

4-H Job Readiness ... Oklahoma Style!!!!



**4-H Youth Development
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Oklahoma State University**



**OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE**

**4-H Youth
Development**

4-H Job Readiness ... Oklahoma Style!!!!

Job Interest and Skills

Goals

What are goals? Goals are things we set our sights on achieving; winning 1st place in a livestock show, completing a state recordbook, getting a job, etc. There are three types of goals: short-, mid- and long-term.

Short-term goals

Short-term goals are usually things you can achieve in a one- to six-month period.

Mid-term goals

Mid-term goals usually range from six months to two years.

Long-term goals

Long-term goals usually are two years or more.

Life Experiences and Life Cycle

What kinds of experiences do you have from life? Where are you in your life cycle? These are good questions to ask yourself. Life experiences may have the most influence on your work habits. If you did chores while growing up did it make you more responsible? Keeping records gives you experience with keeping things organized and in a usable form. Where you are in the life cycle also influences how you view a job or work. If you are a first time job seeker, you may be looking for jobs that look like fun; while a more seasoned job seeker might be looking for a job that helps to develop certain skills that will be beneficial in the future. Others may be looking for making more money or making a difference. You are the only one who can choose what is best for you.

Why do I need a job?

First of all, a job ensures money, which allows us to purchase the things we need and want. Without a job, we don't have money and figure out mom and dad aren't going to support us for the rest of our lives. Therefore a job becomes very important. If you think for a moment where you want to live and what you want to drive, you soon realize that neither of those can be accomplished without a job. A job can bring a lot of satisfaction even to the youngest employee, such as not having to ask for money to buy new clothing or put gas in the car, or go to the movies with friends.

Differences in Jobs and Job Interest

Most people will go through a variety of jobs before finding the one that is just right for them. High schools students many times find jobs at fast food chains. Even though maybe not a prestigious job in the eyes of most teenagers, a teen who chooses to work in the food service industry can gain valuable skills necessary for the next job. Often, our first jobs can help us focus on what we want to do in the future or even perhaps what we don't want to do.

How do I view myself? How do others view me?

Many times, teens view themselves as very important people, but in the job world many people are just as capable of doing the same job. It is important that teens understand that they are replaceable at any time. The thought of being replaceable will help you focus on the job at hand and work to achieve your very best.

How others view you may be quite different than your own view. For example, you may think you are being careful by taking your time; others may view that as lazy and slow.



My job, reasoning, math and language skills

Can you answer the telephone with proper etiquette? How do you come to a decision? Are your math skills good enough to make change at a cash register? Are your language skills pleasing to customers? All of those skills; job, reasoning, math and language are very important to any job.

More training.....Dream Job.....My Job Plan

Some people get stuck in a job where advancement is not available or possible. Some people stay at the same job their entire career with little to no advancement. If you want to do more, you have to think more. Obtaining more training is a great way to develop needed skills. Most employers are looking for people who are willing to go the extra mile and extra training is a great way to show the boss you are worth keeping. Most teens have thought about their "Dream Job." The question is: do you have a plan to reach that goal? If so, you are well on your way to obtaining it, for others it may seem like it will never be reached. In those cases, setting smaller, more achievable goals all leading to the dream job can make your journey a success. Those steps help you develop a job plan. Your job plan should identify what you want out of a job. This is a personal decision that can't be decided by parents, siblings or anyone else.

Finding a Job

Preparing a Resume and Job Application (

A resume is a paper document that gives potential employers important information about yourself. Who is a “potential employer?” A potential employer is the person and/or business you would work for if you got the job. A resume may be thought of as a personal information sheet. Your personal work history, education and anything else you want future employers to know about you should be included on your resume. Even if you do not need a resume for a particular job, your resume can be helpful when applying for jobs. Writing a resume will help you think through the facts often needed to fill out an application form, such as reference names, addresses and phone numbers. Having a resume also helps when applying for jobs by mail or email. After a few brief remarks in a letter or email, you may refer to the enclosed resume. The primary purpose of a resume is to get an interview for the job. The information found in your resume may also help you answer questions during the interview. Presenting a resume will show a potential employer that you are serious about wanting a job.

