Future Ready:

The Importance of College and Career Programming in Middle School

Who We Are

Visit successbound.org to learn about our free middle school curriculum and aligned professional learning

You can also sign up for an upcoming info session to learn more or contact us to connect with a member of our team

Welcome!

Introduce yourself:

Name, Role, Organization

Share:

What career goal did you have when you were in middle school?

Objectives

- Participants will learn why early adolescence is a crucial time for college and career exploration

- Participants will understand the importance of integrating SEL with academic pursuits and postsecondary exploration for middle school students

- Participants will plan for the integration of holistic postsecondary initiatives in their own contexts
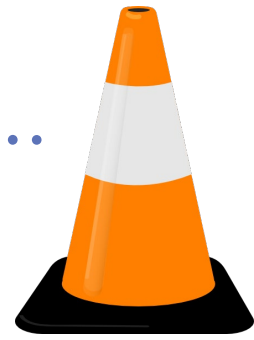
The Adolescent Mind

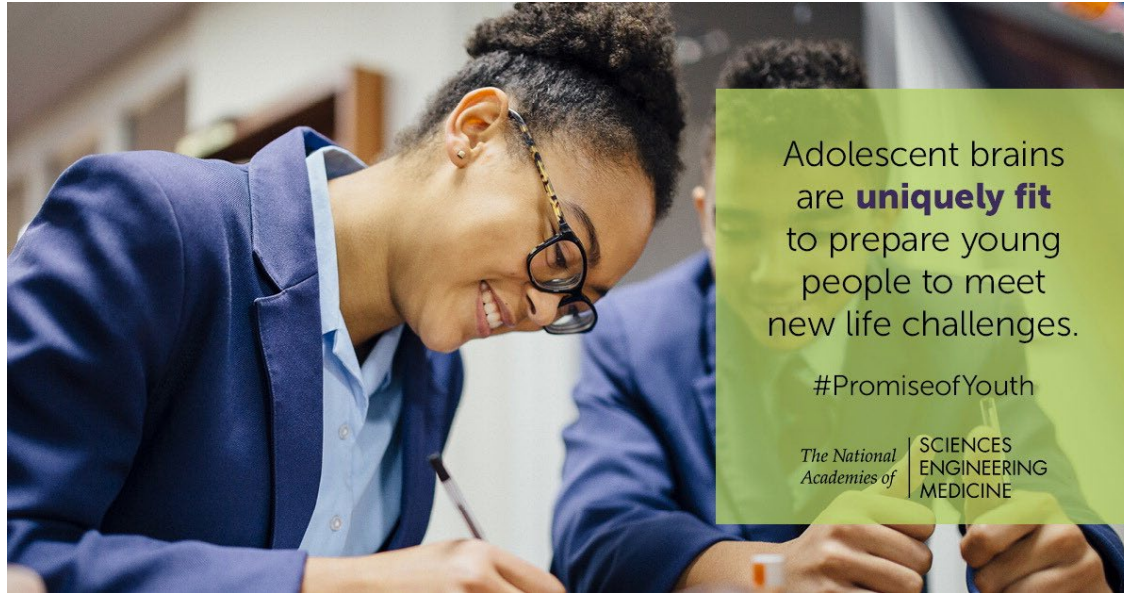What words are most often used to describe early adolescents, or teenagers?

Here's What We Know About Middle Schoolers…

1. It is a time of rapid change and development where adolescent brains and bodies are literally under construction.
2. There is increased brain plasticity, leading to more adaptability.
3. There is a major drive to explore identity, discover meaning, and search for purpose .
4. The cultural and social context is very important to adolescents.
5. Engagement in school declines.

The Promise Of Adolescence

Adolescent brains are **uniquely fit** to prepare young people to meet new life challenges.

#PromiseofYouth

The National Academies of | SCIENCES ENGINEERING MEDICINE

Self-Exploration

Academic Agency

College and Career Planning

Science of Learning: What Educators Need to Know About Adolescent Development, Alliance for Excellent Education, September 2019

What do students need to learn or what skills do they need to develop to have meaningful future pathways?

Integrating Social & Emotional Learning with Postsecondary Exploration

Research Round Robin

1. With your group, read your research snippet
2. Discuss the implications of what you read
3. Determine one person to share your big takeaway from what you learned (Think "Tweet" or TikTok)

Research Round Robin-1

"A middle school curriculum should invite students to meaningfully explore their myriad identities and speak to the diversity of their peers. It should also include opportunities for young adolescents to explore postsecondary education and career options, ensuring they can navigate the many possibilities of their future selves."

