

# Gateway to the World: A Toolkit and Curriculum

## MODULE 1: MONEY, HOME AND FOOD MANAGEMENT



Developed and compiled through a partnership between:



And



## Module I

### Independent Living Skills

#### Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA)<sup>1</sup>

#### **Money Home and Food Management**

This module has a lot of valuable exercises and information for every-day living. It was created by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. Some of the information is directed toward Massachusetts instead of Washington State. Because the PAYA curriculum is proprietary information we are not able to customize it for Washington State. The information and exercises are relevant to individuals, peer counselors, caregivers or parents. Module 7 is a resource guide for Washington State services.

This module specifically helps you with the following home management skills:

- Money management-budgeting, credits cards, taxes and buying a car.
- Home management-housekeeping and maintenance, and
- Food management-meal planning and nutrition.

Below is a brief summary of some services that can change frequently and be operated by different companies in your community. If you want to establish new services it is best to check on the internet or in your local phone book. Modules 4 and 7 have additional information on services and utilities for your home.

#### Banking

Almost all banks have on-line banking whereby you can access your account information from the internet. The process is similar for each bank, but you will need to check with your bank for details on how to set up and access your account. Following your bank's instructions, you will need to establish an ID and password. Checking, savings and credit card balances are on-line for most banks.

Also, banks send out monthly hard copies showing the status of your account; including deposits and checks written. Savings accounts and credit card accounts from the same bank may be included.

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts, Department of Social Services, Independent Living Skills, Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA) Money, Home and Food Management. Also available on website: <http://www.caseylifeskills.org/pages/res/PAYA/Module1/Module%20120Complete.pdf> (9-08-09).

There are computer programs, such as Quicken, that can help you manage your money. These programs can help you keep track of withdrawals and deposits and create reports on your spending without going on-line.

Many banks have Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) where you can make withdrawals and deposits to your account.

For study beyond the curriculum presented in this module, you may find resources listed below helpful. The following websites will take you to a money management workbook series called “I Know Where I’m Going (But Will My Cash Keep Up?), Part One and Part Two”, *published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation; National Endowment for Financial Education*. The books are designed to stimulate conversations between foster parents and youth, but you can use them on your own.

Part I is a practical guide about money values, attitudes toward money, setting goals, planning spending, and using a bank. There is a focus on using mathematics to solve practical word problems related to budgeting. Part Two is about investing money, being a savvy shopper, and using a credit card. It deals with personal responsibility, planning a career, sharing with others and setting long-term aspirations. You can access the workbooks at the following websites:

Website Part I.

<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid={59459742-DCD3-467F-9F35-B50276B3D4AB}> (viewed 9/10/09)

Website Part II

<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid{ED37AA04-5B09-492A-8D&D-8C9A3D495F6D}> (viewed 9/10/09)

The PAYA Module 1, produced by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services, contains general information by topic and various assessment tools and learning exercises.

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**Independent Living Skills Module I**

**Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA)**

Module I

**MONEY  
HOME  
AND  
FOOD  
MANAGEMENT**

Handbook for Skill Development

**Massachusetts Department of Social Services**

# Independent Living Skills Module I

PAYA

## MODULE I

### Introduction

W

elcome! The topic areas you'll be working on in this booklet include such vital independent living skills as education, job seeking skills, and job maintenance skills. Each topic area includes sections for easy use: 1) Assessment; 2) Skill Plan; and 3) Activity/Resource Workbook.

The Assessment will help you determine your skill level in each topic area and target those skills in need of further development.

The Skill Plan will help you organize your efforts as you work towards each goal.

The Activity/Resource Workbook contains information and exercises for each of the topic areas to help you develop or strengthen your independent living skills.

As you move from one skill topic to the next, you will be increasing your understanding of the fundamentals of independent living and enhancing your abilities to make a successful and smooth transition to self sufficient young adulthood.

Remember, it's your future!

Good luck and enjoy yourself!

# Independent Living Skills Module I

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# Independent Living Skills Module I

## MONEY MANAGEMENT

### SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify money management skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
1. Am able to use a calculator to add, subtract, multiply, and divide.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Understand the value of money, can purchase small items using the correct change, and am able to determine when I receive correct change from a purchase.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know what the basic necessities for daily living are (food, housing, transportation, clothing, etc.) and am aware of their costs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Can set up and follow a monthly budget covering regular living expenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Can manage unexpected bills or financial emergencies and keep within my budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Know how to open a savings account, make deposits and withdrawals, and read a passbook.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Understand what a money order is and know where and how to purchase one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Know how to open a checking account, write checks, make deposits and withdrawals, and accurately record each transaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Can read monthly bank statements and balance my checkbook.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Independent Living Skills Module I

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
<b>10.</b> Am able to regularly put aside some money for savings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11.</b> Know how much money I will need for independent living start-up costs and have established a savings plan accordingly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12.</b> Know the meaning of the words “gross” and “net” in reference to a paycheck and understand all the deductions, i.e. federal tax, state tax, FICA, etc. that are itemized on my pay stubs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>13.</b> Understand that by law I must file federal and state tax forms and know how to get assistance to complete them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>14.</b> Know the value of using coupons and looking for sale prices when shopping.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>15.</b> Can recognize deceptive or misleading advertising.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>16.</b> Know the importance of comparing prices by using unit pricing when shopping.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>17.</b> Know when and how to say “no” to friends wanting to borrow money.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>18.</b> Know the basic concepts of credit, loans, and interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>19.</b> Understand the importance of a good credit rating and how to avoid late payment penalties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

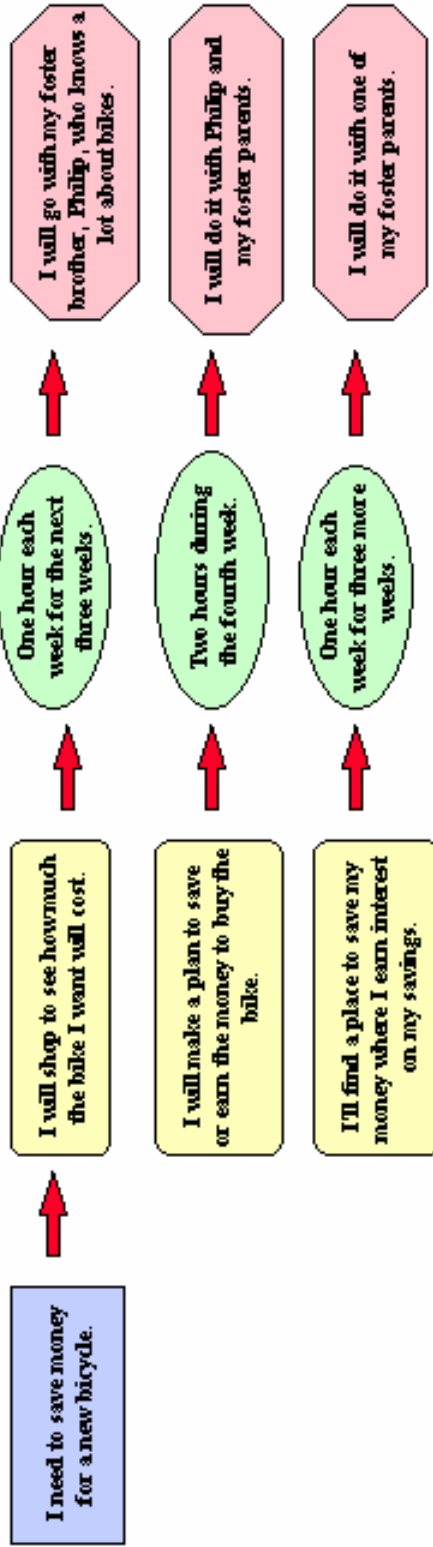
# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Independent Living Skills Module I

You have now completed the assessment section and identified those skills in money management that you would like to strengthen in order to be better able to do things on your own. The following guide can help you in planning how you can learn about and practice these skills. Choose a few skills that you want to develop, and with your team, write down your plan of action. Remember, once you accomplish these goals you can go back to your assessment tool and select new goals to build on your new skills.

### **EXAMPLE** **GOAL: TO IMPROVE MONEY MANAGEMENT**

































State Skill 1:



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### GOAL: TO IMPROVE MONEY MANAGEMENT

<b>State Skill 1:</b> to be developed and/or improved		<b>Plan:</b> how do you plan to learn, develop and improve this skill?		<b>When:</b> when, where, and how often will you work on this skill and by when will you have mastered this?	<b>Who:</b> will assist you?
		  	  	  	  
<b>State Skill 2:</b> to be developed and/or improved		<b>Plan:</b> how do you plan to learn, develop and improve this skill?	  	<b>When:</b> when, where, and how often will you work on this skill and by when will you have mastered this?	<b>Who:</b> will assist you?
		  	  	  	  

# Independent Living Skills Module I

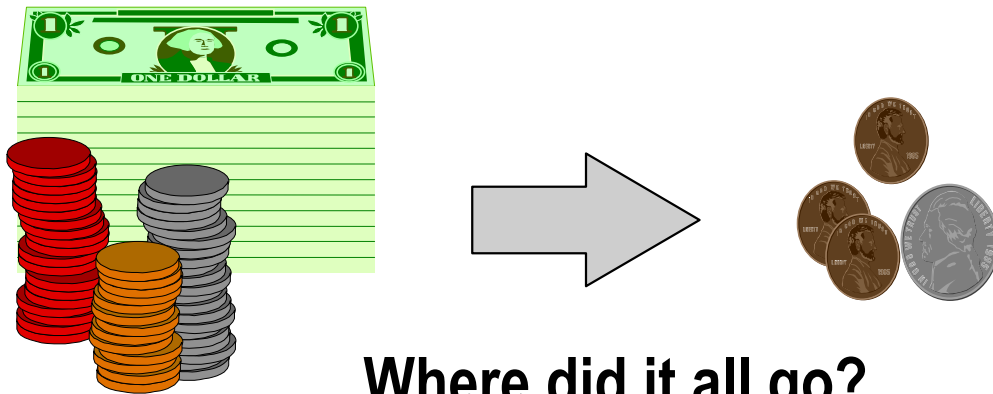
## Money Management and Budgeting

Managing money appropriately is probably one of the most important independent living skills. In the following section, we will work on money management and budgeting. Even if you do not have a regular income or live independently at this point, the information will be helpful to you in planning for the future. The way you spend your money now is probably a good indicator of what you will do with your money later on. In the following exercise, evaluate your spending habits. Circle the item which best reflects the way you spend money.