A resume includes six main parts: personal information, education, work experience, activities, skills and references.

1. The **Personal Information** section includes:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone Number
- Social Security Number (only if the job you are applying for would require that – such as a job that would require a background check prior to an interview) – you may choose to leave it off your resume, but you must have one to be employed.



2. The **Education** section includes:

- Schools attended
- Dates attended
- Details of coursework or classes
- Graduation dates
- Grades and/or transcripts (only if requested)

List your most recent schooling first – For example: college – high school – elementary school:

If you have not graduated from high school – you may consider finishing your schooling to get an equivalent of a high school diploma (GED: General Equivalent Diploma). Call a local high school counselor, principal or a junior college and they can refer you to someone who can help. If you are not currently attending or have not finished high school, it will probably be hard to find a job that will provide you with enough money for basic living needs.

3. The **Work Experience** section includes:

- Full-time positions
- Part-time positions
- Volunteer positions

List your most recent work experiences first. You may have a lot of work experiences to include or you may have only one or two experiences to list. Take a moment to think about all the work you have done in the past, including volunteer work. It is important to list all your work experiences. Remember to include volunteer work, especially if they are skills needed for the position you are applying for: carpentry, clothing construction, babysitting, etc.

4. The **Activities** section includes:

- List activities that you think will help you get the job.
- Major activities you have been involved in and honors you have received.
- Emphasize a variety of involvement (participant, organizer, team member, etc.).
- Keep the most recent information (go back to high school or middle school if needed).

For example: Volunteered to read to individuals with special needs during junior high.

Another Example: Member of my 4-H club for the past five years.

- Hobbies
- Church and community activities
- Volunteer work (especially if you don't consider it to be part of your work experience)
- Organization/school activities
- Offices held
- Sports involvement
- Special projects
- Committee work
- Honors or special awards received



5. The **Skills** section includes:

This area is similar to your activities and work experience. A location for you to showcase your specific skills: time management; computer programs; welding; etc.

Example: Committee Work: Served as the chair of the achievement banquet committee – this committee was in charge of planning menu, location, speaker, decorations and awards.

6. The **Reference** section includes:

You can include references here or you can have a statement that reads “References available on request.” If you do include them you will need your reference’s name, title, address, phone number and email address if possible. Remember, potential employers may call, email or send them a questionnaire to fill out about you and your job readiness skills. Possible references include:

- A previous employer
- A co-worker
- A teacher
- A principal
- 4-H leader

Avoid using relatives or close friends as references because their opinions may appear biased and not accurate.

If you have had personal problems in the past:

Remember every person makes mistakes. Do not lie about past problems; be honest when asked questions. Do not tell more than what is asked and never volunteer information that can make you look bad to the potential employer.

Do not expect the people you ask as references to be dishonest or lie. This is where your past can catch up with you. If you have had trouble holding a job, dealing with conflict on the job or have had trouble with the law, this can be a concern for your references. Your past record may affect your future. Even though you cannot erase your past history, you can avoid any future problems that can hurt your record. Do your best to avoid problems with your supervisor, the law or anyone else in authority. It is very important to ask your references if they can give you a “positive” recommendation and remind them of your skills and qualities. It is helpful to give references a copy of your resume and a list of your skills, especially if it has been a while since you worked for them.

Make your resume look professional

- Use at least 1" margins.
- Consistent space between sections.
- Do not crowd words.
- Keep your resume as simple as possible.
- Be concise, use only one or two pages.
- Make your resume easy to read.
- Sentences are usually incomplete.
- Use a computer and proofread.



Make sure to get several people to look at your resume. Strongly consider their advice to make your resume the best it can be. Take your resume with you when applying for a job and going to an interview.

Common Interview Questions



Tell me about your job skills.

Tell me about your work experiences.

Do you really have experience doing all those things?

Have you had a paying job?

What level are you in school?

Are you a good student?

How can I be sure you can handle the responsibilities of the job?

I get a lot of applicants. Why should I hire you?

This job doesn't pay much and the hours are crazy. Why do you want to work here?

Tell me why you change jobs so often.

Why are you interested in this job?

What skills do you have to help you handle the job responsibilities?

Are you able to travel for the job?

Do you have a reliable vehicle?