Source: Bishop, P. A., and Downes, J. M. (2019). Working paper: Optimizing teaching and learning in the middle grades. *Remaking Middle School Series.* University of Virginia Curry School of Education and Human Development. Youth-Nex.

Research Round Robin-2

While SEL programs that directly teach skills in isolation are generally found to be beneficial to children, these types of stand-alone programs have not been found to be as effective with teenagers (Yeager, 2017). This age group benefits from an integrated approach to SEL that focuses on creating positive climates and developing mindsets to help students connect SEL skills to their values and identities. Further, students report that a lack of social and emotional skill development contributes to feeling unprepared for life after high school (Atwell et al., 2018). The teaching practices found to be most effective with middle and high school students include cultivating positive relationships, providing opportunities for student voice and choice, and incorporating personalized student supports (Srinivasan, 2019)

Sources:

Atwell, M. N., Bridgeland, J. M., DePaoli, J. L., & Shriver, T. P. (2018). *Respected: Perspectives of youth on high school and social & emotional learning.* CASEL Report by Civic with Hart Research Associates.

Source: Srinivasan, M. (2019). *SEL every day: Integrating social and emotional learning with instruction in secondary classrooms.* W. W. Norton & Company.

Yeager, D. S. (2017). Social-emotional learning programs for adolescents. *Future of Children, Princeton-Brookings,* 27(1): 31-52.

Research Round Robin-3

One study found that a student's social and emotional competencies in kindergarten predicted several positive life outcomes, such as increased likelihood to graduate from high school on time, full-time employment, and decreased likelihood of drug use or involvement in crime (Jones et al., 2015). Other research indicates that strong SEL in K-12 educational settings is linked to greater civic and community engagement (DePaoli et al., 2018).
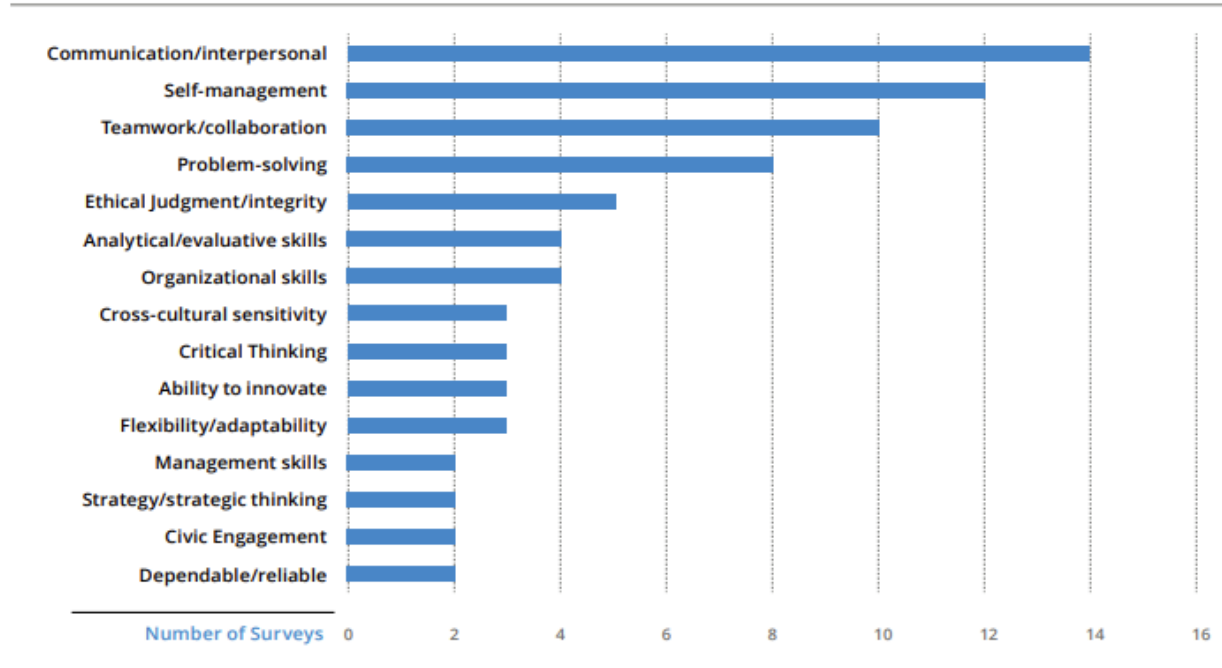
Sources:

DePaoli, J. L., Atwell, M. N., Bridgeland, J. M., & Shriver, T. P. (2018). Respected: Perspectives from youth on high school and social and emotional learning. Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates for CASEL. Retrieved from: https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Respected.pdf