### Do You Usually

- |   |   |                                   |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Save most of your money                         | - | Spend most of your money          |
| Buy things you need                             | - | Buy things you like               |
| Spend most of your income as soon as you get it | - | Budget your money so it will last |
| Plan for purchases                              | - | Buy impulsively                   |
| Keep track of your money                        | - | Don't know where your money goes  |

Another step to evaluating your spending is to establish exactly where all your money is going. Some of you may not be aware of where all your money is going. Do you feel as if your income simply disappears? Keeping track of how you spend your money will help you to adjust your spending habits, if necessary. We can divide the things we spend our money on into two groups - necessities and luxuries.



# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

Use the following chart to list any appropriate items you can think of in each category

<b>Necessities</b>	<b>Luxuries</b>

The money spent on necessities are usually “fixed cost” items while the money spent on luxuries can be flexible according to income. For example, your rent will generally stay the same from month to month although it is possible for the landlord to raise your rent. Therefore, you will always require the same amount of income. On the other hand, the number of times you can go to the movies in one month or buy new CD’s depends upon how much money you have left after paying for all your necessities.

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

In the following exercise, use the chart below to keep track of the things you spend your money on throughout a single week. Differentiate between luxury and necessary items. Be sure to write in the price of each item.

**MY INCOME FOR THE WEEK:**

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
NECESSITIES:							
LUXURIES:							

**TOTAL AMOUNT SPENT:**

**MY SAVINGS FOR THE WEEK:**

After reviewing the above information, how would you describe your spending habits?

Do you think you need to change some of your spending habits? If so, what might be some things you could do right away to improve the ways you spend your money? How could your social worker, foster parent, or staff help you?

**My Strategies are:**

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Establishing and following a budget will help you develop a good spending habits and will assist you in making the best use of your income. Your budget should be simple and still include all items which you will need to spend your money on.

List all the items you can think of that should be included in the budget of someone who was living independently? List them below.


If you included some of the following items in your list, then you're really thinking ahead:

- Rent
- Utilities (gas, electricity, telephone, water)
- Food (both groceries and restaurant meals)
- Home Care (furniture, cleaning supplies, repairs)
- Personal Care (shampoo, laundry, clothing)
- Medical Care (medicine, doctor's visits, dental care, vitamins)
- Insurance (medical, car, life)
- Transportation (bus fare, car payments, gasoline, oil, repairs)
- Recreation
- Taxes
- Savings

Each of these categories is very important. There are many items within each topic in addition to those listed in parentheses. You can probably think of many more. How much money should you spend in each category? To help you decide, you need a personal budget. A budget will determine in advance where your money will go, so you won't end up with empty pockets before the end of the month.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Personal Budget

In this next section, we will work on establishing a personal budget. Each individual's personal budget will be different, reflecting his/her income, needs, lifestyle, preferences as well as where a person resides. Rents for apartments tend to be more expensive in a city or highly populated area close to the city. On the other hand, rents tend to decrease as you get farther from the city because there is less accessibility to places of entertainment as well as limited public transportation. Before beginning to work on your personal budget, take a look at two examples of financial planning -- Peter and Diana's personal budgets

### Peter

Peter, 19, lives in a two bedroom apartment, which he shares with his roommate. They split the cost of rent (\$800 per month) and utilities (hot water is included in the rent). They each pay their own phone bill. Peter has a girlfriend who lives in another town and often calls her long distance. Peter and his roommate keep a phone log and each of them is responsible for the expenses of their calls. They go grocery shopping together and share the cost of food. Peter and his roommate take turns cooking meals. Peter works full-time (40 hours a week) at a gas station and makes \$7.50 an hour, about \$300 a week or \$1,200 a month (\$14,400 a year, before taxes). Based on the expectation that 33% of his salary will be deducted for taxes, Peter will have \$804 to spend each month. Peter's job does not offer health insurance so he needs to pay for all medical expenses out of his income. He enjoys taking his girlfriend to the movies and going out to dinner once in awhile. Presently, Peter is saving some of his income to purchase a car.

After considering each budget item individually, Peter has set up a budget for himself which looks like the following:

### Peter's Monthly Budget

<i>Income (after taxes):</i>	<i>\$804</i>
<hr/>	
Rent (Peter's half):	\$400
Utilities (gas, oil, electric):	\$47.50
Phone:	\$40
Food:	\$100
Home Care	\$18
Personal Care	\$20
Medical Care (including prescriptions, etc.):	\$10
Insurance (life, auto, home, renter's):	--
Transportation:	\$30
Clothing:	\$30
Recreation:	\$25
Savings:	\$13
Additional Taxes:	--
*Cable (luxury):	\$28
*Cell Phone:	\$25
Miscellaneous	\$17.50



## Independent Living Skills Module I

### Diana

Diana, 18, lives in a studio apartment by herself in Spencer (a town approximately 15 miles from Worcester, MA). Her rent is \$675 a month, including all utilities except for her phone bill. Diana recently completed a Nurse's Aid Certification course and is presently working at a nursing home full-time (40 hours a week). Diana makes \$12.02 an hour and gets paid bi-weekly. Therefore, she receives \$961.60 every 2 weeks before taxes, which is \$1923.20 per month or \$23,078.40 a year. After taxes, her bi-weekly paycheck equals \$644.27. Through her job, Diana receives benefits including medical and dental insurance as well as sick and vacation pay. Diana bought a car six months ago, which she uses to drive to and from work daily. Diana likes to buy new clothes and is a member of the local health club. She is presently saving some of her income to continue her education at the community college in order to become a nurse. Diana has set up a budget for herself which looks like the following:

### Diana's Monthly Budget

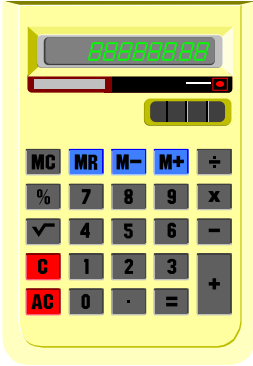
<u>Income (after taxes):</u>	\$1289
Rent:	\$675
Utilities (gas, oil, electric):	--
Phone:	\$60
Food:	\$200
Home Care	\$25
Personal Care	\$25
Medical Care:	--
Car Insurance:	\$100
Transportation:	\$60
Clothing:	\$54
Recreation:	\$10
Savings:	\$5
Taxes:	--
*Cable: (luxury)	\$55
*Cell Phone:	--
Miscellaneous (health club expenses):	\$20

\*These items are not necessities. If you can fit them into your budget, fine; if not, you might have to go without them until you can properly afford them. You can also look at prepaid cell phones as an option to a contract cell phone and buy the least expensive cable package until you can afford an upgraded one.

If you compare Peter and Diana's budgets, it becomes obvious that budgets can be flexible in order to accommodate each person's lifestyle. As stated earlier, some budgeting items like recreation, transportation, and savings are more flexible than rent and utilities. While establishing your personal budget, you need to keep in mind how your preferences and lifestyle might influence your own budget.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

In the next section, we will work on establishing a personal budget using a monthly income of \$804.00, the approximate amount you would earn each month working 40 hours a week at \$7.50 an hour. Before you fill out the complete budget below, you will need to complete the individual item sections and place the “final amounts” in the appropriate labeled box on the “My Personal Budget” page.



**NOTE:** It might be helpful to use a calculator on this next section. If you haven't used one before, ask your social worker, foster parent, or staff to teach you.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## My Personal Budget

**My Income:** Total: \$

**Wages:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Assistance:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child Support/Alimony:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interest/dividends/Social Security:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Expenses:** Total: \$

**Fixed Expenses**

**Rent/Mortgage** \$

**Property Taxes/Insurance** \$

**Trash Collection** \$

**Car Payment** \$

**Car Insurance** \$

**Other Loan Payments** \$

**Credit Cards** \$

**Health Insurance** \$

**Day Care** \$

**Flexible Expenses**

**Utilities** \$

**Gas:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Oil:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Electricity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Water:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cable:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Food** \$

**Transportation/Gas** \$

**Home Care** \$

**Car Maintenance** \$

**Education** \$

**Personal Expenses** \$

**Savings** \$

**Other** \$

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### Rent:

The rent portion of your budget will most likely be the largest. Housing costs are rising all the time and sometimes provide severe obstacles to young people starting out. Prices may vary greatly depending on the size, amenities, and area you choose to live in.

Given your \$804 budget, how much money do you think you can spend on rent?

<p><b>I can spend _____ because:</b></p>
--

Living with a roommate is almost an essential consideration when someone is living on a limited budget. It is an alternative that should be discussed and carefully considered when making long-range plans. The rent of a two-bedroom apartment divided into halves is usually significantly cheaper than a comparable one-bedroom apartment. However, it is not always easy to share expenses and living space with a roommate.

**NOTE:** For comprehensive roommate and apartment exercises, please refer to Module IV.

Before estimating the costs of rent, it is important that you are aware of some qualities to look for in an apartment. Complete the following exercise by circling the item which reflects your preference.

### I Would Like To

Live alone	-	Live with a roommate
Pay a higher rent with utilities included	-	Pay less rent with utilities excluded
Live in a big apartment in an unsafe neighborhood	-	Live in a smaller apartment in a safe neighborhood
Have a small 2-bedroom apartment	-	Have a large 1-bedroom apartment
Have a lease	-	Have no lease
Have a yard		Have off-street parking

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In summary, I would like an apartment that:

Now that you have determined what is important to you, go through the ads below, and choose the apartment you could afford and which best meets your needs.