Please tell me about your last job.

Commons reasons people do not get a job

There are several reasons why people don't get jobs. Some involve things you can change, others may be things you need to work on or strive for in the future. Here are a few of the common reasons:

Poor general appearance (clothes are dirty, dirty fingernails, visible tattoos, etc.)

Negative personal attitude (I can't do anything right, I won't be able to do this or that, I'm dumb, etc.)

Do not have enough training or background (always read the job description and job requirements – this will help make the decision to apply or not and save you possible embarrassment)

Argue or disagree about job requirements (the people doing the hiring understand the job requirements, you may or may not have the full picture of the job requirements)

Seek unrealistic wages (research to find out what kind of wages someone in a similar job is making – many first-time jobs will pay minimum wage)



Poor school attendance (an employer looks at school attendance as how you will approach a job, if you didn't attend school regularly, then you probably won't show up to work regularly either)

Poor work attendance (an employer will often look at your previous job attendance – if past employers could not rely on you to be there to work your shift, then a potential new employer probably doesn't want to waste time on you). Remember training a new person costs money and they want to keep that cost to a minimum by hiring people who will come to work and stay with the job for a number of years.)

Shows a lack of motivation (If you have a hard time getting motivated to come to work, then it will show in your enthusiasm for the job.)

*Learning more about jobs....
Shadowing on the job...
How to look for a job*

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a great way to experience the job from the inside without actually applying for the job. Shadowing is great for any job. For example, Susan wants to become a nurse because they make a lot of money, so she does a job shadow at a local family clinic. She enjoys following the nurse around visiting each new patient that comes into the office. She observes the wellness checks of oxygen saturation, blood pressure, weight, height, etc. The doctor comes in and orders blood work, she now follows the nurse back to the room to draw blood. Susan gets sick to her stomach and thinks she is going to pass out. She decides nursing isn't for her. This job shadowing experience was negative, but it helped Susan decide on a career before going through the school work, then finding out after graduation that nursing isn't for her. For a positive example, John job shadows at an Extension office, he gets to work with

everyone in the office including the secretarial staff. He enjoys his time and decides he wants to pursue a degree so he can become an Extension educator. Job shadowing can give you the true picture of what a job entails and can help guide decisions in the future.

How to look for a Job

First, you will need to know what type of job you want and then begin looking. Keep a journal so you know where and when you applied. This will help you track how many jobs you have applied for and how much time has passed since you submitted your application.



Here are a few examples of where to look for a job:

Read newspaper job ads (including online newspapers) from the area where you want to work (this will narrow down your search)

Put an ad in the newspaper (for jobs like mowing lawns, cutting firewood, babysitting, etc.)

Read bulletin boards (many people are needing help, and will post to bulletin boards)

Submit an application with your resume or write a letter of application to the places you would like to be employed. Ask them to keep you informed of any job openings. Letting a company know you are interested in their company makes them aware that you know what kind of impact they are having in the world and will set a good impression in case they have an opening in the future.

Register with the Job Service Center in your area. These are great sites to keep you connected with places that are hiring people with your skill set.

Tell people you are looking for work. Word of mouth is often the best way to look for a job.

Read the yellow pages (find places of where you are interested in working and give them a call)

Use internet services. The internet is a great place to look for jobs, and since many companies use the internet for their application process, searching will give you notice on available jobs.

Post work wanted signs at places of business or on bulletin boards. People often will post they have a job available or when they are looking for help.

Keeping a Job

Work Habits....Positive Self-Talk....Self-Motivation

There are many skills involved in keeping a job. Employees must learn to care for themselves and dependent family members, while meeting job expectations. Balancing work and personal life requires prioritizing the most important things. For teens this can be very stressful because it might involve not going to a sporting event or missing a family function because of work.

Work Habits

What are your work habits? Work habits are the qualities you have that help you do a good job. Certain work habits could actually hinder your work performance. Work habits may reflect your personality. For



example, you may be a person who smiles and laughs a lot. This will most likely reflect on your job in a positive way, however, if you are too social on the job and spend too much time talking it can hurt your job performance. Having a positive attitude is always a plus. How you approach each day will set the tone for you and your co-workers. Sometimes you may be asked to do things outside of your skill set, which is okay — just make sure everyone around you knows that you may need a little more guidance for this task. We can all look at a glass as half empty but when we reach deep down and can see the glass as half full our whole attitude can change for the better. A positive attitude helps you see the good in yourself and others. You will feel better about your job and possibly help you get the work done in a timely manner.