Jones, D. E., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness. *American Journal of Public Health, 105*(11), 2283–2290. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630

Research Round Robin-4

Figure 2. Top Skills Employers are Seeking

Skill	Number of Surveys
Communication/interpersonal	14
Self-management	12
Teamwork/collaboration	10
Problem-solving	8
Ethical Judgment/integrity	5
Analytical/evaluative skills	4
Organizational skills	4
Cross-cultural sensitivity	3
Critical Thinking	3
Ability to innovate	3
Flexibility/adaptability	3
Management skills	2
Strategy/strategic thinking	2
Civic Engagement	2
Dependable/reliable	2

Source: Yoder, N., Atwell, M. N., Godek, D., Dusenbury, L., Bridgeland, J. M., & Weissberg, R. (2020). Preparing youth for the workforce of tomorrow: Cultivating the social & emotional skills employers demand. SEL for Workforce Development. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Research Round Robin-5

Social and emotional skills were found to be not only in demand in the workforce but are also among the most difficult to find in employees.

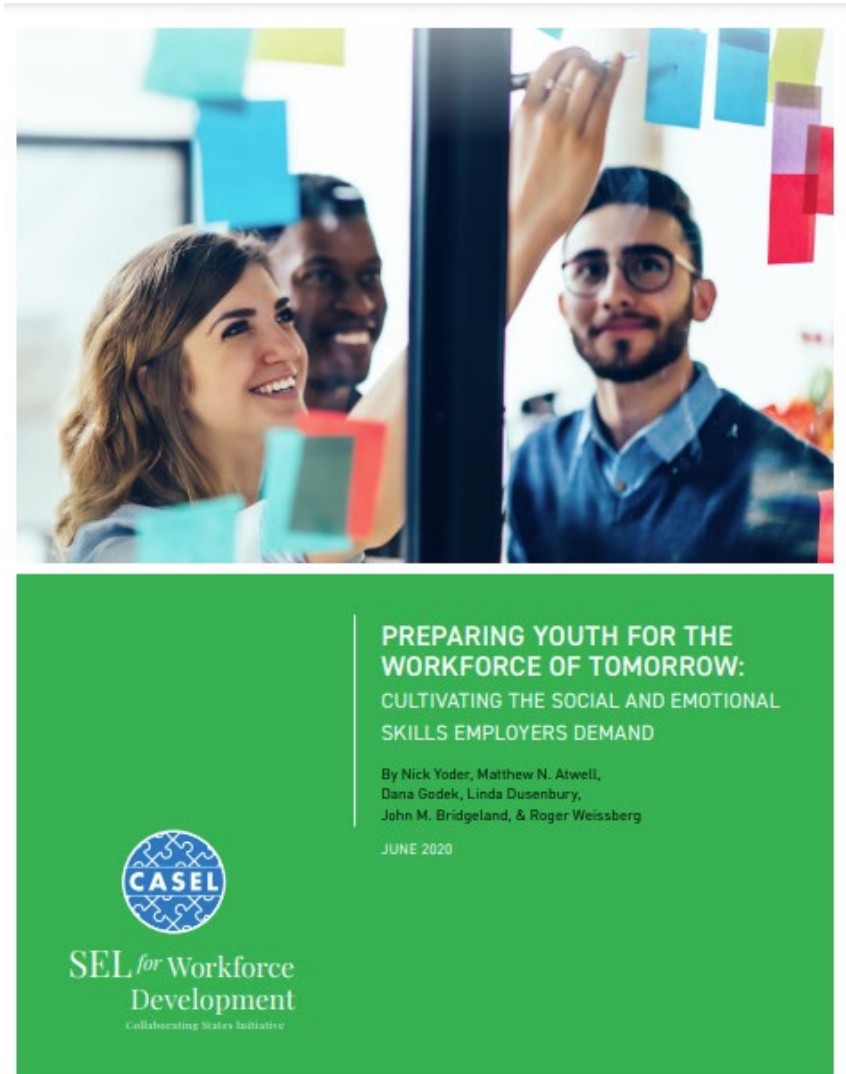| SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES	EMPLOYEE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS (in demand skills from employers)	
SELF-AWARENESS	• Positive attitude • Flexibility • Ability to apply skills to real-life settings • Openness to developing/ learning new skills • Sense of self-worth	• Ability to Innovate • Confident • Creativity • Commitment • Shows flexibility
SELF-MANAGEMENT	• Initiative • Works well under pressure (e.g., manages emotions) • Punctuality • Ability to work independently • Detail-oriented • Strategic planning (e.g., setting and achieving goals)	• Strong work ethic • Time management • Entrepreneurial thinking • Reliability • Organizational skills • Adaptability • Budgeting • Self-discipline
SOCIAL AWARENESS	• Cross-cultural sensitivity • Ability to work with people of different backgrounds/cultures	• Supervision of others • Respects individual differences
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS	• Written and oral communication skills • Listening skills • Conflict resolution • Teamwork and works well with others	• Effective communication • Ability to collaborate • Management skills • Responds to customer needs
RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING	• Integrity • Honesty • Analyze and solve complex problems • Ability to evaluate information from multiple sources	• Critical thinking • Reasoning • Civic participation and engagement • Ethical and sound decision-making • Observes carefully

