

EMPLOYERS AND INDUSTRY-BASED PARTNERS

CAREER ↔ CONVERSATION STARTERS



For use by employers, job coaches, mentors, apprenticeship supervisors

Creating a positive transition for students from academic life to the world of work is an important responsibility for employers and industry-based partners. When employers provide quality onboarding programs, novices' prior learning in the areas of academics, career development and employability skills are transferred into success in the workplace. Quality onboarding for apprentices, interns and new employees includes an orientation to the industry or company, work-specific orientation, professional development, mentorship or job coaching, and formative and summative feedback.

In 2014, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) published the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student. In 2016, the Colorado Department of Education partnered with the ASCA to develop Career Conversation starters. These starters are conversational prompts that essentially align to each of the college- and career-readiness standards. Employers and industry-based partners can use these conversation starter prompts for multiple purposes: (1) interviewing candidates for apprenticeships, internships or job openings; (2) mentoring students or new employees; and (3) promoting professional growth and development during formative and summative assessment (e.g., performance evaluations and job coaching sessions).

Tips for using these conversation starters:

- Remember these are prompts to start a conversation and not the entire script or the whole scope of a conversation.
- Tailor the questions in whatever way you see fit for the individuals with whom you are working.
- When interviewing, you may replace underlined words such as this career with the actual title of the career as in, "When you realized that you were interested in health care what did you do to get more information or learn about health care?"

Mindset/Behavior	Employer/Industry-Based Partner Questions
MINDSETS	
Self-confidence in ability to succeed (M 2.)	What types of support do you need to succeed at new tasks? <i>[If clarification is needed]</i> For example, do you like to have someone demonstrate the task?
Understanding postsecondary education and lifelong learning are necessary for long-term career success (M 4.)	After you get a job in your career field, how do you plan to stay knowledgeable about the field?
Positive attitude toward work and learning (M 6.)	What aspect of your education or training related to your career have you enjoyed the most?
BEHAVIOR: LEARNING STRATEGIES	
Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions (B-LS 1.)	Describe your general decision-making process when you have to make a difficult choice or a tough decision,
Use time-management, organizational and study skills (B-LS 3.)	Imagine you have been given a large project to complete. This is a project that will take an entire month of work to complete. How might you go about planning for this project?

Mindset/Behavior	Employer/Industry-Based Partner Questions
Identify long- and short-term academic, career and social/emotional goals (B-LS 7.)	If you are still working for our company in five years, what role do you want to be in? What do you need to learn to get there? What do I need to do to help you meet that goal?
BEHAVIOR: SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS	
Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control (B-SMS 2.)	Tell me about a time when you needed a lot of self-discipline and self-control to reach a goal and you didn't meet your goal. What went wrong, and what did you learn? What do you do differently now to ensure you meet your goals?
Demonstrate ability to work independently (B-SMS 3.)	Imagine your supervisor was on vacation for an entire week and you are fairly new to your job. How might you go about finding answers to questions that come up?
Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem (B-SMS 7.)	Imagine you and your work team have a deadline on a large project coming up quickly. To meet the deadline, everyone on the team needs to focus and work as efficiently as possible. However, you discover one of your teammates is behind on his piece of the project, which will cause delays for everyone else, including you. He will need some help to get caught up, but helping him could put all of you even further behind. How might you feel, and what might you suggest?
Demonstrate ability to manage transitions and ability to adapt to changing situations and responsibilities (B-SMS 10.)	Describe a time when you did not have a typical day at work. Perhaps you had to make changes or your responsibilities were different that day. What happened and how did you handle it?
BEHAVIOR: SOCIAL SKILLS	
Create relationships with adults that support success (B-SS 3.)	If you are assigned a formal mentor on your worksite, how might you prepare for your mentoring meetings to ensure you will get the most possible from your mentorship interactions? What are your responsibilities as a mentee?
Use effective collaboration and cooperation skills (B-SS 6.)	Describe a time when a group you were in did not work well together. What did you learn from that experience?
Use leadership and teamwork skills to work effectively in diverse teams (B-SS 7.)	Describe an activity you were involved in where you got to work with people from different races, differing abilities, sexual orientation, religions or ethnicities? What did you learn from that experience?

The Career Conversations provide a guide for working with middle and high school students, parents and community members to address the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student. The Career Conversations questions are based on ecosystems theory, counseling theory and an extensive review of counseling and career counseling literature. The questions can be used to work with individuals and groups of students, parents and community members. The Career Conversations were developed by ASCA for the Colorado Department of Education.



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