Positive Self-Talk

Positive self-talk is something that can help each of us. Self-talk is what we are thinking about without always saying it out loud. When you find yourself being hard on yourself, calling yourself names, calling yourself stupid, dumb, lazy, etc. or being mad at yourself – STOP-

and say “you are not allowed to talk this way about yourself.” Figure out a way to do things differently and when you find yourself doing it, change it to something positive like “I am a hard worker,” “I care about others opinions,” etc. Treat yourself with dignity and respect. This means that you deserve to be treated with dignity and respect from others also.

Self-Motivation

Self-motivation comes in many different forms, but you can start with a few of the basics.

Begin any job with getting to work on time. If you are on time, then you’re not rushed to get out of the car, get into the business, clock-in, go to the restroom, etc. Being on time allows you to feel confident

when you arrive that you have enough time to take care of the tasks that need to be done before starting to work. Setting an alarm is a great way to motivate yourself. If you can set your alarm and get up on the first ring, then you are off to a great start. For many people, the snooze button is a great asset. If you routinely push the snooze button, make sure to set your alarm early enough for plenty of time to hit it a couple of times before getting out of bed.



Getting the task or job done while you are at work is important to success in your job. If you are accomplishing what you were hired to do, then everything is good. But what about those days when you didn't accomplish a task? The first thing to do is to assess the problem. What prevented you from completing the task? Is there something in your control that you can fix such as talking too much, spending too much time on the phone, etc. or was it something out of your control, like a broken machine? If it's something in your control, make a few notes about how you can fix the problem and be more productive.

Self-motivation is not just about getting the job done, but looking for other things that need to be done. It also means keeping busy at work. This means when the job you are doing is complete, look for other tasks to be done. This may be sweeping the floors, taking out the trash, cleaning shelving, cleaning the break room, etc. Always use good judgement when taking on other tasks not assigned to you.

Self-motivation also means managing your breaks. Breaks are intended to be used, so don't skip breaks. Breaks will help you get more work done. The break allows your brain to rest and not become as frustrated with the task. Your stress level will also decrease with taking breaks. Breaks are meant to help you and your employer, so they shouldn't be abused. Always be courteous at break time because you are representing your employer.

Working with Others

It is important to work well with others to do the best job possible. It takes skills and patience to work with other people, but each person has a unique personality and different skills and interests. Because human interactions are very complex, you will probably experience some conflict or problem with others. How you manage those conflicts will help you in your job experience. These conflicts can be



with other co-workers and maybe even with a supervisor. Sharpening your personal skills to manage conflict will help you in the long run.

Listening

Listening is an important skill to have and to perfect. Remember that you have two ears and only one mouth, so you should listen twice as much as you talk. Listening doesn't mean that you agree with the other person, but

you are acknowledging them as speaking. It is not always easy being a good listener. Listening takes patience and time. Having eye contact and friendly facial expressions will show that you care about listening to others.

Share your Feelings

Sharing your feelings is also an important part of working with others. When you are on the job, you must use common sense about what is okay to share and what is not appropriate. Always be respectful no matter what the subject when talking to co-workers and supervisors. There may be an occasion where you will want to share personal information, but you will not usually want to discuss your feelings when it pertains to your job. Be honest and tell the truth, do not lie. Being respectful means not talking about others behind their backs. You also need to control your temper, don't use bad language or have a negative tone of voice. You can be honest with your feelings in a friendly manner, this may take waiting for a period of time before saying anything. This will allow you time to form your thoughts before discussing the issue. Talking to a supervisor is sometimes the hardest thing to do, but may be necessary if you can't solve the problem by yourself.