Table 2. Social and Emotional Skills Demanded by Employers

Source: Yoder, N., Atwell, M. N., Godek, D., Dusenbury, L., Bridgeland, J. M., & Weissberg, R. (2020). Preparing youth for the workforce of tomorrow: Cultivating the social & emotional skills employers demand. SEL for Workforce Development. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Takeaways

1. Know Thyself
2. Integrated SEL for Big Impact
3. SEL skills→better life outcomes
4. Employers top desired skills are SEL

PREPARING YOUTH FOR THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW: CULTIVATING THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS EMPLOYERS DEMAND

By Nick Yoder, Matthew N. Atwell, Dana Godek, Linda Dusenbury, John M. Bridgeland, & Roger Weissberg

JUNE 2020

CASEL

SEL *for* Workforce Development
Collaborating States Initiative

PaCE Middle School Framework

What outcomes are currently being achieved by your postsecondary initiatives?

What outcomes do you want to focus on for the upcoming school year?

Strategy Brainstorm

Use the Postsecondary Initiative Brainstorming Note Catcher to begin planning your college and career programming for the upcoming school year.

1. **Who**: which group do you want to work with? (i.e., 8th grade), who can you collaborate with? Which voices should you include? (i.e., teachers, counselors, parents/guardians)
2. **What**: what activities will be ongoing? specific events? programs or curricula? what resources will you need? *How will SEL be integrated into these activities?*
3. **Why**: what are your desired outcomes/impact? Short-medium-long term goals? (ie., academic, SEL, future readiness, personality traits)
4. **How**: how will you measure or know if it's successful? How will you pivot/change course if needed?

AMLE's Career Exploration in the Middle Grades
Playbook For Educators

Directions: Use the chart below to help you brainstorm ideas for postsecondary initiatives that can be implemented during the upcoming school year.

Whole-School	**School Culture Shift:** school and district staff develop a school/district-wide mission that incorporates career exploration at every level (*i.e., curriculum, professional development, school/district-wide projects and events*).
	School-Wide Events: programming that focuses on school-wide events that involve staff, students, and members of the school community (*i.e., career days, project showcases, school assemblies*).
	Pathways-Focused: schools create pathways via course offerings to provide more focused exploration opportunities for students. Students can choose electives or exploratory courses related to career exploration.
	Middle and High School Transitions: CTE programs or programs that help students access career exploration in middle school and continue as students transition to high school.
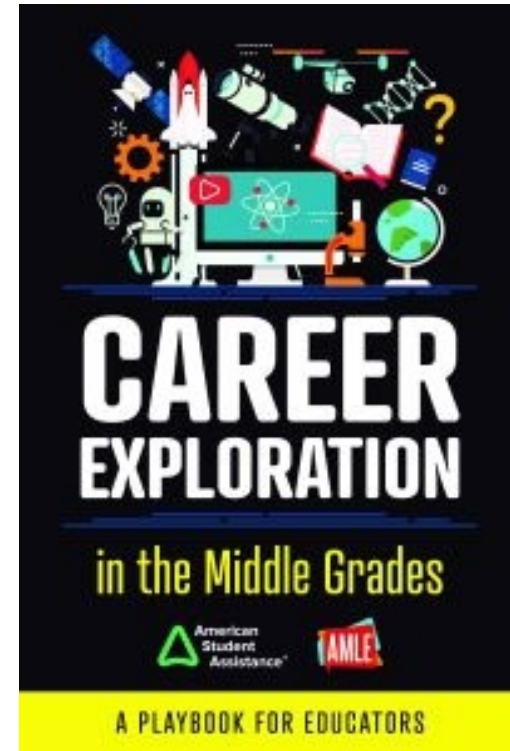
Small Group Share-out

Share 1 idea that you're really excited about

Closing: Whole Group Share Out

Head: One thing you're thinking differently about based on what we discussed

Heart: One thing this session made you feel

Feet: One action you're going to take based on what you learned from this session