

Youth Life Skills Assessment Instructions for Program Staff

Fostering Futures and Youth Advocacy Grants

In order to measure changes on life skills indicators, National CASA expects state and local program grantees to facilitate and encourage the completion of a Life Skills Assessment for all youth **ages 14 and older** who are served as a part of the grant. Any children 13 or younger do not need to take the assessment. If the youth is 13 when the grant begins, but turns 14 during the grant period, the assessment should be given when they turn 14.

This youth-centered tool assesses life skills youth need for their well-being, confidence and safety as they navigate high school, postsecondary education, employment, and other life milestones. The assessment is made up of 64 items categorized within three areas for skills, knowledge and awareness. It can be completed all at one time in approximately 20 – 30 minutes, or one area at a time.

The Youth Life Skills Assessment, which includes a paper copy of the tool, is attached here.

Each volunteer who is assigned to work with a youth (ages 14 and older) under the grant is expected to complete an assessment of the youth, and that youth is expected to complete a self-assessment. The Youth Life Skills Assessment should be administered as a pre-assessment and a follow-up assessment. They will use the same instrument for both assessments. The pre-assessment should be completed, by both the volunteer and the youth, upon assignment to the case, preferably within one to two months. The follow-up assessment should happen one year later, again, with both the volunteer and the youth completing the assessment. If the youth's case closes before the one year mark, the assessment should be administered at case closure. It is best that volunteers complete their assessment of the youth before reviewing the youth's self-assessment. If the grant period ends before one year, the post-assessment should be done at that point.

Evaluation ID numbers will be used to link pre- and follow-up assessments, as well as link volunteer and youth assessments. Please make sure that each volunteer has the Evaluation IDs for themselves as well as the youth with whom they work. They will not be able to enter the assessments online without these numbers.

Note: If a volunteer works with more than one youth, they should complete a separate assessment for each youth. If the youth also works with another CASA Volunteer (who is also a part of the grant), only one volunteer fills out the assessment of the youth: one youth assessment, one volunteer assessment.

Volunteers and youth can complete the assessment on paper or online using the following link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NCASA_LifeSkills

Grantees will be provided with a list of the ID numbers of the volunteers and youth who enter the assessment into Survey Monkey on a monthly basis. No names will be provided, only ID numbers and the dates on which the assessment was entered into Survey Monkey.

Note: if the assessment is completed on paper, the answers still need to be entered online. If the answers are not entered online, the information will not be provided to National CASA. Once volunteers and youth begin entering information online, they will not be able to save their work and come back to it. If they do not think they can complete the assessment in one sitting, we recommend that they complete the assessment on paper before attempting to enter it online.

Youth Life Skills Assessment

What is the Youth Life Skills Assessment?

This youth-centered tool assesses life skills youth need for their well-being, confidence and safety as they navigate high school, postsecondary education, employment, and other life milestones. It is designed to be as free as possible from gender, ethnic and cultural biases, and is appropriate for all youth ages 14 to 21 regardless of living circumstances (i.e., in foster care, with bio-parents, in group homes or other places). The assessment is made up of 64 items categorized within three areas for skills, knowledge and awareness. It can be completed all at one time (in approximately 20 – 30 minutes) or one area at a time.

The Life Skills Assessment is not a test, but a self-reporting instrument that gives both you and the youth the opportunity to assess their strengths and challenges. It also promotes young people's active engagement in planning their learning goals and making decisions about their future. The assessment does not collect personal/identifying information, so youth can feel free to be open and honest.

Who completes the Life Skills Assessment?

If the youth you work with is age 14 or older, you should fill out the assessment, and so should the youth. If the youth is 13 when you start working with them, but then turns 14 during the grant, the assessment should be completed then, both by you and the youth. You will complete the assessment from your own perspective of the youth, answering the question: Are the following statements like the youth with whom I work? The youth also completes the assessment as a self-assessment, answering the question: Are the following statements like me?

When should the Life Skills Assessment be administered?

The Life Skills Assessment should be administered as a pre-assessment and a follow-up assessment, and you will use the same instrument both times. The pre-assessment should be completed, by both you and the youth, when you are first assigned to the youth, preferably within one to two months. The follow-up assessment should happen one year later, again, with both of you completing the assessment. If the youth's case closes before the one year mark, the assessment should be administered at case closure. It is best that you complete your assessment of the youth before reviewing the youth's self-assessment.

How do we complete the Life Skills Assessment?

You and the youth can complete the assessment on paper or online. But remember: if you or the youth complete the assessment on paper, the answers still need to be entered online. If the answers are not entered online, the information will not be provided to National CASA. Once you begin entering information online, you will not be able to save your work and come back to it. So if you do not think you'll have time to complete it all online, we suggest filling out the paper copies first.