Transportation

Most jobs are going to require reliable transportation. If you already have a car, this is easy to manage, but what if you don't have a car? Many people who live close to their job can either walk or ride a bike if they don't have a car. Others can ride public transportation like a bus or a subway system. For some, a car may be the only logical way to get to work. For this situation, consider riding with others and helping pay for the gas. This should only happen for a short period of time until a car can be purchased. If you have multiple people in your household that have jobs, you may have to share transportation. You also must consider seasons and weather in your area and plan accordingly. Driving a car includes other expenses that are often overlooked when purchasing a vehicle. Here are a few of the basic costs to keep a vehicle on the road:

Driver's license

Purchase price of a car or a car payment with interest

Taxes

Car tags

Insurance: liability and collision

Car upkeep or repairs

Gas

Appropriate Dress and Grooming

You will need to ask yourself: is what I wear to work appropriate for the job I am doing? The first thing you should always think about is safety. What type of job do you have? What are some of the hazards of the job? For example, a cook in a restaurant would want to wear closed-toed shoes, no loose clothing, no dangling earrings or necklaces and a hairnet or cap. All of these



items are worn for safety reasons; the closed toed shoes will protect you from sharp objects like knives that could fall to the ground; loose clothing – can become a fire hazard when reaching across a cooking service; dangling jewelry can fall into foods being prepared; and wearing a hairnet or cap will keep hair out of customers food.



Good grooming is a must for any job. You will want to look and smell clean. It does not cost a lot to take a daily bath or shower; have clean, neat hair; and clean clothes. Take good care of your nails, skin, hair and your body. Budget money for toiletry items such as soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, razors and deodorant. You will want to decide which items are necessary for your personal cleanliness. These toiletry items can be purchased in generic brands, store brands or with a coupon to save money. You will need to allow

time each day to get ready for work. You do not need to spend hours getting ready, but you do need to allow time to bathe and get ready for work. Some jobs will require you to wear a uniform, company shirt or jacket. Having uniforms is often for safety reasons, but also may help people identify you and your employer. Keep uniforms clean and neat. Launder them often. Each day before you wear your uniform, check for stains and lint. Usually, how you dress will depend on your job. Some places have a dress code and your employer may tell you how to dress. Even if you wear a uniform, it is important that your clothes are clean and fit you properly and appropriately.

Basic Tips to Follow

- Follow the dress code for your job
- Wear a uniform if required
- Use common sense
- Always consider clothing safety
- Keep your clothing clean
- Keep your clothing repaired
- Choose clothing that makes you feel good about yourself
- Select comfortable clothing
- Select clothing that fits properly



Taking Care of Myself... Balancing Work and Personal Life

There is only one of you. If something goes wrong and you do not feel good, you cannot get a replacement body. Yes, there are medications, procedures, surgeries and treatments that can help, but the best way to have good health is to take care of yourself and preserve your good health. Prevention is the key to good health.

Good health care is essential. The best way to avoid getting sick is to take very good care of yourself. You have probably heard of “preventative” health care. This means that you do what you can to stay healthy. You make an effort to eat well, sleep, exercise, have regular doctor checkups, visit the dentist, wear your seat belt, do not drink and drive, do not abuse medications and the list goes on. You can probably tell if your body is getting enough sleep. Do you have energy to last you throughout the day? Do you feel good in the morning when you get out of bed? Do you sleep well at night? You may need to make some adjustments if you are not getting enough sleep. Are you eating healthy meals and snacks? Do you basically have a healthy diet? It is important to allow time for eating and not to skip meals. You need food for energy. Give yourself permission to eat. However, the foods you choose should generally be a variety of healthy foods. It is important to eat whole grains and cereals (crackers, breads, bagels, cereals), as well as fresh fruits and vegetables. You also need to consume some protein and dairy products. Taking care of your body is one of the best things that you can do to keep your job. If you miss a lot of work because you are not feeling well, you put your job in jeopardy. If you take care of yourself, you will be a healthier employee. It takes time to take care of yourself and one of the best things you can do is exercise. Teens need exercise every day. A good time manager will make time for exercising! This is one of the most important things you can do for yourself



Nurture relationships with family and friends. In order to be a healthy worker, it is important to have a personal life. This applies to you even if you are a single person without a significant other. We all need special people in our lives, such as family and friends. Close relationships with a few special people can help us balance our work and personal lives. It is important to have someone you can talk to and trust. It is important to have someone you can share your feelings with in a safe environment and not be judged or criticized. Take time to foster relationships with special people.

