



L I F E S K I L L S
H A N D B O O K S

Moving Out *on Your Own*

Readiness for Independence
Finding an Apartment
Moving in and Getting Settled
Solving Common Problems



21st CENTURY

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SECTION 1

Preparing for Independence

Turning 18 makes someone an adult in the legal sense. But being an adult involves much more than age. Adults have the knowledge and skills to live on their own. Adults also make their own decisions and accept responsibility for what they decide—no matter what the consequences. Can you do these things? Are you ready to be an independent adult?



It Takes More Than “Planning”

Derek had never been a “morning person.” Throughout high school, he struggled to get to school on time. Many mornings, he slept right through his alarm. Then his dad would try to wake him. It usually took Dad three or four trips into Derek’s room before Derek actually got out of bed.

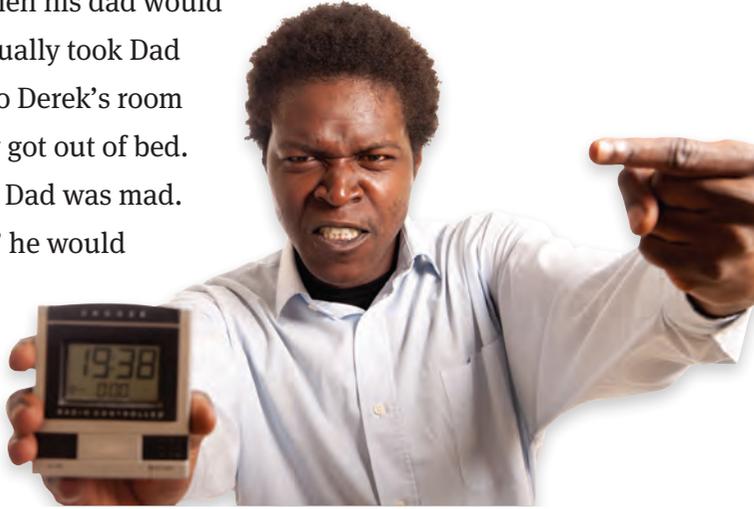
By the fourth trip, Dad was mad. “You’re 18 years old!” he would remind Derek. “You need to start acting like an adult!”

Derek already thought of himself as an adult. After

all, he’d just graduated from high school. And in the fall, he planned on going to the community college. He hadn’t talked to anyone at the college yet about being admitted. But he was pretty sure he’d be able to get in.

This summer, Derek was working full time doing landscaping. He had to be at the worksite at 7:00 a.m. Most days, he managed to get up on time. His co-worker Jack picked him up. Derek knew that if he wasn’t ready, Jack would leave without him.

Next month, Derek planned on moving into a house with Jack and a few other guys from work. He’d been spending a lot of time there, and he looked forward to moving in. He just needed to save enough money for his share of the rent and utilities.





Derek was making good money at his landscaping job. And he loved that his employer paid him in cash. He didn't even need to have a checking account! But he always seemed to run out of money before his next payday. He thought about asking his dad to help out with the rent.





CHAPTER 1

Knowledge and Skills Checklists

Most young people are eager to become independent adults. But what does it take to make it on your own in today's world?

One way to judge your **readiness** is to **inventory** your **competencies**. What's the current level of your knowledge and skills? What additional knowledge do you need? What basic skills require more development?



Readiness

Being prepared and willing to do something.

Inventory

To list or record.

Competencies

Skills and abilities.



Complete the following checklists to help you see how far you've come—and how far you need to go—along the path to successful adulthood.

General Knowledge and Skills

Review the following list of *essential* knowledge and skills. For each item, rate your ability level — from 1 to 5. Be honest!

Essential
Necessary or required.

I do this . . .				
Not so well		Very well		
1	2	3	4	5

I've developed the ability to . . .

- 1. balance my wants and needs.
- 2. work hard for what I want.
- 3. manage my money.
- 4. express myself clearly.
- 5. make wise decisions.
- 6. resist peer pressure.
- 7. respond to emergencies.
- 8. cooperate with others.
- 9. manage my time.
- 10. solve everyday problems.





Tips for Handling Peer Pressure



- Choose friends who influence you in positive ways. True friends will respect your values and decisions.
- Think in advance about what a specific situation might involve. Avoid people, places, and activities that involve things you don't want to do.
- Make decisions that fit your values, not other people's values. And then stick with your decisions, no matter what others do.
- Consider the possible consequences of your behavior: Could you get in trouble? Could you get hurt or harm your health?
- Practice ways of saying "no." Either tell the truth or make up an excuse, but be able to tell other people "no."





Specific Knowledge and Skills

Review the following list of specific knowledge and skills. For each item, identify your competency by writing Y for “Yes” or N for “No.”

I know how to . . .

- _____ 1. take care of my health.
- _____ 2. cook simple dishes.
- _____ 3. write a résumé.
- _____ 4. manage a checking account.
- _____ 5. dress properly for different occasions.
- _____ 6. investigate job opportunities.
- _____ 7. use the library and Internet to find information.





- _____ 8. prepare for a job interview.
- _____ 9. create and stick to a budget.
- _____ 10. schedule an appointment.
- _____ 11. make simple home repairs.
- _____ 12. use public transportation.
- _____ 13. write a business letter.
- _____ 14. fill out forms properly.
- _____ 15. get information from maps, charts, and graphs.
- _____ 16. get legal help.
- _____ 17. understand and follow directions.
- _____ 18. take care of my clothes.
- _____ 19. apply for a driver's license.
- _____ 20. register to vote.





Work on Your Social Skills

Social skills are the behaviors that help people get along and communicate well with others. Key social skills include the following:

- Being polite and friendly
- Controlling anger
- Resolving conflicts
- Apologizing and accepting responsibility
- Compromising (not having to get your own way)

Having good social skills will help you be successful in everything you do. Social skills are important with your peers, with your family, and at your job.

To develop your social skills, work on these things:

- Knowing what to say and when to say it
- Listening effectively to others
- Understanding body language and unspoken signals
- Knowing how to behave in different situations