You can take the survey directly online or enter information completed on paper using the following link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NCASA_LifeSkills

You will be asked for your evaluation ID, the youth's evaluation ID, and the youth's age. If you are unsure of the ID numbers, contact your CASA supervisor. It is very important that you enter these numbers, as they will be used to link your assessment to the youth's assessment, as well as your pre-assessment results to the follow-up assessment results.

What are some good tips to help motivate the youth to take the Life Skills Assessment?

- Be enthusiastic and positive about the assessment and its purpose. Make sure that the youth knows that it is not a test, but a tool for them to use to learn what knowledge and skills they have and need.
- Youth should work at their own pace and can work on one skill area at a time or they can complete the entire assessment in about 20 – 30 minutes.
- Let the youth gain more experience with the computer. Computers run our world – youth need hands-on experience to keep up with technology that could help them stay in school, get a job, and attain other achievements.
- If the youth has trouble reading or a short attention span, feel free to fill the assessment out together.

What will be done with the information from the Life Skills Assessment?

The information from the Life Skills Assessment will be used to detect improvements in life skills indicators, including work and study skills, social relationships, and self-care (including substance use and health indicators). National CASA will then combine and report this information to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), who funds the grant. The information will not be at the child-level, but aggregated at the program-level. This will help the National CASA Association determine in what ways youth are impacted by working with a CASA volunteer.

You can also use the information to identify areas in which you can help the youth. The two of you can use the assessment to develop a plan to meet the youth's wants and needs. With the follow-up survey, compare the previous and current assessment results. You can start with the positive and first look for the areas of most improvement. It is important to note that sometimes a youth's answers may be "lower" than their first assessment. They may have been overly confident in a particular skill, given answers because they thought they were the expected answers, or simply guessed. Discuss why the scores are the same or different. Ask the youth if they feel more or less confident in particular areas.

What if I work with more than one youth?

If you work with more than one youth, you should complete a separate assessment for each youth.

What if the youth also works with another CASA Volunteer?

If the youth also works with another CASA Volunteer (who is also a part of the grant), only one of you fills out the assessment of the youth. One youth assessment, one volunteer assessment.

Who do I contact if I have any questions?

If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact National CASA at survey@casaforchildren.org.

Life Skills Assessment – Volunteer

Date: _____ How old is the youth with whom you work? _____

What is the **YOUTH'S** evaluation ID number? (If you're not sure, contact your supervisor) _____

What is **YOUR** evaluation ID number? (If you're not sure, contact your supervisor) _____

What **CASA** organization do you work with? _____

Is this a pre-assessment or a follow up assessment? Pre-Assessment Follow-Up Assessment

Work and Study Skills

Are the following statements like the youth with whom you work?	No	Mostly No	Somewhat	Mostly Yes	Yes	Don't Know
I am enrolled in school or a GED program.						
I have an adult in my life who cares about how I am doing at school or work.						
I plan to attend college or a vocational school.						
I know where I can get tutoring or other help with school work.						
I have access to transportation to get to work or school.						
I know the steps I need to take to get a driver's license.						
I have a driver's license.						
I know how to find financial aid to help pay for my education or training.						
I have talked about my education plans with an adult who cares about me.						
I know how to get the documents I need for school or work, such as my Social Security card, birth certificate, and proof of child welfare involvement.						
I know what type (college, trade school) education I need for the work I want to do.						
I know how to develop a resume.						
I have a resume.						
I know at least two people I can use for references for a job.						
I know how to fill out a job application.						
I know how to prepare for a job interview.						
I know what clothes I should wear to an interview.						
I have been involved in volunteer service or an internship.						
I can fill out a W-4 payroll exemption form when I get a job.						

I know the steps I need to take to open a checking and/or savings account.						
I have a checking and/or savings account.						
I know where I can get help with an income tax form.						
I get to school or work on time.						
I can take criticism and direction at school or work without losing my temper.						
I get my work done and turned in on time.						
I know at least one adult, other than my worker, who would take my call in the middle of the night if I had an emergency.						

Self Care

Are the following statements like the youth with whom you work?	No	Mostly No	Somewhat	Mostly Yes	Yes	Don't Know
I have access to a computer and/or the internet.						
I know how to use my email account.						
I have a telephone number/cell phone.						
There is at least one adult I trust who would be legally allowed to make medical decisions for me and advocate for me if I was unable to speak for myself.						
I know the signs of an abusive relationship.						
I know the signs of people bullying me online.						
My relationships are free from hitting, slapping, shoving, being made fun of, or name calling.						
I know how to do my own laundry.						
I keep my living space clean.						
I know the products to use when cleaning the bathroom and kitchen.						
I have a place to go when I feel unsafe.						
I know an adult I could live with for a few days or weeks if I needed to.						
I can make meals with or without using a recipe.						
I bathe (wash up) daily.						
I can take care of my own minor injuries and illnesses.						
I brush my teeth daily.						
I know how to get health insurance when I am older than 18.						
I know where to find a doctor or dentist.						
I know when I should go to the emergency room instead of the doctor's office.						

