

# LIFE SKILLS INVENTORY

DSHS 10-267 (Modified 11/2025) — CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION — DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

## INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOL

Updated from DSHS 10-267 (12/2000) by Jennifer Burnes, PhD, Lawrence, KS (11/2025)

### INSTRUCTIONS

To accurately complete the IL assessment, please involve the youth, the Children's Administration social worker, the foster parent or relative caregiver, and any other persons knowledgeable about the skills of the youth.

**Scoring should be based on the lowest level of completion.** The level of attainment for each youth completing this assessment is the lowest level where they satisfactorily complete the required number of questions. Youth may be highly competent in some areas, but have limited basic knowledge in others. Having basic knowledge in each area is important for long term success, and plan development should be focused on filling gaps in youth knowledge.

**Completion of Category P:** It is important for all youth to have a basic understanding of the options for pregnancy prevention. It is not the goal for all youth to reach "Exceptional" in this category, unless the youth (either male or female) is or will shortly be in a parenting role.

**Duration of completion:** All youth should ideally be assessed at 15 to 16 years of age. Once completed, you do not need to repeat the assessment. Further reporting will be based on the goals of the youth, and their skill level will be indicated by the progress achieved in attaining goals.

### COVER SHEET

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON(S) INVOLVED IN ASSESSMENT: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	DATE	BASIC	INT.	ADV.	EXCEL
A. Money Management/Consumer Awareness					
B. Food Management					
C. Personal Appearance and Hygiene					
D. Health					
E. Housekeeping					
F. Housing					
G. Transportation					
H. Educational Planning					
I. Job Seeking Skills					
J. Job Maintenance Skills					
K. Emergency and Safety Skills					
L. Knowledge of Community Resources					
M. Interpersonal Skills					
N. Legal Skills					
O. Internet and Technology Skills					
P. Pregnancy Prevention/Parenting and Child Care					

## Category A: Money Management and Consumer Awareness

### Basic - Must know 3 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Knows values of coins and currency.
- Can make a transaction at a local store and count change.
- Understands the difference between "luxuries" and "necessities" in food, transportation, clothing, housing.
- Understands the difference between "sale price" and "regular price".
- Can identify one way to save money on purchases.

### Intermediate - Must know 4 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Can open a checking or savings account.
- Can write checks/make withdrawals and deposits, or use mobile banking apps.
- Can record banking transactions using online banking, mobile apps, or paper records.
- Can budget allowance to last for a week (shows understanding of saving).
- Understands the difference between gross wage and take home pay.
- Can use a calculator or smartphone calculator to add, subtract, divide and multiply.

### Advanced - Must know 4 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- With assistance can make out monthly budget covering regular expenses for independent living.
- Shows "sales resistance" to "something for nothing" advertising, "low weekly payment" credit plans, and online scams.
- Can read monthly bank statements (paper or electronic), compare balances, make adjustments as necessary.
- Can comparison shop using unit pricing information online or in stores.
- Understands the responsibility of filing tax forms. Knows where to get assistance.
- Knows how to use digital coupons, coupon apps, and clip paper coupons.

### Exceptional - Must know at least 5 of 7:

- Budgets for unanticipated emergencies, seasonal bills, etc.
- Understands buying on credit, loans, interest, and late payment penalties.
- Understands payroll deductions, taxes, FICA, insurance.
- Can complete a short tax form or use tax preparation software/apps.
- Can balance a checkbook or reconcile online banking statements.
- Has regular savings program.
- Recognizes common financial scams (phishing emails, fake websites, phone scams).

## Category B: Food Management

### Basic - Must know at least 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Washes hands before eating and preparing food.
- Can order in a cafeteria or fast food restaurant (in-person or using an app).
- Can describe food pyramid and foods that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.
- Knows name and use of cooking utensils.

**Intermediate - Must be able to do 5 of 8 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can order a meal from the menu in a restaurant (in-person or online).
- Can fix a breakfast for one.
- Can fix a lunch for one.
- Can fix a dinner for one.
- Can make out a grocery shopping list (paper or digital).
- Can use cooking utensils effectively and safely.
- Can use kitchen appliances effectively and safely.
- Can use acceptable table manners.

**Advanced - Must know 5 out of 7 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Stores perishable items under refrigeration.
- Recognizes signs of spoilage in food.
- Can follow instructions for preparing canned or frozen foods.
- Can plan weekly menu of nutritious meals.
- Can shop for a week's menu and stay within budget (in-store or online).
- Can set the table properly.
- Can carry out a grocery-shopping trip.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 3 of 5:**

- Prepares recipes from a cookbook or recipe website/app.
- Can adjust recipes to feed more or less people than called for.
- Understands how to use dates on food packages to prevent spoilage.
- Prepares and eats a balanced diet.
- Understands and can use unit pricing to comparison shop.

