

First Step Career Skills

These First Step Career Skills were created to reach K-12 students early in their educational journey and provide them with knowledge needed to pursue a career in health care. Oftentimes this knowledge is not available to all populations or is provided later in a student's education. The goal with these competencies is to give students the knowledge they need early so they can begin building skills that will help them pursue a medical career in the future.

The skills are based on the [AAMC Premed Competencies for Entering Medical Students](#). With the input of the AAMC Early Learner Competency Resource Project Team and Working Group, subject matter experts, and generative AI, the original premed competencies were scaled back to be appropriate for students in grades 5 - 12. Read more about the career skills and how to talk about them with your students below.



Empathy and Compassion:

Understand and care about how other people feel and what they are going through. Be kind and thoughtful towards others. Choose to help others and make them feel better.

Showing Empathy and Compassion:

Everyone has feelings. Showing empathy and compassion means understanding those feelings in others and treating them kindly.

Think about it like this, if you were having a tough time, how would you want to be treated? Maybe you'd want someone to check in on you or offer a helping hand. Now think about how you would react if you saw someone feeling down or having a tough time. That's empathy and compassion.

Let's think about this in action!

Say you spot someone crying in the hallway at school. Would you go up to them? If you do, think about how you'd want to be approached if you were feeling sad. Asking if they're OK or if they need anything can really make a difference.

Or think about a time you did something nice for someone out of the blue? Like holding the door open for someone carrying a lot of books or helping a friend with their homework when they're struggling? Those are acts of compassion!



Resilience and Adaptability:

Keep trying even when things are hard, stressful, or unclear. Change how you act when new things happen or when things don't go as planned. Ask for help when needed. Bounce back from difficulties and learn from mistakes. Take care of yourself while also handling your responsibilities.

Be Flexible and Work Through Challenging Situations:

Sometimes things can get tricky or tough. Being flexible and working through challenging situations means being able to handle those tricky times like a champ!

Imagine this--you're faced with something super stressful or confusing. It's like hitting a roadblock in a video game. Here's the cool part: you've got what it takes to get past it! Sure, you might stumble or even fail at first, but that's totally OK. It's all about asking for help when you need it and finding a new way to tackle the problem.

When you're in the middle of a tough situation, it's normal to feel all sorts of emotions – maybe even some not-so-great ones. But guess what? That's part of the deal! What matters most is how you handle those feelings while you're working through the challenge.

So, think back to a time when you had to deal with something really tough. What parts were in your control? What parts weren't? How did you push through it all? Don't forget to pat yourself on the back for not giving up!

Just remember, even when things feel like they're spinning out of control, you've got the power to keep going and do your best.



Interpersonal Skills:

Understand that your actions, words, and feelings affect how others act, speak, and feel. Think about and choose respectful behaviors and words when interacting with others to build strong relationships. Treat others kindly, politely, and with respect.

Relationship Building and Interacting with Others:

Being aware of how our actions and words affect others is important to building relationships and interacting with others. How and when you say or do something can affect how someone else feels, just like how our own feelings can change how we act around others.

And let's get real. We all hit bumps in relationships sometimes, whether it's with friends, family members, or classmates. Maybe you and your bud have a little disagreement, or someone gives you some tough feedback. It happens! The key is figuring out how to handle it like a champ.

So, think about it: when things get tricky, how do you deal? Do you take a deep breath and try to talk it out? Or maybe you take some time to cool off before sorting things out? Whatever your style, just remember – it's important to treat each other with respect and kindness.



Cultural Awareness and Humility:

Understand that history, culture, politics, and money affect how people act and feel. Respect and value people who are different from you and be curious about other cultures and beliefs. Listen to different opinions with an open mind and try to see things from others' perspectives. Reflect on your own values and how they might affect others. Recognize and address any biases and help create an inclusive environment.

Respect and Learn About Other Cultures:

People worldwide have unique backgrounds, beliefs, and traditions. It's fascinating how these things can totally shape how they see the world and what's important to them.

Being open-minded and respectful towards other cultures is essential. It means being curious and learning about others' lives, beliefs, and what's meaningful to them. Plus, it ensures everyone feels included and welcomed.

Think about this: have you noticed your friends doing things differently because of their backgrounds? Maybe they speak a different language at home or celebrate unique holidays. It's neat to learn about these differences, right?

Also, have you ever made assumptions about someone because of their culture? It's OK; we all do it sometimes. The important thing is to learn and grow from it. Ask about their culture or do some research. It's all about respect and growth. Cool, right?



Commitment to Learning and Growth:

Consistently try to learn and get better by setting personal goals and working towards them. Think about what went well, what was hard, and any mistakes made, then look for ways to improve. Ask for feedback from others and use it to grow.

Work to be My Best Self:

To be our best, we need to keep learning new things and practicing. We should reflect on what we've done well, what's been challenging, and the mistakes we've made. It's OK to say, "I don't know," and ask others for help. We should listen to advice and strive to improve. When we make mistakes or face challenges, we can see them as opportunities to learn and grow.