I know ways to protect myself from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).						
I know how to prevent getting pregnant or getting someone else pregnant.						
I know where to go to get information on sex or pregnancy.						
I know how to get the benefits I am eligible for, such as Social Security, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV).						

Social Support

	No	Mostly No	Somewhat	Mostly Yes	Yes	Don't Know
Are the following statements like the youth with whom you work?						
An adult I trust, other than my worker, checks in with me regularly.						
I have at least one trusted adult who would visit me if I were in the hospital.						
I know at least one adult I can depend on when I exit care.						
I know an adult who could act like a grandparent, aunt or uncle to my children now or my future children.						
I have friends I like who help me feel valued and worthwhile.						
I have friends or family to spend time with.						
I am a part of a family and we care about each other.						
I can get in touch with at least one family member when I want to.						
I show others that I care about them.						
I have a good relationship with a trusted adult I like and respect.						
I believe my relationships with others will help me succeed.						
I feel I am ready for the next phase of my life.						
Most days, I am proud of the way I am living my life.						
Most days, I feel I have control of how my life will turn out.						
There is at least one adult that I have regular contact with, other than my case manager or other professional, who lives in stable and safe housing.						

Don't Forget!!!

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Life Skills Assessment – Youth

Date: _____

How old are you? _____

For the next three questions, you will need to ask your CASA Volunteer for help.

What is your evaluation ID number? _____

What is your CASA Volunteer’s evaluation ID number? _____

What CASA organization does your volunteer work with? _____

Is this a pre-assessment or a follow up assessment? Pre-Assessment

Follow-Up Assessment

Work and Study Skills

Are the following statements like me?	No	Mostly No	Somewhat	Mostly Yes	Yes
I am enrolled in school or a GED program.					
I have an adult in my life who cares about how I am doing at school or work.					
I plan to attend college or a vocational school.					
I know where I can get tutoring or other help with school work.					
I have access to transportation to get to work or school.					
I know the steps I need to take to get a driver’s license.					
I have a driver’s license.					
I know how to find financial aid to help pay for my education or training.					
I have talked about my education plans with an adult who cares about me.					
I know how to get the documents I need for school or work, such as my Social Security card, birth certificate, and proof of child welfare involvement.					
I know what type (college, trade school) education I need for the work I want to do.					
I know how to develop a resume.					
I have a resume.					
I know at least two people I can use for references for a job.					
I know how to fill out a job application.					
I know how to prepare for a job interview.					
I know what clothes I should wear to an interview.					
I have been involved in volunteer service or an internship.					
I can fill out a W-4 payroll exemption form when I get a job.					

I know the steps I need to take to open a checking and/or savings account.					
I have a checking and/or savings account.					
I know where I can get help with an income tax form.					
I get to school or work on time.					
I can take criticism and direction at school or work without losing my temper.					
I get my work done and turned in on time.					
I know at least one adult, other than my worker, who would take my call in the middle of the night if I had an emergency.					

Self Care

	No	Mostly No	Somewhat	Mostly Yes	Yes
Are the following statements like me?					
I have access to a computer and/or the internet.					
I know how to use my email account.					
I have a telephone number/cell phone.					
There is at least one adult I trust who would be legally allowed to make medical decisions for me and advocate for me if I was unable to speak for myself.					
I know the signs of an abusive relationship.					
I know the signs of people bullying me online.					
My relationships are free from hitting, slapping, shoving, being made fun of, or name calling.					
I know how to do my own laundry.					
I keep my living space clean.					
I know the products to use when cleaning the bathroom and kitchen.					
I have a place to go when I feel unsafe.					
I know an adult I could live with for a few days or weeks if I needed to.					
I can make meals with or without using a recipe.					
I bathe (wash up) daily.					
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I know where to go to get information on sex or pregnancy.					
I know how to get the benefits I am eligible for, such as Social Security, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV).					

Social Support

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Are the following statements like me?					
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I know at least one adult I can depend on when I exit care.					
I know an adult who could act like a grandparent, aunt or uncle to my children now or my future children.					
I have friends I like who help me feel valued and worthwhile.					
I have friends or family to spend time with.					
I am a part of a family and we care about each other.					
I can get in touch with at least one family member when I want to.					
I show others that I care about them.					
I have a good relationship with a trusted adult I like and respect.					
I believe my relationships with others will help me succeed.					
I feel I am ready for the next phase of my life.					
Most days, I am proud of the way I am living my life.					
Most days, I feel I have control of how my life will turn out.					
There is at least one adult that I have regular contact with, other than my case manager or other professional, who lives in stable and safe housing.					

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