Attendance at Work

Employers want their workers to be dependable and to show up for work each day they are scheduled. This means you should plan to get to work no matter what your obstacles might be. Think through potential problems before they happen and how you will handle problems so they do not negatively impact your work.

Reasons You May Need to Miss Work

The reality of life is that there will be a few times that you have to miss work. But, this needs to be done with great caution and concern. Do not plan to miss work very often! If you miss a lot, you will probably lose your job.

Possible Reasons You May Have to Miss Work

- You have a contagious/infectious illness or something that others can catch
- You are sick and work around food
- You are so sick that you cannot work or do your job
- You are hospitalized or need surgery
- A family member is very ill and you need to be with them

Many jobs do not have sick leave benefits. Sometimes there are ways to continue working while a family member is sick. You might be able to arrange taking care of the sick person in shifts around work schedules with other family members or friends. Maybe you can schedule vacation time (if you have the benefit) or leave without pay.



- Someone close to you has died. It is important that you take time off to attend the funeral. You must allow yourself time to grieve and be with other family and friends. The amount of time you need off work will depend on your relationship with the person. Many businesses have set guidelines for funeral time.

• You have a doctor or dentist appointment or other business appointment that you cannot schedule at another time. Try to schedule personal appointments during your time off, before or after work, during lunch or on a vacation day.

- You have been called to jury duty. Your employer should NOT penalize you for this absence.
- You serve in the armed forces and have been called to active duty. Your employer should NOT penalize you for this absence.

Your Responsibilities When Missing Work

Be honest and tell the truth. Always let your boss know about your situation. It does not need to be in detail.

Ask your boss about your plans before deciding exactly what to do.

Call your boss immediately if you decide that you cannot go to work. Occasionally, you may need to be more assertive and explain to your boss how important something is to you.

Problem Solving at Work

Problems in the workplace are bound to occur at some point. When individuals have communication and problem-solving skills, they are better equipped to handle difficult situations. This, in turn, will help prevent stress and encourage productivity in the workplace. Employers, managers and employees are faced with problems every day. Having problems to deal with seems to be a fact of life. We cannot always prevent problems from occurring, but we have control over how we handle and cope with



problems. Being willing to recognize problems is a start to finding effective solutions. There are no guarantees that the decisions we make will always be the right decisions. People who are willing to work through problems are less likely to make snap judgments or generate problems for themselves.

What Kind of Problems Might Occur at Work?

- Working in a small space
- Working with others on the same work or project
- Taking orders from a boss or manager
- Not doing the work I am supposed to be doing
- Not working fast enough or meeting deadlines
- Employees gossiping about others
- Employees are talking about me behind my back
- Others implying that I am not doing my job
- Sexual harassment
- “Put downs” from co-workers
- Being watched and criticized at work
- Not agreeing with something that is being done at work
- Co-workers not being nice
- Cliques and feeling as though I do not belong
- Employees talking negatively about the boss
- Boss does not like me
- Employees breaking the workplace rules

Problem-solving is a skill that can be learned. There are many ways to solve problems and using a problem-solving procedure may help find the best response to the situation.

Problem-Solving Procedure

- Identify the problem.
- Control your emotions so that you can talk about the problem.
- Gather information about the situation. You need to know all the facts so you can make a good decision.



Interpersonal Skills. Interpersonal skills, such as listening and sharing feelings, are necessary when working with others to help avoid conflict. There are some things you can do to prevent conflict from occurring in the first place. Be prompt. Do your own work and fulfill your responsibilities. Check with your boss to get feedback on how you are doing. Ask questions when you need help. Be honest. Be sincere. Tell others how you feel in a polite and tactful manner. When you are pleasant to others, it will help you get your work done and others will be more helpful to you. It usually does not pay to be rude or nasty to others. Make sure you get your own work done and pay attention to how you treat others. You may have a difficult person at work that you simply will have to avoid as much as possible. Talk to the person if you must work together. If things do not get better, you may need to talk with your boss. However, always try to work with the individual first. Hurt feelings and resentment will occur and even escalate if you do not try to work with the person directly. It is sometimes hard to do this— but think about if the difficult person was you. Would you like a chance to work things out before the boss was pulled into the discussion? Having interpersonal skills can help you work more effectively with people and help avoid conflict. This is done through communication and by being cooperative, willing to negotiate, sharing, caring and being a good listener. Think about one of your close friends. What qualities does this person have? The chances are high that this person is a good listener, cares about you, is fun to be with, is flexible and shares. These are similar qualities needed on the job. Although it is not necessary to be good friends with co-workers or the boss, it is imperative to have good interpersonal skills and to get along with others. It is important to have a friendly work environment.