## APARTMENTS FOR RENT

<p><b>Medford:</b> 2 bdrm, 1 bath, 5 rm apt, 2<sup>nd</sup> fl., off Fellsway, on bus line, w/w, w/d hookups, no pets. Available 4/1. \$1300 plus 1<sup>st</sup>, last &amp; \$600 security deposit. 781-987-5481</p>	<p><b>Hingham:</b> Harbor area, great new 3 bdrm, 2-½ baths, walking distance to town. \$2400 per month, heat &amp; hot water incl. Last month's rent &amp; sec. dep. required along w/ reference. Call: 508-437-8641</p>	<p><b>Framingham:</b> Large, nice 1 bdrm condo, prime location, great view, no pets. Available 4/1, \$1000 per month. 1<sup>st</sup>, last &amp; deposit due at lease signing. Call: 508 487-7834</p>
<p><b>Cambridge:</b> Study, \$995. All utilities included. Near Red Line, MIT, Harvard. Call: 617-657-5412</p>	<p><b>Lowell:</b> Loft-like, 2-3 bdrm apts, 1400 sq.ft, starting at \$895 + util. Available immediately. 978-359-7851</p>	<p><b>Stoneham:</b> Modern 2 bdrm condo, 2 bath, w/d, a/c, pool, tennis courts, \$1250 mo. Call realtor: 617-874-1257</p>
<p><b>Fitchburg:</b> 2 bdrm, off Rte. #12. \$850, heat &amp; hot water incl. Only security deposit &amp; references required. 508- 579-5492</p>	<p><b>Boston:</b> Waterfront property, 2 bdrms, \$1100 mo. Utilities not included. Available immediately. Call: 617-555-4739</p>	<p><b>Swampscott:</b> 3 roommates wanted, M/F, non-smoker for lg. 4 bedroom house near ocean. \$400 plus util. Call Mark: 781-547-5417</p>
<p><b>Stoneham:</b> Modern 2 bdrm condo, 2 bath, w/d, a/c, pool, tennis courts, \$1250 per</p>	<p><b>Quincy/Wollaston:</b> Room for rent, furnished. 6 min to T, only allow for single, \$550</p>	<p><b>Worcester:</b> College Square, 3 bdrm townhouse, all util inc. \$1550/mo, w/w, w/d hookups,</p>

## Independent Living Skills Module I

month. Call realtor: 617-874-1257	utils inc. Avail now. 617-945-7348.	cat OK. 1 <sup>st</sup> , last & security. Avail 4/1. 508-357-4258
--------------------------------------	--	---

Explain your choice:



### ACTIVITY

Research the apartments in your local newspaper. Choose two apartments which you would be able to afford and which meet your needs. Place the ads in the box below.

Explain your choice:

Now you probably have a good idea about the approximate cost of an apartment in your area and what is available to you within your budget. How much would you budget for your apartment, excluding any utilities for which you will be responsible.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Transfer the amount into the **Rent** category on your personal budget sheet.

### Utilities

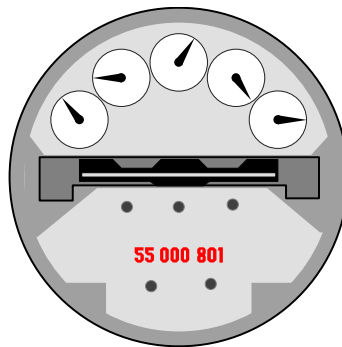
Utilities can also be a substantial part of your budget. Costs of utilities may vary according to use. You need to be aware of the costs and be able to estimate your expenses in order to keep within your budget and avoid over-spending.

Can you list all the utilities you will need when living independently?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Some utilities (often water, gas, and electric) might be included in your rent. If you rent an apartment which excludes utilities, you will have to pay for them separately. Telephone utilities and additional services like cable television are never included in rent.

NOTE: For more comprehensive information on utilities and start-up costs, please refer to Module IV.

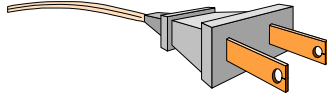


Somewhere in or around your house or apartment building, there are various types of meters (most often for electricity and gas) which detail exactly how much energy you use. Your bills are created by the services based on estimates and actual readings of these meters of these meters, which are checked every two or three months. Make sure

## Independent Living Skills Module I

that anyone asking to read a meter has the proper identification from the company he or she represents.

### **Electric**



The costs of electricity may vary according to use, number of occupants, types of appliances used, and the area you live in. Before you can estimate your anticipated costs of electricity, evaluate your potentially costly habits.

Circle the item which best reflects your habits:

### **I Usually . . .**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Turn the lights off when I leave my residence                                 | - | Leave the lights on   |
| Leave the television on, even when I am not watching it.                      | - | Turn the television off when I am not watching a program.   |
| Close the refrigerator door soon after I open it in order to save energy      | - | Take a long time to decide what I want from the refrigerator, and leave the door open while I choose. |
| Use the dishwasher, washing machine, and dryer even when they are not filled. | - | Only use the dishwasher, washing machine, and dryer when they are filled.                             |

Do you think you are saving energy (and money) by being cautious with electricity use, or do you think you might be wasting some energy (and money) by using electricity unnecessarily?



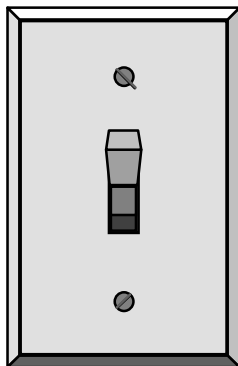
## Independent Living Skills Module I



Refrigerators need a lot of energy and are responsible for as much as 25% of your total electric bill. To save energy (money), close refrigerator doors as soon as you can. Other appliances like dryers, humidifiers, and television sets can use a lot of energy as well. Use them cautiously and always turn lights, radios, and TVs off if you do not need them.

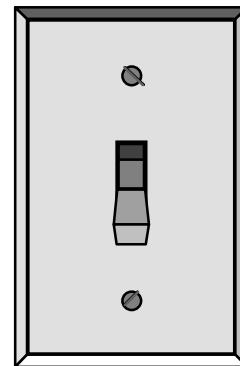
The following chart will give you an estimated range of electric bills according to size and number of occupants. (None of the apartments in our chart are heated by electricity. Electric heat is very expensive.) With your habits and energy conservation tips in mind, utilize the chart to estimate your electricity costs according to your anticipated (or present) living situation.

Number of Occupants	Number of Bedrooms	\$ per Month Range
1	1	\$25.00 to \$55.00
2	2	\$55.00 to \$75.00
3 or more	3 or more	\$75 to \$120.00



Given the size of your apartment and your efforts in saving electricity, how much do you think you will spend on your monthly electric bill?

Write your estimate in the box below.



## Independent Living Skills Module I

Note: Keep the weather in mind when estimating heating costs. Also, some electric companies offer a “budgeting” plan. Ask for details when you first call for service.

### **Water**

Unless you rent an entire house or a duplex, water is usually included in your rent. However, you might have to pay for the costs of heating your water. (Refer to the heat section).



### **Gas**

Even if you do not use natural gas as a heating fuel, many ovens and stove-top ranges use gas. Gas stoves normally require a tiny amount of gas to keep the pilot lights lit and, of course, more gas to raise or lower the temperature of the flame on your range or in your oven. If natural gas is not used to heat your apartment, but you do have a gas stove, you will pay about \$8 to \$15 per month depending on where you live.

### **Heat**

Particularly during the winter months, heat can be an expensive portion of your utilities budget if it is not included in your rent. Usually apartments are heated by either oil or natural gas. Rarely will you find apartments which are heated with electricity, which tends to be very expensive and, given your budget limitations, not a good option.

When estimating the cost of your heating service, there are several additional factors to be considered. For example, the position and insulation of an apartment relates to the amount of energy necessary to heat it. The main factor, however, is the temperature you

## Independent Living Skills Module I

would like to have (and are able to afford) in your apartment. Most apartments have individual thermostats which allow you to adjust the temperature. Again, energy-saving habits can make a big difference in your bill.

**C**onsider the following examples:

**Dustin's** apartment is heated by gas. Particularly during the cold months, Dustin tries to save heat. He insulated all his windows and doors in the fall in order to contain the heat within his apartment. Dustin usually sets his thermostat at 63° Fahrenheit. When Dustin feels cold while watching television or believes he might be catching an illness, he wears a sweater to keep himself warm. When Dustin leaves to visit his family over the weekend or if he is gone for the day, he turns his thermostat down to 55°.

**Dustin's Bill:            \$80.00**

**Lenore** has gas heat as well. She likes to keep her apartment very warm, particularly during the winter. Lenore usually sets her thermostat at 70° and often opens the windows for fresh air. Her apartment is not insulated. Lenore does not like to turn her heat down when she leaves because she does not want to come home to a cold apartment.

**Lenore's Bill:            \$135.00**

Which of the two examples given is closer to your habits and preferences? Explain.



### ACTIVITY

Call your local gas/oil companies for additional information and energy conservation tips.

With the above examples in mind, consider the following chart and estimate your anticipated costs of heat.

	Gas Heat	
Size	Service	Average Price Range
1 Bedroom	Gas heat & hot water service	\$800 - \$1200 per year

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Size	Oil Heat Service	Average Price Range
1 Bedroom	Heat only	\$600 - \$1000 per year

My anticipated cost of heat is:

Explain your estimate:

Transfer the amount onto the **Heat** line under the **Utilities** category on your personal budget sheet.

### **Telephone**

Telephone bills can be very expensive surprises if you are not aware of the associated costs including the prices of local, in-state and long-distance calls as well as service charges and taxes. You will need to plan and estimate the costs associated with your telephone use very carefully if you want to stay within your budget. Since there are many telephone companies offering a variety of local and long-distance plans, you will want to find out which company offers the best price for what you need.