**Category C: Personal Appearance and Hygiene****Basic - Must be able to do 4 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can dress self (including underwear, socks, tied shoes) in reasonably acceptable fashion.
- Can bathe self.
- Knows how to use soap, shampoo, deodorant, shaving cream, other personal products.
- Brushes teeth regularly.

**Intermediate - Must be able to do 3 of 3 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Showers or bathes regularly.
- Keeps hair clean and neat.
- Dresses in reasonably clean clothing.

**Advanced - Must be able to do 4 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can read clothing labels and determine care instructions.
- Can sort and machine-wash clothes at a Laundromat using appropriate settings.
- Can dry clothes in a dryer using appropriate settings.
- Knows the cost of and can budget for special hair and nail care.
- Can iron clothes.
- Can sew on buttons and make minor clothing repairs.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 2 of 3:**

- Can hand wash items following the instructions on the label.
- Knows appropriate clothing to wear for almost all occasions.
- Knows approximate cost of dry cleaning and can arrange for it.

**Category D: Health****Basic - Must know 5 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can open childproof container.
- Knows not to take someone else's medication.
- Knows that drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and vaping may be harmful to health.
- Knows parts of the body and sexual functioning.
- Knows how pregnancy occurs.
- Knows how and where to get emergency health care.

**Intermediate - Must know 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can recognize and describe symptoms of colds, flu, and other common health problems.
- Knows what to do for a minor cut, minor burn, or splinter.
- Understands the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Understands the risks of drug, alcohol, and vaping/tobacco abuse.

**Advanced - Must know 9 of 13 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can take own temperature using a thermometer.
- Can nurse self through cold or flu.
- Recognizes/makes correct use of "over the counter" drugs.
- Can call, email, or use patient portal to schedule doctor or dentist appointment.
- Can read a prescription label correctly and follow instructions.
- Can take medication without supervision.
- Knows how to dispose of drugs safely.
- Knows how to use what is included in a First Aid Kit.
- Knows how to obtain copy of personal immunization records and medical history.
- Knows methods of birth control and how to obtain birth control devices.
- Knows how to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections.
- Has selected a doctor, dentist or clinic for regular health care.
- Understands the importance of medical insurance.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 2 of 4:**

- Is conscious of diet, exercise, good eating habits, and preventative health measures.
- Can determine when to go to ER vs. making appointment with doctor or clinic.
- Has obtained medical insurance.
- Can access telehealth services when appropriate.

**Category E: Housekeeping****Basic - Must know 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can wash dishes adequately using soap and hot water.
- Can change a light bulb.
- Can make a bed.
- Knows how to dispose of garbage and recyclables.

**Intermediate - Must know 3 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can use vacuum cleaner properly and change bags.
- Can change bed linen.
- Knows how to prevent sinks and toilets from clogging.
- Knows how to clean floors, windows, dust, polish furniture, clean toilet, bathtub, and sink.
- Knows appropriate cleaning products to use for different jobs.

**Advanced - Must know 5 of 7 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Knows how to stop a toilet from running.
- Knows how to use a plunger to unstop a toilet or sink.
- Can defrost the refrigerator, if necessary.
- Can clean a stove.
- Knows how to conserve energy and water.
- Performs routine house-cleaning to maintain home in reasonably clean state.
- Uses drawers and closets appropriately for storage.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 3 of 6:**

- Knows what repairs a landlord should perform.
- Can do minor household repairs or find tutorial videos online for guidance.
- Is able to contact landlord (phone, email, text) and request repairs.
- Can change a fuse or reset a circuit breaker.
- Can measure a window for shades or curtains.
- Knows how to get rid of and avoid roaches, ants, mice, etc.

**Category F: Housing****Basic - Must know 2 of 2 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Understands the concept of renting.
- Knows how to access emergency shelter.

**Intermediate - Must know 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can search for housing online or read classified ads for vacancies.
- Understands basic terms (lease, sub-let, utilities, studio, efficiency, security deposit, reference, etc.).
- Can calculate the costs associated with different types of housing.
- Can describe pros and cons of choosing a roommate.