Some Interpersonal Skills

- Be a good listener
- Share feelings
- Be flexible
- Care about others

Be a Good Listener at Work. Probably the best way to gain respect and attention is to be a good listener. Listening is a skill. You need to hear what the other person is saying and at the same time not worry about what you will say in return. A good listener will show interest and use friendly gestures or expressions.

To Be a Good Listener

- Pay attention to what is being said
- Look the person in the eyes, without staring
- Use friendly expressions with your face and body
- Say a few words to show interest in the speaker and what is being said
- Ask questions if more information is needed or wanted

What Makes It Hard to Be a Good Listener?

- Something else is on your mind
- You do not like the person talking
- The person talks too much and dominates the conversation
- You are not interested in what the person is talking about
- You are distracted during the conversation
- You think you need to be talking
- You are in a hurry
- You do not understand what is being said



When Is It Easy to Be a Good Listener?

- You focus your thoughts on the person talking and you care about that person
- You care about what the person is saying
- You are not distracted easily
- You are willing to give your time to the person talking
- You are willing to ask questions to help you understand

Why is it often Difficult to Share My Feelings?

- You do not really know how you feel or are confused
- You think you will get in trouble for saying how you feel
- You think you might be different or stand out
- You think others do not care about you
- Others might not like what you say
- You may offend someone
- You are shy
- You are scared to speak out for any reason
- You think your opinion does not matter
- You are depressed
- You do not feel like talking
- You do not trust the audience
- You are too angry to talk




What Makes It Easier to Share Feelings With Others at Work?

- You trust who you are talking to
- You feel respected
- You feel comfortable with the person
- You have a friendly work environment: Co-workers respect each other. The boss respects you and you respect your boss



- You have a reason for saying what you are saying
- You are being honest and telling the truth
- You have given some thought about what you are saying
- You are trying to be helpful
- You care about your job
- You care about doing a good job
- You are calm enough to talk sensibly
- You know the information will be kept confidential**

*** An exception to keeping information confidential would be in the case where the person could cause harm to self or others. If a person is depressed, suicidal, has suicidal tendencies or is talking about harming others, please get help.*


**Other Important Characteristics
and Skills to Have on the Job**

- A positive attitude
- Willing to do my work
- A pleasant smile or friendly face
- A friendly tone of voice

Getting Fired: Is there a “Right” way?

Employees can be terminated (fired) for the right reason or for no reason at all, but cannot be terminated for the wrong reason.

Employers may not terminate (fire) an employee for:

- Refusing to commit an unlawful act, such as committing perjury or refusing to participate in illegal price-fixing schemes or reporting an employer’s wrongdoing
- Performing a public obligation, such as serving on a jury or serving in a military reserve unit
- Exercising a statutory right, such as filing a claim for workers’ compensation or filing a discrimination complaint

- Any form of discrimination covered by state statutes
- Reporting an employer's breach of contract
- Lawful union activities
- Having wages garnished for indebtedness

DISCRIMINATION. If an employer has more than 15 employees, Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Americans With Disabilities Act* applies to them. If an employer has more than 20 employees they are also subject to the *Age Discrimination in Employment Act*. These laws prohibit employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability. Any employer who uses one of those factors as a basis for firing an employee is guilty of discrimination under one of the federal antidiscrimination laws. Some state laws prohibit employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation, marital status and family status.

If employees are not doing their work or not doing it adequately to meet expectations, the employer should:

- Give verbal warning to the employee of concern or problem with examples of how to change behavior
- Impose discipline practices progressively and continue to talk to the employee about the problem
- Use termination (getting fired) as the last resort. Pre-problem counseling or training can prevent a lot of stress, wasted time and other costs for both employers and employees.

