

My Life Time Line

Use: This activity may be used as a workshop, activity at a camp program or class

Goals:

Participants will come away knowing:

- How to plan for future goals by creating action steps
- How to make a time line that shows past and present
- How to plan for deliberate next steps to move toward a goal in a timely way.

Timeframe: 60 minutes

Target Age: middle school age to adult

Activity: This visual display activity is designed to help youth get a visual image of what steps and activities must happen for them to achieve their goals. Adapted from the Michigan State University's SPACES curriculum.



Procedure:

Supplies:

10 index cards per student with hole punched in top left corner

5 – 6 feet of yarn or cord per student

Markers

To help kids see their place in the future, we must first examine the past. Give each participant 3-5 index cards with a hole punched in the upper left corner and about 5 feet of yarn or cord.

Instruct them to begin by writing about their birth event on the first card, then tie that to the beginning of their life line. Next ask the kids to focus on the first 5 years of life. Did anything interesting happen? Move? Special playmates? Family events such as birth of siblings, etc. Have them put that on the card and tie next on the line, continuing on until present with elementary, middle school, or other interesting events. Some kids will have more cards than others. Next have them explore where they want to be in the future. For instance, they might say an electrician by age 21. They would make that card and tie toward the end of line and then identify and write the action steps on each additional card as needed and the age at which they will need to have the step completed. Students may need help in this step. Invite students to share their Life Lines if they are comfortable doing so.

If you have completed the *Painting a Bright Future* activity or similar activities to discover goals, have the youth review each of their goals and predict where they will need to place on the time line and what action steps must be taken to achieve that goal.

Background

Often children living in poverty do not possess the skills, knowledge or abilities to plan for the future. Frequently, life with limited resources results in youth living very much in the moment without much thought for the future. Much discussion occurs in schools around the idea of career building, however, youth may need much smaller, more manageable goals to experience a measure of success before taking on the world of work. An example could be a child who wants to learn to play guitar. The first step may be to speak to the music teacher to see if there are any guitars available for loan, then signing up for the class for the next semester or year, or perhaps even doing odd jobs to earn money to buy a used instrument, and so forth.

Reflection Questions:

- You've heard the saying, "Life is not a dress rehearsal." What does this mean to you?
- When should you listen to others and when do you listen to yourself when planning your future?
- What happens when you fail?
- Do you think your goals and plans might change?
- What can keep you motivated toward a goal?
- Who are some people you can trust to give you help or good advice toward your goals?