### **Surcharges and Taxes**

Telephone companies charge monthly service fees to all customers that include some set charges. Here's an example of a local carrier's *surcharges and taxes*:

- *FCC Line Charge \$6.45*
- *Local # Portability\$.23*

## Independent Living Skills Module I

- *Disability Access Fee \$.85*
- *Federal USF Surcharge \$.65*
- *Federal Tax (3% of the bill)*
- *State Tax (5% of the bill)*

If you are renting your own apartment, you may want to consider getting “inside wire maintenance” for \$3.45 a month. You can split the cost with housemates if you have any. If you use directory assistance, you will be charged for each request. Currently it’s \$1.25.

### ***Service Options***

Telephone companies offer additional service options at additional costs. Below are some examples of options one company offers.

Distinctive Ring	\$4.00 per month
Call Waiting	\$4.00 per month
Three Way Calling	\$4.00 per month + \$.75 each time used
Voicemail (Including Call Forwarding)	\$5.95 per month or \$7.45 with multiple boxes
Caller ID	\$7.50 per month
Call Return (*69)	\$4.00 per month + \$.50 each time used
Call Forwarding	\$4.00 per month
	\$4.00 per month

### **Speed Dial**

Call Waiting ID	\$7.50
-----------------	--------

With your budget limitations in mind, would you choose any of these additional options? If so, which would you choose and why?

Some of the above options may be included in a package plan. You need to carefully evaluate which features you will use and need. It may not seem like a lot of money, but it will add up!!!

### ***Selecting a Telephone Carrier***

When selecting a telephone service carrier, you select a carrier for three types of calls: local, regional (local toll) and long distance. You may use the same carrier for more than one type of call or different carriers for each type of call. Calling plans generally offer a discount from the casual or basic rate, which applies if you have no calling plan. Always select a calling plan to avoid being billed at the basic rate. Telephone carrier options in

# Independent Living Skills Module I

Massachusetts include: AT&T, MCI, RCN, Sprint, Verizon and Working Assets. Companies often have a number of different plans to choose from.

## ***Local Calls***

A local call is any call within your local calling area of telephone exchanges.



### **ACTIVITY**

Refer to the white pages of your telephone directory to find out which towns and areas are included in your local calling area and list them below.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

How many local calls do you make each month from your home telephone?

How many local minutes do you use?

## ***Regional Calls***

A regional toll call (sometimes referred to as local toll call) is a call to a phone number that is not local, but is also not state-to-state or international. For example, a call from Boston to Worcester is a regional toll call.

Will you be making any regional toll calls? With your limited budget in mind, establish a list of what regional calls you will be making.

***My regional calls:***

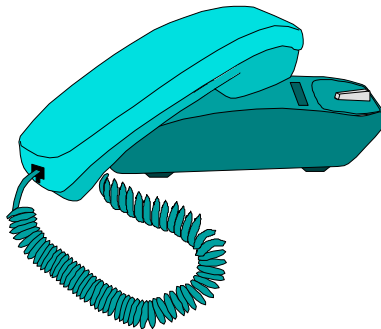
## Independent Living Skills Module I

Name	Location	How Often	How Long

My estimate of total minutes per month of regional calls is:

### ***Long Distance Calls***

Long distance telephone calls can sometimes be less expensive than regional calls, largely depending on the plan you choose and/or the time and/or days you choose to call. Weekends and sometimes evenings are less expensive times to make long distance calls.



Determine your long distance usage.

***My long distance calls:***

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Name	Location	How Often	How Long

My estimate of total minutes per month of long distance calls is:



### ACTIVITY

Now that you have established your needs, it's time to find out your options. The following will provide examples to give you a general idea of what your telephone budget might be. Evaluate the options below:

INDIVIDUAL PLANS	AT&T	Verizon	Working Assets
Local Unlimited No Features	\$18.95	\$19.30	XXX
Local Unlimited 2 features	\$22.95	XXX	XXX
Local Unlimited 3 features	XXX	\$24.95	XXX
Local & Regional Unlimited 5 features	XXX	\$39.95	XXX
Regional & Long Distance if you have a local plan	\$.05 per minute	XXX	XXX
Regional & Long Distance Only	\$4.95 per month \$.07 per minute anytime	XXX	\$3.95 per month \$.07 per minute anytime
Regional & Long Distance Only	\$5.00 minimum monthly usage \$.05 per minute		\$4.95 per month \$.05 per minute evenings/weekends



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## *Package Plans*

Here are a few examples of package plans various carriers offer:

### MCI

\$37.99 per month for unlimited local calling; 200 minutes of long distance calls and \$.05 per minute thereafter. You get call waiting, caller ID, call waiting ID and three-way calling.

\$55.99 per month for unlimited local, local toll and long distance calls. You get call waiting, caller ID, call waiting ID, speed dial 8 and three-way calling as well as personal voicemail and message center.

### RCN

If you take a local/long distance package, you get unlimited local calls; for regional calls you choose between unlimited at \$10 a month or \$.08 per minute and for long distance calls, a choice of \$20 per month or \$.08 per minute.

### Verizon

\$54.95 per month for unlimited local, regional toll and long distance anytime and anywhere in the U.S and to Canada. You also get a choice of five features.

Would you choose individual companies or a package? Why?

You will need to do additional research to find a telephone company with a plan that is best for you. Prices change frequently as do special offers.



### **ACTIVITY**

Investigate which carrier might be best for you by looking up your options online and then calling representatives from at least two different companies. When you call, ask about installation, switching and cancellation fees.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

I would choose the following telephone carrier(s):

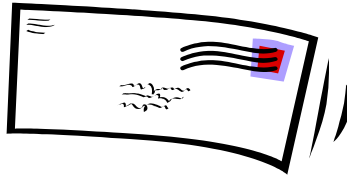
Local: \_\_\_\_\_

Long Distance: \_\_\_\_\_

Or

Package: \_\_\_\_\_

Remember that the current cost of a postcard stamp is 23¢ and a first class postage stamp for a letter is only 37¢. For the cost of five to ten minute minutes of long distance, you can send a letter or a card to a friend or relative.



*The Cheapest Long Distance Carrier*

**Stay away from charge calls to 900- (and some 800- and 888- ) numbers. They are very expensive!!!**

To estimate your approximate monthly telephone bill, add up each of the sub-sections.

Surcharges and Taxes: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Calls: \_\_\_\_\_

Regional (Local Toll) Calls: \_\_\_\_\_

State-to-State Calls billed by a long distance carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

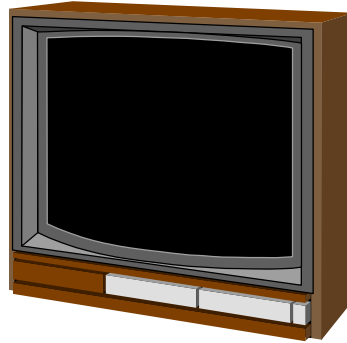
Or Package \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:**

\$

Now that you have estimated the approximate amount of your monthly telephone bill, enter the total amount into your personal budget sheet on the "Phone" line under **Utilities**.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### *Cable Television*

Cable Television is not so much a utility as it is a luxury service. Given the limited amount of your income, you need to evaluate whether or not you can afford any cable services. Keep in mind that you will need electricity and heat, but you will not **NEED** cable. Ten cable companies are licensed to operate in the Commonwealth. Cablevision and Comcast are available throughout the state while each of the others covers a certain area. Satellite television is another option. If you choose this option, you will have to purchase the dish which could range from \$25-100 (installation is not always included) and you will have to pay extra to receive regular TV channels. Before purchasing this option, call ahead of time to make sure you are able to have this service, sometimes there might be obstructions in the way of the dish, for example: a tree, light pole, etc.

Evaluate the sample costs of cable television listed below to see which option you would be able to afford, if any (remember this is just one company, keep in mind prices may vary).

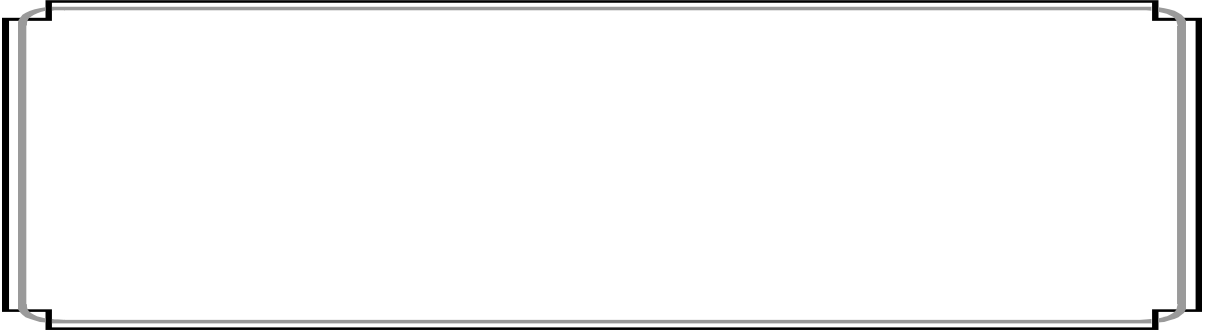
1. Basic Service: \$11.27 (this just gives you a clear picture for network television)
2. Basic and Expanded Service: \$47.50 (basic cable stations, no movies/sport channels)
3. Analog/digital cable box: \$3.96 per month in the house
4. Remote control: \$0.20 each
5. Digital Complete Basic: \$54.95
6. Digital Complete Basic with Pipeline (pipeline is internet through the cable company, not phone company: (basic cable, no movie channels)
7. Digital MVP package: \$78.95 (includes some movie/sport channels)
8. Digital MVP plus package: \$86.95 (includes an extended amount of movie/sports channels)
9. Digital Leadership package: \$109.95
10. Digital Leadership Plus package: \$117.95

\*You can also purchase a la carte, for example you can purchase basic cable and then purchase certain movie packages by themselves, which range from \$3.95 to \$25.95 extra.

Before purchasing cable make sure you find out how much all the packages are and what they include before making your decision.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Would you use/not use any of the cable services offered? Explain.