**Advanced - Must know 6 of 9 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can identify type of housing within budget that meets current needs.
- Can calculate "start up" costs (deposits, fees, first month's rent, furniture, household items).
- Can complete a rental application (paper or online).
- Can ask landlord about available apartment to determine if it meets needs.
- Knows to inspect apartment to verify appliances work and information is accurate.
- Shows concern for the rights of other residents regarding property and noise.
- Understands consequences if rights of other residents are not respected.
- Understands the implication of the security deposit.
- Knows the role of a landlord.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 2 of 3:**

- Demonstrates ability to get along with other residents and landlord.
- Knows how to get help if there is a conflict with landlord.
- Can access emergency assistance for utilities.

**Category G: Transportation****Basic - Must know 3 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can ride a bicycle safely.
- Understands and uses seat belts.
- Familiar with any form of public transportation available.
- Knows nearest public bus stop to home.
- Knows bus fare amount or how to use transit app/card.
- Knows nearest town with bus services.

**Intermediate - Must know 3 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Aware of consequences of driving without license and insurance.
- Has successfully completed a Driver's Ed class.
- Knows how to request rideshare (Uber, Lyft) or call taxi and approximate cost.
- Can make public transportation journey involving transfers using maps or transit apps.
- Knows requirements for foster parent reimbursement for transportation.
- Can give directions or use GPS/maps on phone.

**Advanced - Must know 4 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can arrange routine transportation to work or school.
- Knows what is required to get a driver's license.
- Has driver's permit.
- Can fix a bicycle.
- Can read a map or use GPS navigation.

**Exceptional - Must know 2 of 3:**

- Knows how to do basic car maintenance or find reliable information online.
- Can estimate cost of owning and operating a car for a month/year including tabs and insurance.
- Has a driver's license.

## Category H: Educational Planning

### Basic - Must know 2 of 2 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Has a realistic view of his/her chances for completing high school.
- If high school graduation not realistic, understands what a GED is and how to obtain one.

### Intermediate - Must know 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Can fill out forms to enroll in an educational program (paper or online).
- Has a general idea of what education is needed for the job he/she wants.
- Can discuss educational/vocational plans with teachers/counselor.
- Is aware of educational resources available in community and online.

### Advanced - Must know 4 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Knows how to obtain school transcripts (paper or electronic).
- Is aware of current educational credits and standing.
- Has an appropriate educational plan for the job selected.
- Understands educational/skill requirements for job selected.
- Is aware of the cost of higher education/vocational training.
- Knows the difference between a loan and a grant.

### Exceptional - Must know at least 3 of 6:

- "Shops around" to find the best educational resources (online and in-person).
- Knows where to find and how to access adult education or vocational training.
- Knows how to obtain financial aid/scholarships for additional education.
- Understands future prospects and living standards relative to education levels and skills.
- Can identify connection between course work and vocational goals.
- Can use online learning platforms for skill development.

## Category I: Job Seeking Skills

### Basic - Must know 2 of 2 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Has reasonable idea of the types of jobs available to him/her.
- Knows what the minimum wage is.

### Intermediate - Must know 4 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Can fill out a standard job application form (paper or online).
- Can search for jobs online or read classified ads and find appropriate leads.
- Can complete a mock interview giving appropriate answers.
- Can make appointment for a job interview (phone, email, or online scheduling).
- Knows appropriate clothing to wear for the interview.

**Advanced - Must know 6 of 8 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can write a resume.
- Has a completed job application/fact sheet to take on a job interview.
- Knows to prepare for a job interview.
- Can complete a job interview (in-person or virtual).
- Knows function of and can contact public employment agency.
- Knows that private employment agencies charge fees.
- Can identify ads placed by private employment agencies.
- Can contact temporary employment services.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 2 of 4:**

- Has a resume.
- Can follow up an interview with an email or letter.
- Is able to maturely weigh the advantages of one job over another.
- Understands legal discrimination and where to seek help if discriminated against illegally.

**Category J: Job Maintenance Skills****Basic - Must know 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Dresses for work appropriately.
- Reports to work on time.
- Knows job responsibilities and how to complete job tasks.
- Knows to contact employer when not able to go to work (phone, text, email, or workplace app).

**Intermediate - Must know 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Knows how to read a pay stub (paper or electronic).
- Knows appropriate way to talk to supervisor.
- Knows what behaviors will get a person fired immediately.
- Knows how to ask for help with a problem on the job.

**Advanced - Must know 4 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Knows if eligible for sick time, vacation time, or personal time.
- Knows what a grievance procedure is.
- Knows what to do to get a raise.
- Knows where and when not to talk with co-workers.
- Has a plan for handling anger when angry at supervisor, co-workers, or customers.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 3 of 6:**

- Can implement anger management plan in majority of cases.
- Knows how to use company grievance procedure to resolve disagreements.
- Knows companies "unwritten policies" and can function within them.
- Knows how to ask for a raise.
- Knows what to do to be eligible for promotion.
- Knows legal rights as an employee.

