



Foundations for Young Adult Success

What's it all about?

Foundations for Young Adult Success is a developmental framework created by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. It sets out what children and adolescents (ages 3 to 22) need beyond educational attainment to be prepared for adulthood, with a focus on the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes they need to succeed in post-secondary and career environments, maintain healthy relationships, be engaged citizens, and make positive life choices.

The framework consists of four interrelated components (knowledge and skills, self-regulation, values, and mindsets) that form the foundation for three key factors necessary for young adult success: agency, competencies, and identity. The study frames these components and factors as malleable across the lifespan and sorts them into age ranges for optimal development.

This summary is part of our curated digital platform on social and emotional skills (SES) assessment and contains key details on one of the external SES assessment tools and applied studies we reviewed. The platform is part of The Conference Board of Canada's multi-year research project for the Future Skills Centre on SES. [For more information, check out our landing page here.](#)

How does it work?

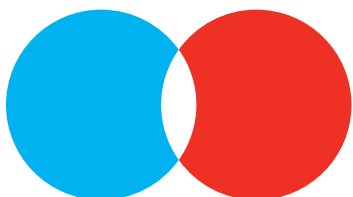
The development of the framework was based on three major components:

- definition of adult success and identification of the essential factors needed to succeed;
- identification of key developmental milestones from preschool to young adulthood, during which skills and success factors develop;
- identification of how these essential factors could be coherently promoted in homes, schools, and community organizations.

The developers reviewed more than 20 existing frameworks and models that specialized in social and emotional skills and consulted with subject matter experts and practitioners in the fields of economics, education, sociology, business, and psychology.

The key developmental tasks during each stage of development are identified as:

- early childhood (ages 3 to 5): self-regulation, interpersonal (social-emotional) knowledge and skills;
- middle childhood (ages 6 to 10): self-regulation (self-awareness and self-control), learning-related skills and knowledge, and interpersonal skills;
- early adolescence (ages 11 to 14): group-based identity and emerging mindsets;
- middle adolescence (ages 15 to 18): sense of values and individuated identity;
- young adulthood (ages 19 to 22): integrated identity.





Intended users

Educators, parents, and community organizations

Educators, parents, and community organizations can use this framework to better understand the consistent and stimulating environments needed to support skills development. Recognizing the best ages for children to learn the components of skills can also help users to create tailored programs.

Policy-makers

Policy-makers can use this information to develop education and curriculum policy and guidelines, specifically around developmental experiences through school and extra-curricular activities. These policies can ensure that students focus not only on academic achievements also on the key factors and components that lead to ongoing SES development.



Social and emotional skills measured

This test measures the following skills, as defined by the framework authors:

Foundational components

Self-regulation: includes awareness of oneself and one's surroundings and managing one's attention, emotions, and behaviours in goal-directed ways.

Knowledge and skills: Knowledge is sets of facts, information, or understanding about oneself, others, and the world, and skills are the learned ability to carry out a task with intended results or goals, and can be either general or specific.

Mindsets: are beliefs and attitudes about oneself, the world, and the interaction between the two. They are the lenses we use to process everyday experience.

Values: are enduring, often culturally defined beliefs about what is good or bad and what is important in life. Values serve as broad guidelines for living and provide direction for one's desired future.

Three factors

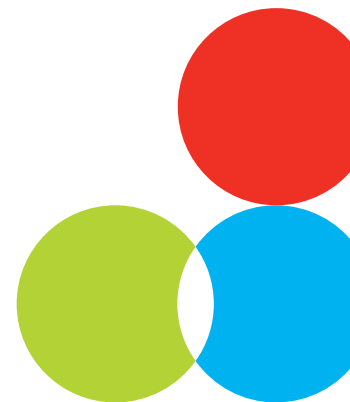
Agency: intentionally making choices about one's life rather than depending on circumstances.

Integrated identity: a consistent view of oneself across time and contexts.

Competencies: the abilities to effectively complete tasks and achieve objectives.

Read the study:

Jenny Nagaoka and others, *Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework* (Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, 2015), accessed May 21, 2020, www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Foundations-for-Young-Adult-Success.pdf.



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