

Workplace Readiness Skill

Personal Qualities and Abilities

Activity Sheet

Skill 1

Taking Initiative and Self-Direction

It is often not enough for us to wait around for someone to tell us what to do. It is our responsibility to do what needs to be done without being asked. Employers look for employees who show initiative and self-direction by attending to their responsibilities. If you see something that needs to be done, do it!

Description of Taking Initiative and Self-Direction

Taking initiative and being self-directed means to initiate or look for ways to help and accomplish tasks without being told to by someone else.

Examples of showing initiative:

- Complete a chore without being told.
- Independently ask for work when you don't have a lot to do.

Menu of Activities

These activities are designed to help families discuss and practice taking initiative. Choose one or more activities to complete with your child.

Activity 1: Taking Initiative is Cool

1. Watch [Taking Initiative is Cool](https://youtu.be/ALtsSru4jzE) (youtu.be/ALtsSru4jzE) with your child.
2. Provide examples of when you took initiative at home and at work. Discuss ways your child can take initiative at home.
3. Together, go through your home and identify things that need to be done or ways your child can demonstrate initiative. Describe WHY these things are important to do.
 - Examples: taking out the trash, washing dishes, picking up clothes, getting the mail, or turning the lights off in rooms not being used.
4. From those tasks that were identified, have your child make a list of three chores or activities they can be responsible for and set a date and time for when each activity will be completed.
 - To track the chores, try an app like [ChoreMonster](https://bit.ly/choremonster-app) (bit.ly/choremonster-app). All smartphones should have a Notes app that your child can use to track their chores.

Activity 2: For Hire

1. Make a “For Hire” list of chores that need to be completed around the house. Assign payment or reinforcement to each chore. Payment can be something that is reinforcing like money, a new book, or time on the computer.
 - Try [Our Home](http://ourhomeapp.com) (ourhomeapp.com) for an app to track chores.
2. When your child wants to earn some type of payment, have them check the “For Hire” list and negotiate their desire to be “hired” for specific jobs.

Activity 3: Scavenger Hunt

1. Tell your child they are going on a scavenger hunt for items they need for their day.
2. Have each family member hold onto an item that is reinforcing or needed (Wifi password, book, keys, game, hat, etc.). Make sure the family members aren’t all hanging out in one area so your child needs to search a bit for each member of the family.
3. Have your child go on the hunt. In order to complete the hunt, your child take the initiative to seek out each family member. If your child requests the item from the correct person then that family member will give it to them. If not, the item will be held “captive” for the rest of the day.
4. To make this activity a bit more challenging, set a limit of time they have to complete the hunt. For example, you may tell your child they have 30 minutes to get all of the required items. It can be easy to get distracted with each item instead of searching for the next item on the list!

Reflection

Review the questions with your child and respond together after completing the activities.

- Did this information help your child better understand taking initiative and self-direction?
- What was easy or hard about learning and practicing this skill?
- Why is this skill important to use at home and at work?
- How do we continue to practice this skill in the home and in the community?
- What additional information or resources do I need to continue to practice this skill with my child?