTES:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Student Engagement Activities Promoting Student Self-Awareness

1

### IDEA:

**Schools can learn about students’ interests, strengths, and how they are thinking about their future.**

### EXAMPLES:

During an academic meeting with students, ask about their strengths and interests.

*Ask students: “What do you think are your strengths? What are you really good at? Are there certain careers you talk about often at home?”*

If they are already thinking about future careers, take note of their current goals and how the school could support those goals over time.

Survey students during career-related classroom lessons.

*Ask students to respond to the following types of statements: “I have thought about what I am good at and how that relates to future jobs.”*

*Or “I have ideas about the classes I want to take in school to learn skills for my future.”*

Student awareness and confidence for career development is something the school can work to improve over time in middle school.

### NOTES:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Student Engagement Activities Promoting Student Self-Awareness

### 2 IDEA:

**Share links or copies of self-awareness inventories and related resources for students to access during or outside of school time.**

#### EXAMPLES:

Give students a copy of any inventories available for them to keep.

---

Communicate with students on how the inventories can support their career journey.

---

Encourage them to share results with their families.

Possible conversation starters for students to discuss at home: *“I was surprised that my inventory results said ....”* and *“I was not surprised that the inventory revealed ...about my strengths.”*

---

Record a video tutorial describing how to take career inventories. Share the tutorial with students and their families. Make sure it is accessible in the home languages your families speak.

---

### NOTES:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Student Engagement Activities Promoting Student Self-Awareness

3

### IDEA:

Share with students how their self-assessment results may impact career planning and academic planning.

### EXAMPLES:

Direct students to resources on [career pathways](#) and course selections.

---

Support students in identifying future goals for their career development and understanding the necessary skills and courses available in meeting those goals. Provide them with a copy of their course options in middle and high school.

---

Provide opportunities for students and their families to talk to high school students about how certain courses are preparing them for future careers and other life goals.

---

Record a video tutorial describing how career inventory results can be interpreted and utilized to explore possible careers. Or, have students each make their own video about the inventory, their results, and careers they would like to explore during the school year.

---

### NOTES:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---