If appropriate, enter the amount of monthly cable charges onto your personal budget sheet on the “Cable” line under Utilities.

### **Other Expenses**

In addition to monthly costs, some utility companies require security deposits and charge installment fees. For further information, refer to Module IV.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Food

Similar to the varying cost of utilities in the previous section, the cost of food will greatly depend on your living situation, eating habits, and your efforts to save money.

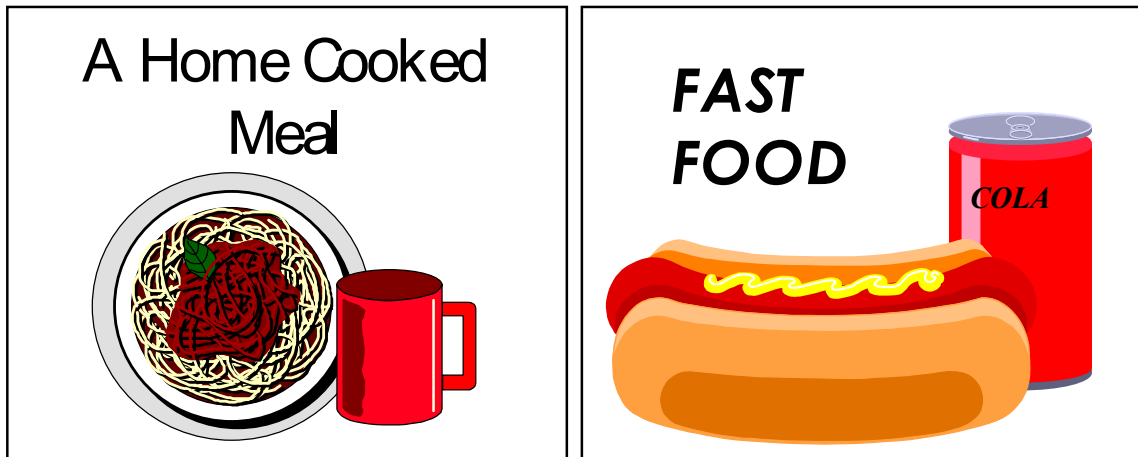
## Eating Out

Eating out is always expensive. On a limited budget, you should be careful you are not overspending on what should be an occasional luxury.



### ACTIVITY

Compare the price of a fast food meal with that of a home-cooked one using the example below.



### Home Cooked

Box of pasta (store brand): \$0.80

Tomato Sauce: \$1.50

Ground Beef: \$1.20

Can of soda: \$0.75

### Total

**Less than \$4.25** since spaghetti is more than one serving

### Fast Food

Deluxe Hamburger: \$2.80

French Fries: \$1.95

Large Soda: \$1.45

Tax: .5%

### Total

**\$6.51**

## **Independent Living Skills Module I**

If you ate at a fast food restaurant ten times per week, how much money would that cost?

If you ate fast food ten times a week for an entire month, you'd eventually spend somewhat more than \$250 or almost one-third of your monthly budget!

### **Choosing a Grocery Store**

Choosing the right grocery store can help to save money. It is important to choose a store that offers good deals on a range of products. At times, however, the store with the lower prices or larger variety might be not be in your immediate neighborhood.

# Independent Living Skills Module I




## ACTIVITY

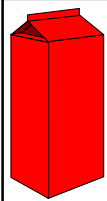
Compare the location and advertised prices of these two grocery stores.

### NEIGHBORHOOD GROCERY


*(Right Around The Corner From Your House!)*



**10" Frozen Pizza**  
**\$3.25**

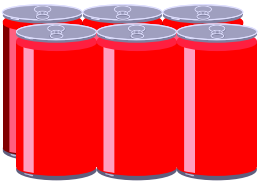


**Vitamin Enriched MILK**  
**One Qt**  
**\$1.99**

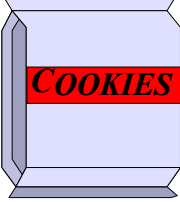


**Oranges \$0.99 per lb**  
**Grapefruit \$1.49 each!**

**GRADE AA Chicken**  
**95¢lb.**



**6Pack of Cola**  
**Only \$2.19 !!!**

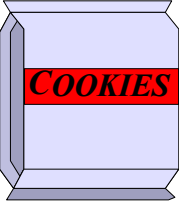


**COOKIES**

**Only \$2.99 !!!**

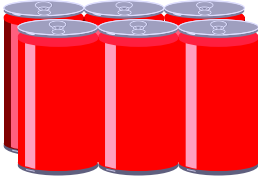
### BIG AND SAVE SUPERMARKET

*(One and a Half Miles from Your House!)*




**COOKIES**

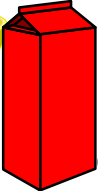
**Now \$1.50!!!**



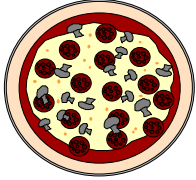
**24Pack of Cola**  
**Just \$3.99 !!!**



**Oranges \$.79 per lb**  
**Grapefruit \$.99 each**



**Vitamin Enriched MILK**  
**One Gallon**  
**\$3.19**



**12" Frozen Pizza**  
**2/\$4.00**

**SPECIAL THIS WEEK ONLY!!**

**GRADE AA Chicken**  
**69¢lb.**

Which store would you shop in? Explain your choice:

# Independent Living Skills Module I

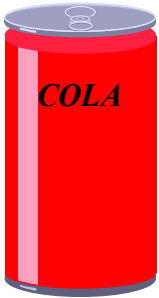
## Determining the Best Buy

When on a limited budget, it is important to be an educated consumer and to develop the ability to determine the best value for your money. Comparing prices might take a little extra time but it often saves a great deal of money. One way to shop economically is to compare different brands of the same product. Often, store brand products are cheaper than name brand products, although many people seem to prefer name brands that have fancier packaging and familiarity. Packaging can be deceiving. Many times you may think you are getting a cheaper price when, in truth, you aren't. Another way to determine the best buy is through unit pricing.



### ACTIVITY

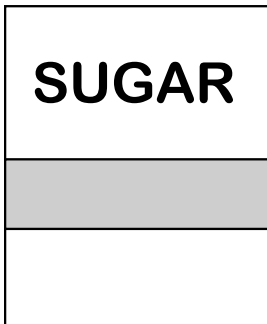
Evaluate the items listed below and determine which one you would buy.



Name Brand Cola	Or	Generic Cola
12 Cans		24 Cans
\$3.19		\$3.99

I would buy the \_\_\_\_\_ cola because \_\_\_\_\_

---



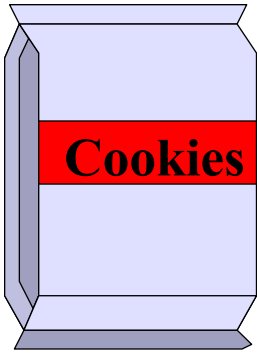
1 Pound of Sugar	Or	½ Pound of Sugar
\$1.98		\$1.04

I would buy \_\_\_\_\_ of sugar because \_\_\_\_\_

---



# Independent Living Skills Module I



**20 oz. Chocolate Chip Cookies**

Or

**12 oz. Chocolate Chip Cookies**

Paper Packaged  
**\$1.99**

Packaged in Decorative Tin  
**\$2.99**

I would buy the \_\_\_\_\_ of cookies because \_\_\_\_\_

---



TUNA

**Solid White Tuna**

Or

**Chunk Light Tuna**

6 oz.

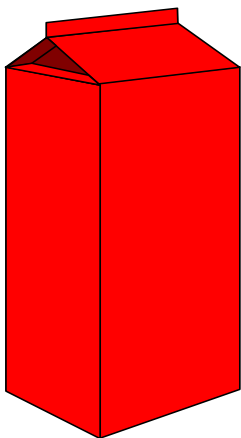
6 oz.

**\$1.29**

**\$.89**

I would buy the \_\_\_\_\_ tuna because \_\_\_\_\_

---



**1 Gallon Milk**

Or

**½ Gallon Milk**

**\$3.19**

**\$1.99**

I would buy \_\_\_\_\_ of milk because \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Independent Living Skills Module I

At times, price-per-unit shopping isn't always the wisest method. In some cases it depends on the amount of an item you can handle. The larger size of milk may be cheaper in relation to the smaller size, but that doesn't make it a better buy if the milk spoils before you can drink it all! It makes no sense to buy the larger size and have to throw some of it away!

"Economy Size" labels on any particular box do not mean that it is a better value. Also, don't base your decision solely on the size of a package; always look at the quantity written on the label.



### ACTIVITY

Visit your local grocery store with your foster parent, social worker, or staff and practice determining best buys.

### Coupons

Clipping coupons can save you a great deal. The amount to be saved on each coupon might not seem much, but it will add up!

Look at the coupons below and circle the ones you would use over a period of four weeks.

<p><b>Save 25¢ on Healthy Butter Substitute</b></p> <p>Expires 9/15/04</p>	<p><b>Save 30¢ on 3 Fat Free Yogurts</b></p> <p>Any Flavor</p> <p>Expires 9/30/04</p>	<p><b>Buy One Get One Free!!!</b></p> <p><b>Choice Frozen Dinners</b></p> <p><b>Regularly \$2.35</b></p> <p>Expires 6/15/04</p>	<p><b>Save 50¢ on One Pound package of Perk Sandwich Cookies</b></p> <p>Expires 7/30/04</p>
<p><b>Save \$1.00 on Crispy Crunch Cereal</b></p> <p>Expires 10/1/04</p>	<p><b>Save 49¢ on Frozen Vegetable Medley</b></p> <p>Expires 9/31/04</p>	<p><b>35¢ off Easy Macaroni and Cheese</b></p> <p>Expires 8/15/04</p>	<p><b>Get 2 Quarts of Milk FREE when you buy 2 loaves of Natural bread</b></p> <p><b>A \$1.75 value!!</b></p> <p>Expires 6/15/04</p>
<p><b>Save 39¢ on ten lb. bag Idaho potatoes</b></p> <p>Expires 9/15/04</p>	<p><b>Save \$1.25 on two large Presto Frozen Pizzas</b></p> <p>Expires 7/31/04</p>	<p><b>\$3 Rebate on one lb. of Roaster's Coffee</b></p> <p>Expires 9/15/04</p>	<p><b>75¢ off any 24-can pack of Sparkle Cola</b></p> <p>Expires 9/15/04</p>

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Add up the value saved on each coupon you've decided to use and write the total on the line below.