**Category K: Emergency and Safety Skills****Basic - Must know 4 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Knows functions of police, ambulance, fire department. Can call appropriate number.
- Is trained to evacuate the residence in case of fire.
- Knows proper way of disposing of smoking materials and vaping devices, if applicable.
- Knows how to lock and unlock doors and windows.
- Knows how to check smoke alarm and replace battery.

**Intermediate - Must know 3 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Understands basic fire prevention (no smoking in bed, proper use of appliances, electrical safety).
- Knows how to use a fire extinguisher.
- Knows that improperly used appliances can cause fires.
- Can recognize the smell of a gas leak.
- Knows what to do and whom to call if she/he smells a gas leak.

**Advanced - Must know 2 of 3 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Knows different methods for putting out different kinds of fires.
- Knows how to properly store cleaning materials.
- Can usually determine when professional medical help is needed.

**Exceptional - Must know 2 of 2:**

- Has completed First Aid training.
- Has completed CPR training.

*\*Youth may have their cards, but completion of other areas is important. Rating should be based on lowest area where skills are completed.*

## Category L: Knowledge of Community Resources

### Basic - Must know 4 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Knows how to get emergency information by telephone or online.
- Knows whom to contact if injured or sick.
- Knows where nearest supermarket or shopping district is located.
- Knows how to access emergency food and shelter.
- Knows how to access crisis line (phone, text, or online chat).

### Intermediate - Must know 3 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Knows where nearest Laundromat is located.
- Knows where personal bank is located (physical or online).
- Can search online for businesses and services or use online directories.
- Knows location of nearest CSO.
- Knows location of nearest post office and how to use it.

### Advanced - Must know 3 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Knows whom to contact if utilities disconnected or heat goes out.
- Knows where and how to register for selective service (online or in-person).
- Knows where nearest state employment office is located.
- Can obtain copy of birth certificate and duplicate social security card.
- Has awareness of "specialized" resources: mental health counseling, consumer counseling, STI clinics, student aid offices, tenant groups, public recreation, etc.

### Exceptional - Must know at least 2 of 3:

- Knows who elected representatives are and how to contact them.
- Has obtained a library card (physical or digital).
- Knows what the Better Business Bureau does and how to contact it.

## Category M: Interpersonal Skills

### Basic - Must know 5 of 5 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:

- Can respond to introductions and answer simple questions.
- Can identify one friend.
- Looks others in the eye and shakes hands if other person offers.
- Can make "small talk" (face to face or via text/messaging).
- Communicates with at least one person weekly.

**Intermediate - Must know 4 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can make introductions, including approaching others to introduce self.
- Is aware of boundary issues (physical and digital).
- Is not harmful to others.
- Can ask for help.
- Can explain feelings.
- Can identify relationships that may be hurtful or dangerous (in-person or online).

**Advanced - Must know 8 of 13 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can identify personal strengths and needs (with assistance if necessary).
- Accepts invitations from others to be involved in social activities.
- Makes arrangements with peers for social activities.
- Knows where to get help if unable to resolve interpersonal conflicts alone.
- Has some ability to resolve conflicts with others.
- Refrains from physical violence as means of solving interpersonal conflict.
- Has practiced how to say "no" to a peer trying to persuade him/her to do something wrong.
- Can develop a realistic plan with appropriate steps to achieve goals.
- Can carry out plans with some assistance provided.
- Can describe "best" and "worst" possible outcomes related to goals.
- Can describe the relationship between actions and consequences.
- Has "good" table manners (can use knife, fork, spoons, napkin appropriately).
- Avoids hurtful or dangerous relationships.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 3 of 6:**

- Labels and expresses anger or strong feelings appropriately, "talks out" problems.
- Has demonstrated the ability to say "no" to peers.
- Can develop and carry out personal plan for goal achievement without supervision.
- Can anticipate, with limited input from others, consequences associated with choices.
- Knows when and how to send written thank-you notes (email or card).
- Can close a relationship or say "good bye" in a healthy manner.

**Category N: Legal Issues****Basic - Must know 2 of 2 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Has phone number of someone to call if arrested or victimized.
- Understands generally what actions are against the law and consequences.

**Intermediate - Must know 4 of 7 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Knows personal rights if arrested.
- Knows what the function of a lawyer is.
- Knows legal age for buying alcohol and tobacco products.
- Understands meaning of "legal age" in legal terms.
- Knows how to read a contract (paper or digital).
- Has understanding of dependency process.
- Knows how and where to register to vote (online or in-person).

