

EXPLORER POST GUIDE for CREATING a SCHOOL-to-CAREERS PROGRAM

A REVOLUTIONARY NEW APPROACH TO EDUCATION. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act establishes a national framework to broaden the educational, career and economic opportunities for all youth through partnerships between businesses, schools, community-based organizations, and state and local governments.

WHY IS IT NEEDED? The United States is one of only a few industrialized nations that do not have an organized, comprehensive system to help young people prepare for and enter the workforce. Because of the increasing demands of a highly competitive global economy, employers have difficulty in finding workers with the academic, analytical, and technical skills they need. Under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, workplaces become active learning environments. Employers become joint partners with educators to train students through paid work experiences for jobs that exist in the local economy. Schools, in turn, will challenge all students to higher academic and skill standards and help them identify career majors.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS. School-to-Work is not a top-down mandate of the federal government. It is a movement that must spring from strong partnerships at the state and local community level. By working together, employers, educators, parents, labor unions, community-based organizations, and others will design and implement systems tailored to meet their specific needs.

REQUIRED CORE ELEMENTS. The act requires that every School-to-Work Opportunities system contain three core elements:

- SCHOOL-BASED LEARNING** Classroom instruction that integrates work and school-based learning and is based on high academic and occupational skill standards.
- CONNECTING ACTIVITIES** A variety of activities that build and maintain bridges between school and work. Examples include matching students with participating employers, and training job-site mentors and teachers.
- WORK-BASED LEARNING** Work experience, structured training, and mentoring at job sites.

CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT. Existing programs of Learning for Life can provide the basis for operating and meeting the goals of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. Before starting, a “Needs Assessment, No. 99-087” should be conducted by a representative from Learning for Life to determine precisely how the Learning for Life programs can help schools address the School-to-Work transition of students. Only after this is done can the Learning for Life representative help design a program linking Senior High Career Seminar programs and career Exploring programs to meet the school's needs.

IMPLEMENTING A SCHOOL-to-CAREERS PROGRAM

It is the mission of Learning for Life to serve others by helping to instill core values in young people and in other ways prepare them to make ethical choices throughout their lives so they can achieve their full potential.

SCHOOL-BASED LEARNING (Using Learning for Life Programs)

9th through 12th grade students participate in either the *Senior High School Career Workshops* and/or the Career Seminar Programs. The Learning for Life representative collaborates with businesses and schools to arrange presenters for these career workshops and seminars. Through this series of 35 career workshops and CDROM *Life Choice Games*, students will gain a better appreciation of values and basic skills needed for success in the workplace. Specific career seminars can also be arranged based on the top twenty career choices of students from the high school student career interest survey.

CONNECTING ACTIVITIES (Provided by LFL Staff & Volunteers)

The Learning for Life representative will serve as the catalyst between selected businesses, industries, or professional associations and local high schools to provide students access to practical career opportunity experiences. The following types of career experiences are available through Learning for Life value added connecting activities:

- Organize seminars, workshops, tours of local business and industry, arrange for speakers, and coordinate career fairs where applicable.
- Recruit high school seminar volunteers, mentors, and role models and provide speaker orientation and training.
- Working with local colleges and universities, develop strong and integrated career programs.
- Provide monitoring, documentation, and evaluation of the *Senior High School Career Seminar* programs.
- Provide camp outdoor resources for retreats, career conferences, and life skill workshops.
- Conduct COPE courses for developing team building, leadership, self-reliance, respect for self and others, and self-esteem.
- Develop community-wide service projects such as food drives, crime prevention programs, and service learning activities.
- Encourage students to apply for Exploring scholarships.

WORK-BASED LEARNING (Explorer Posts)

Organize Explorer posts in various career interests for 9th through 12th grade students. The Exploring program is based upon five areas of emphasis-career opportunities, life skills, service learning, character education, and leadership experience. Students learn about an occupation from adult Explorer leader role models. Exploring helps students visualize themselves in the occupation of their choice through career hands-on activities and projects.

SCHOOL-to-CAREERS RESOURCES

LEARNING FOR LIFE WEB PAGE (www.learning-for-life.org).

Visit the Learning for Life Web Site (www.learning-for-life.org) for ideas on how your organization can connect with today's Exploring programs.

EXPLORER POST PC PROGRAM GUIDES (Learning for Life Web Page).

Explorer post PC program guides are available on the Learning for Life Web Page (www.learning-for-life.org). The contents of each program guide offers multi-avenues of support for a variety of Explorer posts under each topic. For example the following Explorer post could use the suggested post program ideas in the *Communications Explorer Post Guide*: Broadcasting, Editor, Graphic Artist, Journalism, Public Relations, Radio, TV, etc. PC program guides (Microsoft Word format) that are available to help organize Explorer posts include: Aviation, Business, Communications, Engineering, Fire Service, Health Careers, Law Enforcement, Law, Science, and Skilled Trades.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CAREER WORKSHOPS, No. 32113a. (CD-ROM) .

Career workshops are classroom-based programs designed to help students develop career goals and self-awareness. The program provides students with materials for personal decision-making, value assessment, and time and money management. These materials will help students see the relevance and importance of staying in school. These workshops give students the basic information for the following career and life skills: Career Planning, Goal Setting, Decision Making, Interest and Aptitudes, Skills and Job Traits, Education and Training Opportunities, Occupation Selection, Effective Communication, Job Applications, Job Interviews, Understanding People, Problems at the Workplace, and Ethics in the Workplace—Consideration, Courtesy, Friendliness, Helpfulness, Honesty, and Loyalty.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL “LIFE CHOICES” GAME, No. 32113a (CD-ROM).

Life Choices is a game that lets high school students run through real-life situations, making choices that may have unpredictable outcomes. You play the *Life Choices* game through a character, or “alter ego,” which the game generates after you select to play a male or female. This way, every play-through of the game lets the player experience life as a different person—one time as some with exceptional intelligence, another as someone with great looks or personality, and another as just as an ordinary person. The game culminates in one of five simulated job interviews, set several years in the future. The outcome of the interview—getting the job or not—reflects the cumulative effect of the habits and skills the player's alter ego developed over the life choice situations presented to him or her. *Life Choices* is an adjunct to the Learning for Life curriculum. It tries to teach, not by preaching but demonstrating how we can mold our opportunities in life.