I would save \$\_\_\_\_\_ by clipping \_\_\_\_\_ number of coupons.

Go through the advertising circulars and grocery flyers in your Sunday newspaper and clip the coupons you think you would use. List them in the space below. How much money would you save if you used them all?

Make sure that you obtain a supermarket card to take advantage of the sales as well as bringing any coupons that you may have. They could really save you a lot of money. Remember always to comparison shop, you'll be sure to get the better deal.

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

In Conjunction with the food management section later in this module, develop a grocery shopping list (*of food items only*) for one week.

A black and white illustration of a shopping cart with a wire mesh basket and two wheels. A grey pushpin is pinned to the top center of the page, overlapping the top edge of the shopping list area.

---

## My Shopping List

---

The shopping list area is a large, empty rectangular space with a black border, intended for writing down grocery items.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### ACTIVITY

Go to the grocery store of your choice and utilize your comparison shopping skills and coupons to determine the best products and values among the items on your grocery list. Add the prices of all items on your list on your calculator and record your estimate in the box below.

I would spend \$ \_\_\_\_\_ each week on groceries.

Use the above amount to estimate the cost of groceries for 1 month and add costs for eating out if appropriate.

My cost estimate for one  
**month** of groceries is:

My cost estimate for eating  
out is:

---

My total food budget is:

Record your total in the **Food** section of your personal budget.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Transportation

Depending on the location of your apartment and your workplace or school, you will most likely need some means to get around. On a limited budget, it will be difficult for most of you to afford a car. Aside from the money it will take to obtain a car, there are also costs associated with maintaining one.



### ACTIVITY



Evaluate the following information to decide whether or not you would be able to afford a car and its maintenance costs.

\$100 - \$300

Minimum monthly rate for car insurance **without** any collision protection or added features for people under the age of 25. (When obtaining car insurance make sure to shop around before signing a contract. If you took driver's education classes, let the insurance know because there is usually a discounted price. The rates of your insurance will change depending on your driving record, your residence and the type of car that you have).

\$25 - \$35

Amount owed in taxes each month (depending upon where you live and the value of the car). Make sure that you set this money aside each month for when you get your "yearly" bill, this way you will be prepared when it comes.

\$40 - \$60

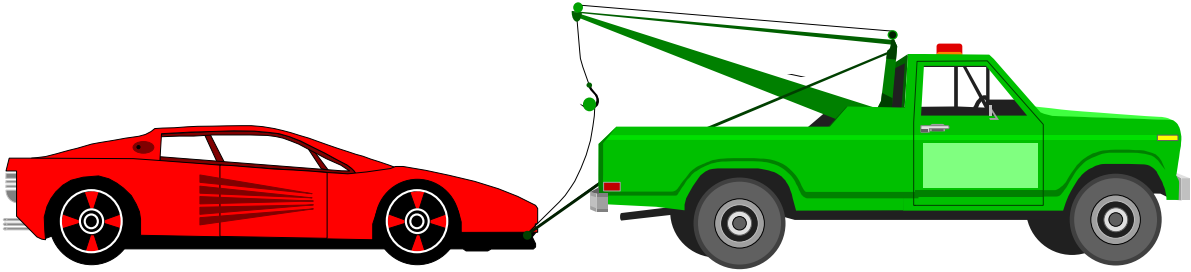
Average range of upkeep per month (gasoline, oil, etc.) depending on the type and age of the car and the mileage driven. This total does not include any repairs that might be necessary. Also, keep in mind the ever increasing price of gas.

---

**\$395.00**

**Total Average (based on the higher price) per month**

# Independent Living Skills Module I



**NOTE:** For additional information, refer to the “Buying a Car” section in this module.

Do you think that you could afford the upkeep of a car on a \$804/month budget? Explain your decision:

If a car is not an option for you, public transportation is a good and much less expensive alternative.



## ACTIVITY

Think about your transportation needs and list them below.

I would use the subway/bus/train \_\_\_\_\_ times each week to travel to:

---

---

---

It is also important to remember that not every area has access to public transportation. If there is public transportation, you need to look up the schedules to make sure that the subway, train or bus comes and is available when you need it.

# Independent Living Skills Module I



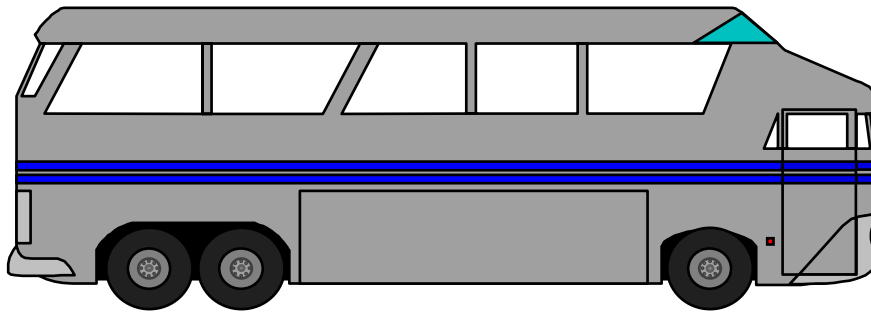
## ACTIVITY

Research the costs of public transportation in your area and list them in the boxes below, if appropriate.

Single Subway Fare (Inbound or Outbound)	<input type="text"/>
Single Bus Fare (to your most frequent stop)	<input type="text"/>
Monthly Pass for MBTA subway or bus	<input type="text"/>
Single train ticket from _____ to _____	<input type="text"/>
Monthly Commuter Rail Pass	<input type="text"/>

According to your list of transportation needs and the costs of approximate fares, how much would you budget for public transportation?

I would budget:



Explain your estimate:

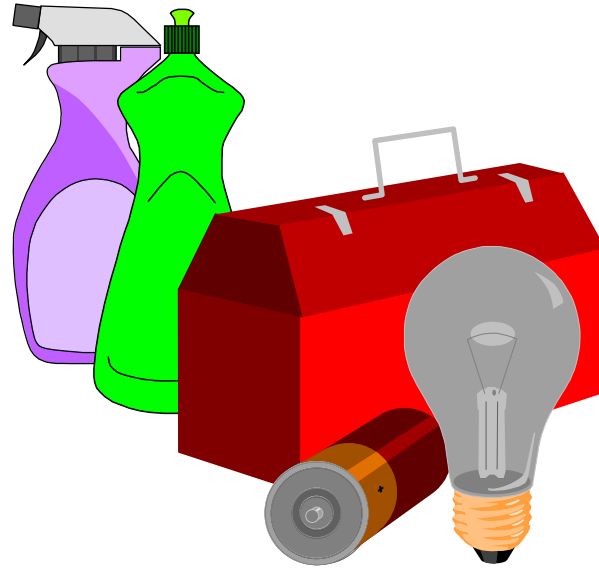
Whether you budgeted for **Car Maintenance** costs or for **Public Transportation**, record the amount on your personal budget sheet in the designed space.



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Homecare

In addition to the costs involved with obtaining furniture and household items (covered in the “Start Up” section in this Module and in Module IV), you will have to budget for ongoing home maintenance. This includes expenses such as cleaning supplies, replacement light bulbs, and minor repairs.



### ACTIVITY

List all cleaning supplies you would need to clean your apartment in the space below. Research prices at your local supermarket and record them next to each item.

**I Would Need**

_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

## Independent Living Skills Module I

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\$

Given the fact that these products usually last for more than one month (depending on how frequently they are used), how much would you spend on cleaning supplies during an average month?

I would spend:



### ACTIVITY

List the items in your apartment you would have to replace from time to time (such as light bulbs, glassware, small appliances, etc.) and research their costs.

Items To Be Replaced	Times per Year	Costs

How much do you think you would spend in an average month on the items listed above?

I would spend:

Usually the repairs and services your apartment requires in upkeep are considered to be included in your rent payments to the landlord (see “Tenants’ Rights” and “Leases” in Module IV). However, if damage to the apartment is caused by you, **you** will be held accountable for the costs of repairs.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### ACTIVITY

Research the costs associated with replacing an average size window (i.e., the cost of the glass pane, frame, and installation) or fixing a clogged toilet (if you were unable to do it yourself).

According to the previous exercises and estimates, how much would you budget each month for homecare?

Cleaning supplies

Replacement items

Possible repairs

**Total:**

Record your estimate under **Homecare** on your personal budget sheet.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## PERSONAL CARE

Personal appearance is important. When planning for personal care items, it is important to differentiate between items you need (basic hygiene products, clean and appropriate clothing, etc.) and items you might like but are not *necessary* (expensive perfumes, aftershave lotions, and fashionable brand name clothing). While completing the following exercises, keep in mind that you have limited funds and a great deal of other financial responsibilities.

### Personal Care/Hygiene

Comparison shopping can once again save you a great deal of money. Utilize the skills you have learned in the Food budgeting section to determine the best buy when purchasing personal care items.



Natural Shampoo	High Class Shampoo	Fancy Shampoo
10 oz.	14 oz.	16 oz.
<b>\$2.10</b>	<b>\$2.40</b>	<b>\$4.00</b>

The units that the shampoo is sold in are: \_\_\_\_\_

The number of units and price per unit in Natural Shampoo: \_\_\_\_\_

The number of units and price per unit of High Class Shampoo: \_\_\_\_\_

The number of units and price per unit of Fancy Shampoo: \_\_\_\_\_

The shampoo with the lowest unit price is: \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Consumer reports indicate that the price of a product is often not reflective of its quality. The quality of a cheaper shampoo might actually be better than the quality of a more expensive one.