**Advanced - Must know 3 of 4 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Knows responsibility to register for selective service, if male.
- Aware of availability of free legal services.
- Understands consequences of signing a contract or lease.
- Knows legal penalty for: buying/possessing/selling drugs; buying/drinking alcohol underage; trespassing; shoplifting; burglary; possession of stolen property; traffic violations.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 2 of 4:**

- Shows good citizenship and understanding of rights and responsibilities of a citizen.
- Is registered to vote.
- Knows where to go to vote.
- Knows the difference between "felony," "misdemeanor," and "violation."

**Category O: Internet and Technology Skills****Basic - Must know 5 of 7 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can access content of personal interest (YouTube, social media, streaming services, etc.).
- Can send and receive text messages.
- Knows how to charge and maintain battery life on devices.
- Can connect to Wi-Fi networks.
- Knows basic troubleshooting (restart device, check connections).
- Can take and share photos using a smartphone.
- Knows that AI chatbots (like ChatGPT, Siri, or customer service bots) are not real people.

**Intermediate - Must know 6 of 9 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can use smartphone or computer to search for information online.
- Can create and manage email account.
- Can download and use basic apps.
- Can use calendar/reminder apps to manage appointments and tasks.
- Knows how to identify suspicious links and avoid clicking on them.
- Can use video calling apps (FaceTime, Zoom, etc.) to communicate.
- Understands importance of keeping personal information private online.
- Knows what cyberbullying is and how to report it or get help.
- Knows not to share personal information (address, phone number, passwords) with AI chatbots.

**Advanced - Must know 7 of 10 to advance to the next level of accomplishment:**

- Can use internet to research community resources (housing, jobs, health services, etc.).
- Can create strong passwords and understands password security.
- Can fill out online forms and applications.
- Can use online maps and GPS for navigation.
- Knows how to identify and avoid online scams and phishing attempts.
- Can manage privacy settings on social media accounts.
- Can use online banking or payment apps safely.
- Understands appropriate social media behavior and consequences of posting harmful content.
- Can access and use online learning platforms (Khan Academy, Coursera, YouTube tutorials, etc.).
- Understands that AI can generate fake images, videos, and text, and knows to verify suspicious content.

**Exceptional - Must know at least 5 of 8:**

- Can recognize misinformation online and verify information from multiple sources.
- Understands digital footprint and how online activity can impact future opportunities.
- Can use technology for professional purposes (documents, presentations, professional email).
- Knows how to protect devices from viruses and malware.
- Can use online portals for healthcare, education, or government services.
- Understands and practices good digital citizenship (respectful online behavior, protecting others' privacy).
- Knows how to block, report, or respond appropriately to cyberbullying or online harassment.
- Can use AI tools (chatbots, writing assistants, etc.) appropriately for tasks like learning, job searching, or problem-solving while understanding their limitations.

## Category P: Pregnancy Prevention, Parenting and Child Care

**Basic/Pregnancy - Must know 6 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment: (All youth complete this part)**

- Knows resources for birth control.
- Knows location of family planning office or how to access services online/via telehealth.
- Knows options for birth control.
- Knows options for pregnancy.
- Knows dangers of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and vaping during pregnancy.
- Knows what adequate pre-natal care is.

**Intermediate/Parenting and Child Care - Must know 10 of 10 to advance to the next level of accomplishment: (Pregnant or parenting teens)**

- Knows where to obtain pre-natal care.
- Knows not to leave child without supervision.
- Can provide appropriate supervision for child.
- Is comfortable being alone with child.
- Knows how to bathe child and change diapers.
- Knows how to access community resources (WIC, PHN).
- Knows how to engage child in appropriate play (reading, singing, drawing, building, etc.).
- Knows the available options for regular childcare.
- Selects appropriate people to periodically baby-sit with child.
- Knows where to go for help if child is sick.

**Advanced - Must know 5 of 6 to advance to the next level of accomplishment: (Pregnant or parenting)**

- Can select toys appropriate for child's age and developmental level.
- Can discipline without using extreme measures (hitting, screaming, withholding food/care).
- Can make arrangements for regular childcare.
- Takes child to childcare on time. Picks child up from childcare on time.
- Spends "quality" time with child each day (talking, playing, listening, etc.).
- Knows where to go for help with parenting.

**Exceptional - Must know 2 of 2: (Child Development)**

- Knows what behaviors are appropriate for child's age and developmental level.
- Knows the costs and benefits of each child care arrangement available.