

Teaching high school students

Financial habits and norms

Financial habits and norms are values, standards, routine practices, and rules of thumb around money. These help us navigate our day-to-day financial lives.

Watch for a student to demonstrate:

- **Positive money attitudes** – places value on savings, planning and self-control
- **Savings norm** – considers for what, when and how to save money
- **Spending strategy** – considers for what, when and how to spend money

To develop these skills you can:

- Define positive habits such as saving for short-term and long-term goals and needs
- Discuss values that support healthy saving and spending plans
- Build math skills through hands-on exercises

Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Financial knowledge and decision-making skills are exhibited by deliberate actions, like financial planning, research, and intentional decisions.

Watch for a student to demonstrate:

- **Aligned decision-making** – makes spending and saving choices aligned with their goals and values
- **Self-confidence** – confronts new situations with optimism in ability to make a positive choice
- **Research skills** – sees where research is needed, identifies trustworthy sources for information, and evaluates the information
- **Math skills** – performs the calculations needed to make practical financial decisions

To develop these skills you can:

- Develop students' ability to compare and contrast so they can analyze their options
- Identify safe resources and tools for the students to use in research
- Make lessons relevant to their students' lives
- Provide opportunities for repeated practice

Executive function

Strong executive function makes it easier to plan, focus attention, remember details and juggle multiple tasks.

Watch for a student to demonstrate:

- **Impulse control** – thinks before acting
- **Strong working memory** – remembers key information
- **Flexible thinking** – adjusts to the unexpected
- Planning and prioritizing – decides on a goal and how to meet that goal
- **Task initiation** – knows how to start on a project

To develop these skills you can:

- Model consistent routines
- Give students lesson outlines
- Give step-by-step directions
- Use rubrics that describe what a successful assignment looks like
- Break assignments into smaller chunks with deadlines that build to a final assignment
- Build students' confidence over time by grading work completed, rather than focusing on work left undone

Youth financial capability skills grow over time and are key to achieving adult financial well-being. Findings from CFPB's research suggest that the knowledge, skills, and behaviors associated with adult financial capability stem from three interconnected building blocks developed in youth. Children and youth need all three of the interconnected building blocks to achieve financial capability.

Learn more about each of the building blocks at consumerfinance.gov/youth-financial-education.