### ACTIVITY

Make a list of all personal care items and services you would need to purchase each month:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Price</u>

Go to two different drugstores and price the items listed, making use of your comparison shopping skills. Record the prices next to the respective items on your list.

Also consider other personal care services, such as hair cuts, styling, etc. Be sure to consider the cost and frequency of such services in your hygiene budget. There are plenty of places that cut and style hair for \$11 - \$15. For example, Supercuts has haircuts for \$11.99, plus a tip of 15%-20%

Given the fact that personal care items/services can last several months, how much would you budget for this category?

I would budget \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month.

### Laundry

Initially, many of you will not have access to a washer and dryer in your apartment and will have washed your clothes either at coin-operated machines in your apartment building or at a Laundromat.

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

Estimate how many loads of laundry you would have to wash and dry weekly.

**On average, I would wash and dry \_\_\_\_\_ loads of laundry each week.**

Go to a local Laundromat to find out the price for washing and drying one load of laundry. Record your findings in the chart on the next page.

<u>                    </u>	<b>+</b>	<u>                    </u>	<b>×</b>	<u>                    </u>	<b>=</b>	
Cost of Washing One Load of Laundry		Cost of Drying One Load of Laundry		Estimated Number of Loads Per Week		Total Cost of Cleaning Laundry for One Week

In addition, whether or not you have access to a washer and dryer to clean your clothes, you will have to purchase detergent.

Compare the two detergents below and determine which one is the better buy.

	<p>Clean Detergent</p> <p>200 FL OZ (1.56 gallons)</p> <p><i>Washes 50 Loads</i></p> <p><b>\$8.99</b></p>		<p>Super Clean Detergent</p> <p>100 FL OZ</p> <p><i>Washes 25 Loads</i></p> <p><b>\$6.99</b></p>
---	---	--	--

## Independent Living Skills Module I

I would buy \_\_\_\_\_ detergent because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Be aware of concentrates when purchasing detergents. One detergent may be both smaller and more expensive than another. This doesn't mean that it's a bad value. If a detergent is "concentrated", you will need less detergent for each wash. In such a case, you will need to find the cost per load of laundry, not per unit. To find the cost per load

of laundry, divide the price by the number of loads of laundry that can be washed with the container of detergent. This will produce the true value of the product.



### ACTIVITY

Comparison shop for a laundry detergent at your local supermarket or drug store.

I would buy \_\_\_\_\_ detergent at a price of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Based upon your estimates, how much would you budget for laundry and detergent in one month?

### Dry-cleaning

Some of your clothes might have to be dry-cleaned (wool, leather, silk). Take an inventory of your clothes which need to be dry-cleaned and list them in the box below.



### ACTIVITY

## **Independent Living Skills Module I**

Go to your local dry-cleaner and inquire about prices relevant to the clothes on your list. Estimate the monthly cost for dry-cleaning.



## Independent Living Skills Module I

To come up with the approximate amount of money you will have to spend on personal care each month, add:

One month's personal  
hygiene products:

My cost estimate for one  
week's worth of clean  
laundry:

( \$ \_\_\_\_\_ X 4 )

One month's dry-cleaning

---

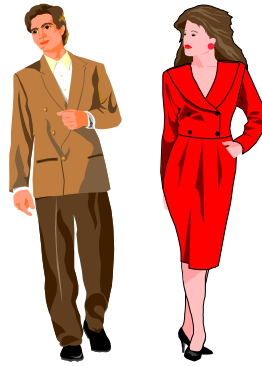
My total personal care  
budget is:

Enter your total in the **Personal Care** box on your budget sheet.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## CLOTHING

When on a limited budget, it is important to be an educated consumer, especially when you are planning and shopping for clothes. Besides the price, there are many factors to be considered. The quality is important because your clothes will have to last for a while. The style is important as well. Fads might fade fast, and you probably will not want to wear your once fashionable and trendy clothes after they become “out of style.” The method for cleaning your clothes also needs to be a consideration; as you may have learned in the exercise in the previous section, dry cleaning is expensive. Certain brand name clothing is often extremely expensive and the quality is normally no better than non-brand name or affordable clothing.



Here are some additional questions to keep in mind when shopping.

- What are the return/exchange policies?
- Do the clothes or shoes feel comfortable?
- Does the zipper work? Are all the buttons attached?
- How often will I be able to wear it?
- Will I need to buy other clothes to match?
- Have I read all the labels and tags carefully?
- Will the material shrink or fade?
- Are the clothes or shoes well made?
- **CAN I AFFORD IT???**

**C**onsider the following:

You have been shopping for a new sweater to wear to a friend’s party next weekend and have finally found not one, but two sweaters that seem perfect to you. The both fit well and look great

Sweater A is on sale for \$15.00. It was originally priced at \$30.00.

Sweater B is not on sale. It is priced at \$19.99.

*Which sweater would you choose?*

---

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Did you have enough information to make a choice? Just in case you're still undecided, here's a closer look at each sweater.

Sweater A: Is bright blue, a color that looks great on you.  
Is woolen and seems to make your skin itch a little  
Must be dry-cleaned only  
Is a final sale item which cannot be returned?

Sweater B: Is also blue  
Is cotton  
Can be machine washed in cold water  
Returnable for store credit within seven days with a sales receipt.

With this new information, which sweater would you choose? Why?



Remember, the more information you have about your choices, the easier it will be to make a decision.

Suppose you had \$80 in your budget to buy a pair of sneakers and a winter jacket. Most of your friends wear expensive brand name sneakers. You would really like to buy similar sneakers but they cost \$65, which would not leave you enough money to buy the winter jacket you need.

What would you do?



## Independent Living Skills Module I

Suppose your budget allowed you to spend \$47.00 per month on clothing and you have saved \$140.00 up to now. You need sneakers, two pairs of pants, two sweatshirts, 6 pairs of socks, and 3 sets of underwear. How much money would you spend on each item?

I would budget:

Sneakers	<input type="text"/>
2 Pairs of pants	<input type="text"/>
2 Sweatshirts	<input type="text"/>
6 Pairs of socks	<input type="text"/>
3 Sets of underwear	<input type="text"/>

---

**Total:            \$140.00**

Some of you might be tempted to buy clothes you like but do not really need. Careful planning helps.



### ACTIVITY

Take an inventory of all your clothes and shoes and list them below.

<b>Summer Clothes/Shoes</b>	<b>Winter Clothes/Shoes</b>

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Evaluate your list and establish what kind of additional clothing and shoes you need and which items you will have to replace over the next twelve months.

<b>Summer Clothes/Shoes</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Winter Clothes/Shoes</b>	<b>Cost</b>



### ACTIVITY

Go to at least two different stores and comparison-shop for the items needed. Record the prices in the designated spaces on your list add up the costs of all items.

My estimated total for clothing over the next 12 months is:

Divide your total by 12 (months) to establish how much your monthly budget for clothing should be.

Enter this amount in the **Clothing** box on your budget sheet.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

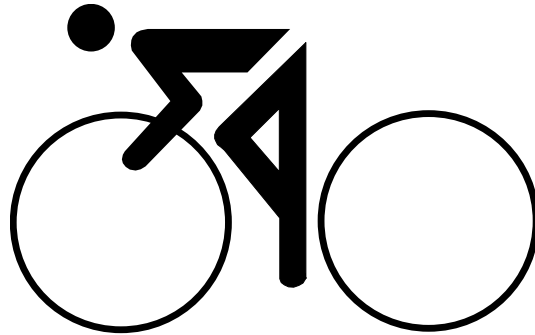
### RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT

Recreational activities are an important part of our lives, enabling us to relax, socialize, and have fun. However, on a tight budget expensive recreational options might be limited. It's important, therefore, to remember that all communities offer a variety of low cost or free recreational activities. In addition, most libraries offer free passes to museums and other attractions. Volunteering can be a fun recreational activity as well.

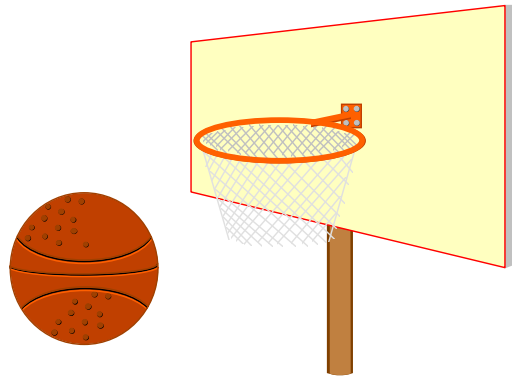


#### ACTIVITY

1. Research low-cost and free recreational activities in your area. Try calling the Park and Recreation Department, City Hall, community action programs, libraries, churches, etc.
2. Develop a list of recreational activities you enjoy. Divide your list into activities you have to pay for (noting their cost) and those which are free.



# Independent Living Skills Module I



## Recreational Activities with a Fee

_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

## Free Recreational Activities

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

After evaluating these options, how much would you budget monthly for recreation and entertainment expenses?

Transfer your estimate to the **Recreation** line on your personal budget sheet.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## MEDICAL

In general, budgeting for health care can be difficult. Taking good care of your health is very important! However, health care costs are rising steadily and the cost of medical care for a serious injury or illness is extremely expensive if you are not covered by health insurance. Once you leave the Department's care, you will no longer be insured through Medicaid. You can reapply for Medicaid Services through your local Office of Transitional Assistance, but you have to be income eligible and certain other restrictions apply.

Most people obtain health insurance (coverage for ongoing and unexpected medical expenses) through their employers. (Most often, you will be eligible for employee health insurance if you work full time.)



Most employers require co-payments, depending on the type of coverage or insurance plan. In addition to those monthly co-payments (which range from about \$20 to \$75), insurance providers require co-payments for each doctor's visit and pharmacist's prescription. These usually range from \$5 to \$20 dollars. Emergency room co-payments have an average cost of \$25-50, but it depends on the type of insurance plan you have.