If you have a problem, be willing to talk about it and try to resolve it. Remember to do the work for which you are being paid. The action must be approved by top management and conform with written policy. Some managers are given the authority to fire persons under them. Except in a for-cause dismissal, an employee is entitled to a documented, concise explanation of the reasons for dismissal. Federal law requires a 60-day advance notification of employees affected by layoffs or closings. Employers may fire employees "on the spot," but it is courteous if they give employees two weeks' notice or notice for the duration of at least one paycheck.

The boss should:

- Be honest and completely clear about the reasons for discharge and have a valid business reason for the termination.
- Avoid personal statements which might degrade or humiliate the individual or vague statements which might suggest that the situation is reversible.
- Present a precise explanation of severance pay procedures, benefit continuation forms, pension or profit-sharing payouts and other available assistance such as counseling.



- Allow individuals to remove personal belongings at a low visibility time, after hours or on a weekend. Prepare a checklist of company property that should be accounted for.
- Try to be sensitive of the employee but do not threaten the company's credibility.
- Document the termination in writing immediately, detailing the conversations, reactions and tones of both parties. Inform the staff of the termination. In the case of for-cause termination, the incident should be mentioned only briefly, in a non-defamatory manner.
- If performance was the reason, experts suggest that employers simply state that the employer and employee agreed to part company.
- Answer questions from other employees in privacy.

Reasons Employees Could get Fired

- Incompetence
- Failure to respond to training
- Gross insubordination
- Repeated unexcused absences or lateness
- Sexual harassment
- Verbal abuse
- Physical violence
- Falsification of records
- Theft
- Drunkenness on the job

Sources

<http://www.lectlaw.com>

<http://www.smartbiz.com>

<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws.html>

Kansas Human Rights Commission



Quitting a Job: Is there a “Right” way?

You have the right to quit a job, just as you have a right to apply for a job. However, you should consider the way you quit your job. The way you go about quitting your job may have an impact on your future. Sometimes people quit a job by simply not going back to the job even though they are scheduled to work. This is not being considerate of your employer. The way you leave your job may influence the type of reference your employer will give you for future jobs.

You will want to consider several things before you quit your job:

- Why do I want to quit my job?
- Do I have another source of income?
- Do I have another job lined up?
- Do I have a partner or family to consider in this decision?
- Will quitting this job change my lifestyle a lot?
- Will my employer give me a good reference?
- Have I been fair to my employer in giving enough notice?
- Have I made adequate plans for this change?
- Are there better opportunities (higher wages, more hours, preferred shift, benefits, etc.) for me if I quit this job to take another?

Do I need to make a change at this time?

You will need to decide what is best for you. However, you will want to use good judgment and give your job choices some consideration. If you are having conflict on the job, you may wish to talk to someone you trust. If you are making too many mistakes, you may wish to get more training. If your work is not valued, you may wish to talk to your supervisor. Try not to make any hurried decisions. It is best to talk about your job and make plans for your future before you quit.

Resources:**Oklahoma Child Labor Law**

<http://www.ok.gov/odol/documents/ChildLaborStatutesandRules2011.pdf>

Workforce Investment Act – Oklahoma

http://www.ok.gov/oesc_web/Services/Workforce_Services/Workforce_Investment_Act.html

Oklahoma Employment Standards

http://www.ok.gov/odol/About_ODOL/Divisions/Employment_Standards/

Oklahoma Department of Education

<http://ok.gov/sde/>

Oklahoma Human Rights Commission

http://www.ok.gov/oesc_web/Labor_Law_Posters.html

Oklahoma Department of Human Resources

http://www.ok.gov/health/Career_Opportunities/Office_Of_Human_Resources/index.html

Additional Resources:**Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993**

Small Business Handbook: Wage, Hour and Other Workplace Standards

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/>

Minimum Wage and Overtime Pay

Wage, Hour and Other Workplace Standards

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/wages/>

Facts About Race/Color Discrimination

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-race.cfm>

Facts About Pregnancy Discrimination

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-preg.html>

Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination

The U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission

<http://www.eeoc.gov>

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qunda.html>