How do you make yourself better so you can be your best in the world?

What are some ways you can improve at home, school, with friends, and on your own? This could mean taking care of your health, studying, asking a teacher for help, joining after-school activities, and more!



Clear Communication:

Shares information clearly when speaking and writing. Listen carefully to understand what others are saying and why. Notice when there are misunderstandings and explain things better if needed. Write messages that are easy to understand.

Clear Communication:

It's all about making sure others understand you when you talk or write and understanding them when they talk to you.

Sharing information clearly by speaking and writing helps everyone know what you mean. Listening carefully to understand what others are saying and why is just as important. When there are misunderstandings, it's good to notice and explain things better if needed. Writing messages that are easy to understand makes communication smoother.

Imagine talking to your best friend, your mom, or your teacher. Show you're listening by asking questions, nodding, or keeping eye contact. When you speak or write, try to be clear so everyone understands you. If someone is confused, try explaining it differently.

Being great at Clear Communication helps you connect better with friends, family, and teachers. You've got this!



Ethical Responsibility:

Always tell the truth and do the right thing. Think about different ideas and values when making choices. Follow rules and do what is right even when it's hard. Stand up against doing wrong things. Encourages friends to be honest and do the right thing too.

Being Honest and Fair:

Being honest and fair is super important!

Always telling the truth and doing the right thing helps people trust you. When you're making choices, think about different ideas and what's important to others. Even when it's tough, follow the rules and do what's right.

If you see something wrong happening, stand up against it. Encourage your friends to be honest and make good choices too. Being honest and fair makes you a great friend and helps everyone around you!



Reliability and Dependability:

Take responsibility for your actions and duties. Complete tasks on time and do them well. Understand that there are consequences for not doing your work or keeping promises.

Being Reliable and Dependable:

Being reliable and dependable is really important!

It means you take responsibility for what you say and do. When you have a job to do, like homework or a chore, you make sure to finish it on time and do it well. People can count on you because you keep your promises and do what you say you will.

If you don't do your work or keep your promises, there can be consequences, like getting a lower grade or disappointing someone. But when you're reliable and dependable, people trust you and know they can count on you.

So, always do your best to be responsible, finish your tasks, and keep your promises. It shows you're someone others can trust!



Service Orientation:

Care about helping others and making a difference. Work hard to do things that help the community and meet people's needs. Show dedication to making the world a better place.

Serving Others:

Service orientation means caring about helping others and making a difference.

It means you work hard to do things that help your community and meet people's needs. Whether it's volunteering, helping a friend, or picking up trash in the park, you show that you care about making the world a better place.

When you're dedicated to helping others, it inspires people around you to do the same. By doing your part, you can make a big difference in your community and make the world a better place for everyone.



Teamwork and Collaboration:

Work with others to reach common goals. Depending on the situation, sometimes take the lead and other times follow. Share information with the team and encourage others to do the same. Give and accept feedback to help the team do better.

Teamwork makes the dream work!:

Teamwork and Collaboration mean working well with others to reach common goals.

It means that sometimes you take the lead, and other times you follow, depending on what the team needs. You share information with your team and encourage others to do the same. It's important to give and accept feedback to help the team improve.

Imagine you're playing a team sport or working on a group project. Everyone has a role to play, and by working together, you can achieve more than you could alone. By being a good team player, you help everyone succeed and make the experience more fun and rewarding for everyone.



Solving Problems with Science:

Use knowledge about people, how they think and behave, and how living things work to solve problems. Understand how our bodies and minds work, from tiny molecules to big systems like organs. Know how to use science to figure things out and make things better.

What is your Hypothesis?

Solving Problems with Science is all about using what we know about people, how they think and behave, and how living things work to find solutions.

It means understanding how our bodies and minds work, from the tiniest molecules to big systems like our organs. For example, knowing how your heart pumps blood or how your brain helps you think and feel.

Using science to figure things out means you can make things better. If someone is sick, doctors use science to understand what's wrong and how to help them get better. Scientists also use this knowledge to find new ways to help people and animals stay healthy and happy.

By learning about science, you can understand the world around you better and help solve problems in your community and beyond. It's like being a detective, using clues from science to make the world a better place!



Analytical Reasoning:

Use logic and math to think through problems, identify strengths and weaknesses in different solutions, and explain things happening in the world. This helps in making smart decisions and understanding how things work by considering all possible options and using numbers to get clear answers.

Analytical Reasoning:

Analytical Reasoning is all about using your brain and math skills to solve problems and understand the world.

Think of it like this: when you face a problem, you use logic to think it through. This means looking at different solutions and figuring out which ones are good and which ones might not work so well. It's like being a detective and finding the best answer!

You also use math to help explain things. For example, if you're trying to figure out how much candy you can buy with your allowance, you use math to get the right answer. Or, if you're doing a science project, you might use numbers to show your results.

By using both logic and math, you can make smart decisions and understand how things work. It's like having a superpower that helps you see all the possible options and choose the best one. So, next time you have a problem, remember to use your analytical reasoning skills to find the best solution!