

# What is *Money Smart*?

Welcome to the *Money Smart* guide for parents and caregivers of teens in grades 9–12 and young adults aged 18–20. Discussing money throughout a child’s life helps to build a strong foundation for healthy financial habits in the future. Within these pages you will find information, resources, activities, and conversation starters about money to help build that foundation.

This guide corresponds to the *Money Smart* curriculum that would normally be delivered by an educator in a classroom or other group setting. This resource can also be used by all families with teens and young adults, whether or not your teen is learning about these topics in school.

To support everyday explorations of money, each theme, or chapter, includes the following:

- **Topics/Lesson Connections:** Connections to the *Money Smart* curriculum in the classroom.
- **Topic Overview:** A brief overview of each section.
- **From the Classroom:** Parent and caregiver information about the topic in the form of key questions that are used as part of the *Money Smart* curriculum in the classroom. Questions are answered in the same language used by educators to provide consistency from classroom to home.
- **Words to Know:** Key vocabulary terms about money.
- **Conversation Starters...Ask Your Teen:** Thought-provoking conversation starters that can be discussed anywhere, at any time, and will lead to interesting discussions between you and your teen around the topic of finances.
- **What if My Teen Wants To...:** Common financial questions and dilemmas, and how to respond when the “what if” moments of life occur.
- **Family Activities:** Simple and fun activities to do as a family that engage teens in the topic while supporting parents and caregivers in their job of raising children.
- **Resources:** Books, articles, online resources, games, and apps that engage teens and help reinforce the topics. These are just a few of many existing resources and are not endorsed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

We hope you find these pages useful and fun for the whole family! To find more resources, visit:

- [www.fdic.gov/moneysmart](http://www.fdic.gov/moneysmart) (for the FDIC’s financial education curriculum)
- [www.consumerfinance.gov/parents/](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/parents/) (to find age-appropriate information and activities for teens)
- [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov) (to find financial education resources from more than 20 federal agencies)

## Your teen’s FUTURE

Part of building a strong foundation for your teen’s financial future is making sure his or her personal information stays secure. Controlling and limiting access to a teen’s information is one of the best ways to protect teens from identity theft.

Keep in mind that scammers also use social networking sites to gather even small tidbits of information that can be used to commit fraud. Parents and caregivers can learn more about how to help keep his or her teen safe when using mobile phones and computers by visiting OnGuardOnline ([www.onguardonline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov)), the federal government’s website to help you be safe, secure, and responsible online.

## Tips For Talking About Money

As teens grow and mature, they may naturally ask a lot of questions as they take on more adult behaviors and responsibilities. Sometimes, questions about money can be awkward or seem hard to answer, but it's important to engage teens in understanding the value of money and how it works. This guide includes "Conversation Starter" questions and fun and useful "Family Activities" to support these conversations and allow teens an opportunity to share his or her thoughts and ask questions. These activities also help you to bond with your teen by creating comfortable ways to talk about money and financial security.

You can use these questions and activities to ask about specific topics that may have been covered in the classroom or as boredom busters while running errands or eating dinner. They are designed to fit into your schedule and make it easier to talk to your teen about money.

However you engage with your teen around the topic of money, you are sure to gain some wonderful insight into your teen's interests and understanding of the world. And, remember, you are your teen's best role model. You may not have all the answers, but engaging in these conversations and activities offers opportunities to learn together.

## About the Resources

The resources listed in this guide are just a few possibilities available in the wide world of books, apps, websites, and games that explore the topics found in these pages. A local librarian or your teen's teacher may have other suggestions.

## Ways to Use Articles:

- **Read together.** This is a wonderful way to bond with your teen and support his or her literacy skills while talking about money.
- **Ask for a summary.** Whether your son or daughter reads with you or independently, ask him or her to explain the purpose of the article.

## Ways to Use Websites, Tools, Games, and Apps:

- **Play and learn together.** Notice how your teen approaches decision making. Ask: *What did you discover while playing a game?*
- **Discuss games.** After your teen has explored the games, ask: *Which one was your favorite? How did you play the game? What skills did the game require? What did you learn?*
- **Explore together.** Explore the tools and apps together. How can they apply to your financial lives?

## Youth Banking Programs

**Youth banking programs are partnerships between schools and banks in which your child is given the opportunity to open and deposit money into a real savings account in school as part of a financial education program.** Having and using a bank account not only reinforces what your child learns about money in the classroom, but also gives your child opportunities to form healthy financial habits. Youth banking programs can:

- Prepare your child to open and learn about how a bank account works, which better positions them for economic opportunities.
- Prepare and empower your child to make sound financial decisions.
- Reinforce what your child is learning in the general curriculum, in math, social studies, and other subjects.

Financial education and real-life experience saving in an account can be a powerful combination. Research shows that having a bank account *boosts the effect of financial education* in the classroom. In addition, in-school banking *increases account ownership* and *improves attitudes toward banking*.

Children in grades Pre-K–2 are ready to start forming healthy money habits and learn norms and rules of thumb that relate to money. They also are learning basic numeracy, how to understand and work with numbers. By second grade, children are developing basic money management skills. Youth banking programs for your child’s age group can promote your child’s development in these areas.

**As a parent or caregiver, you can look for opportunities to get your child involved in one of these innovative programs.**

- Ask your child’s teacher if the school offers a youth banking program or whether offering one is a possibility.
- Check with your bank to see whether they offer any programs or events that combine school-based financial education with the experience of saving in a bank account.
- If there is not a program in place at your school, consider putting the school in touch with a bank or nonprofit engaged in youth financial capability. Together, they can choose from a wide range of options to create a program that is a great fit for the school, the bank, and – most importantly – the students. Encourage them to visit FDIC’s Youth Banking Resource Center online at [www.fdic.gov/youthsavings](http://www.fdic.gov/youthsavings) to learn more.

**Once you find a youth banking program for your child, be supportive by:**

- **Returning any required forms or permission slips.** If you have questions about forms, ask!
- **Building a habit of saving.** Even small amounts add up over time, so help your child stick to a habit of putting a bit into savings out of every amount they earn or receive.
- **Showing interest.** The conversations starters, family activities, and other resources in this Parent/Caregiver Resource Guide are a great way to show interest and reinforce learning.
- **Volunteering.** Ask how you can lend a hand. For example, help prepare supplies and materials for lessons. Or chaperone a field trip to a local bank branch.
- **Participating.** Many youth banking programs include special events for parents and families to learn and have fun doing it.