Some employers offer dental insurance, again with co-payments required. Dental insurance often pays for 80% of needs; you would be responsible for the remaining 20%. Colleges will often offer basic health insurance to students, sometimes included in tuition. If you are planning to go to college, inquire about the specific details. You will need some kind of health insurance whether it is through your job, the college or Mass Health, etc...





## Independent Living Skills Module I

If you are not eligible for Medicaid, don't go to college, or don't work for full-time for one employer, private insurance is available through provider insurance companies. This might be an option for you. Private health insurance costs an average of \$2500 a year, generally covers 80% of costs, and has deductibles (a certain amount of money you are required to pay before the insurance covers the rest).

You are aware by now that health insurance can be expensive. However, having **no** insurance is very risky and could end up being far more expensive than insurance. If none of the options listed above are viable possibilities for you at this time, you will have to pay for doctor's visits and health care facilities out of your own pocket. Thankfully, many communities offer medical care services on a sliding fee basis. That means the fee for services is based on your income. Some even provide free check-ups and emergency care in certain locations.



### ACTIVITY

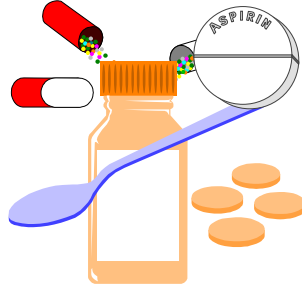
Research lower cost or free health care options in your community and list their location and phone numbers below.

Based on the above information, how much would you budget for health care?

### Medications and Vitamins

Another part of medical costs you will have to plan for are over-the-counter medications and vitamins.

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

List all over-the-counter medications and vitamins you generally use or might need. Go to your local drug store/pharmacy and price the items using your comparison shopping skills.

Product	Purpose	Price

Given the fact that most of these products will last you for several months, how much would you budget for over-the-counter medications and vitamins monthly?

To determine the total amount of medical expenses per month, add:

Monthly health care budget

Over-the-counter medication and vitamin costs for one month:

My total medical budget is:

Record the total on the **Medical** line on your personal budget sheet.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## INSURANCE

You have already estimated your costs of car and health insurance. In addition to those insurance options, you can obtain some additional ones such as life or home insurance. However, you might not really need these types of coverage, particularly when on a limited budget.



### ACTIVITY

Evaluate your insurance needs. Even if you decide not to obtain any policies at this point, call representatives from 2 different companies and inquire about different policies for future information

Would you obtain life and/or home insurance?

---

Explain your choice:

Life:

Home or Other

---

My monthly insurance  
budget is:

If you choose to purchase additional insurance, add the costs of the monthly premiums and record the total in the **Insurance** category on your personal budget sheet.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## SAVINGS

*NOTE: For additional information on savings and start up costs, please refer to the "Savings for Leaving Care" and "Banking" sections in this module.*

Some people find it difficult to save money; they seem to spend all the money they have. Storing a little money away each month, if possible, is **always** important, however. Savings will help you to get through the unexpected events that may occur in life such as illnesses or accidents and will help you prepare for things you may want like a car, college or vocational program, vacation, new clothes, etc.



### ACTIVITY

Make a list of things (items, events) you would like to save for?

Item/Event	Price
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____



How much should you save each month?

**I should save:**

How long would it take you to achieve your goal?

**It would take me \_\_\_\_\_ months.**

# Independent Living Skills Module I

Record the amount you will save monthly in the **Savings** box on your personal budget sheet.

## MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL BUDGET

Now that you have planned for each item, total the amount of all categories on your personal budget sheet. You may have to re-calculate how much you can afford to spend in certain categories before your budget balances out.

**My total is:**

Did you have difficulty keeping your budget within \$804? Explain.

Most people have difficulty figuring out their budget. It usually takes several tries before you can establish a usable budget. Below is a list of budget items with suggested percentages.

Rent & Utilities	43% of \$804 = \$345
Food	20% of \$804 = \$160
Clothing & Personal Care	10% of \$804 = \$80
Recreation/Entertainment	10% of \$804 = \$80
Transportation	7% of \$804 = \$56
Medical/Dental	7% of \$804 = \$56
Savings	5% of \$804 = \$40
Household Maintenance	?
Insurance	?

The sample budget above adheres to a method of budgeting that many banks recommend. This does not mean, however, that this method is perfect for you. You can move money from one budget item to another, depending on your personal needs, but the total must always equal \$804.00. You should not overlook setting aside some of your monthly in a savings account in case of an emergency.



It is difficult to cover all expenses with eight hundred and four dollars. Imagine how your budget and lifestyle would change if you would earn more money. Education can be the

## Independent Living Skills Module I

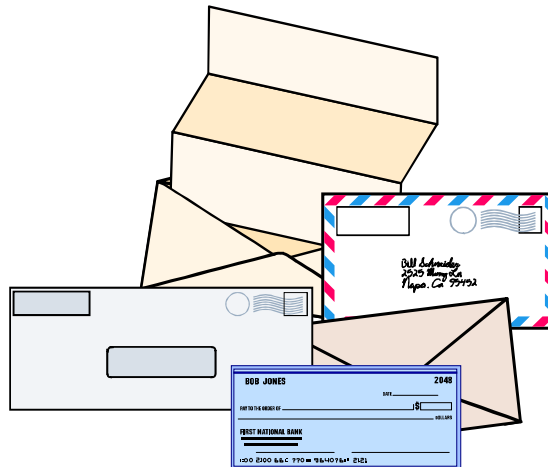
key to greater financial success and a better standard of living. For further information about the opportunities of education and the job market, refer to Module III.

### FOLLOWING YOUR BUDGET

Sticking to your budget might be difficult for many of you, but it is necessary for financial survival. Although there might be a little room to be flexible on some budgetary items, you will basically have to keep within your budget's limits in order to not end up with empty pockets before the end of the month.

What consequences could straying away from your budget have for you?

Throughout your life, you will have to be prepared to deal with many situations which might tempt you to ignore your budget. Giving in to these temptations will only lead you into a financial crisis.



**C**onsider the following:

Your friend calls you in the middle of a crisis. He tells you that he needs to borrow \$100 for an emergency. He promises that he will give the money back to you within a few days. However, this friend has not always been particularly reliable and the only money you have has already been set aside for next month's rent, which is due in three days. You really want to help your friend but are afraid that you'll get evicted if you don't pay the rent in three days.

*What would you do?*

## Independent Living Skills Module I



It is Friday and you have \$20.00 left for grocery shopping. Your refrigerator is empty and it will be another four days until your next paycheck. Your friends stop by and ask you to go out with them for dinner and the movies. You really don't feel like sitting around your apartment by yourself but by the time you paid for dinner and the movie, there would be no money left for food.

*What would you do?*



You have lost your monthly bus pass and you are thinking about purchasing a new one. You have no money budgeted for this extra expense although you may be able to use some of the money you set aside for recreation. You aren't sure that you want to use your recreation funds, but you don't want to walk 4 miles to and from work each day either.

*What would you do?*



You've met a guy/girl through work that you really like, but you only work together once a week. You really want to talk to him/her every day on the phone, but he/she lives in another town and the calls are billed as long distance. You haven't budgeted for the extra expense and know that you can't afford it.

*What would you do?*



## Independent Living Skills Module I

You went clothing shopping and bought a great outfit you had been hoping to find for quite some time. When you arrived home, you found a bill from your dentist in the mailbox which you hadn't expected. The only way you could possibly pay the bill would be to return the outfit you've just bought

*What would you do?*



Can you think of additional situations that would make it difficult for you to follow your budget? If so, please describe.



Develop strategies with your social worker, foster parent, or staff that would help you to stick with your personal budget.



## Independent Living Skills Module I

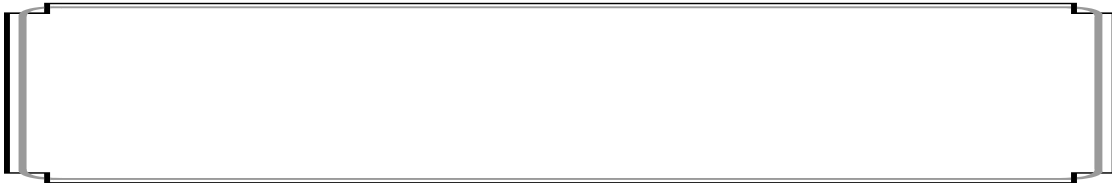
MY STRATEGIES ARE:



### **START UP COSTS / SAVING FOR LEAVING CARE**

The personal budget you have established in the previous sections targets ongoing living expenses that you will be responsible for once you are living independently. You will also have to save some money before moving out on your own. The amount of money to be saved depends on your plans for life after care. In the following exercises, we will assume that you will move into your own apartment. However, if you have definite plans to move in with a roommate, you could divide all costs by half.

How much money do you think you will need to move out on your own?



Let's evaluate your estimate by taking a closer look at the start up costs associated with living independently.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### ***Rent and Security Deposit***

Landlords usually require the first and last month's rent before allowing a new tenant to move into an apartment. A security deposit is up to the landlord. It is usually the price of one month's rent and occasionally you'll find the security deposit is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of one month's rent. (For more information, refer to Module IV.)

**I would need \$ \_\_\_\_\_**



### ***Utility Deposits and Initial Service Fees***

Some utility companies require security deposits or charge initial service fees. The telephone company, for example, will charge you to initially connect your phone.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### ACTIVITY

Call all appropriate utility companies and inquire about security deposits or initial service fees and list them below.

### Security Deposits/Initial Service Fees

Phone	\$ _____
Electric	\$ _____
Gas	\$ _____
Oil	\$ _____
Cable	\$ _____
<i><b>TOTAL</b></i>	\$ _____



### ***Food, Cleaning Supplies, and Personal Care Items***

When you start to live independently, your initial costs for food, cleaning supplies, and personal care items will be somewhat higher for the first few weeks than you estimated in your ongoing personal budget. With that in mind, establish how much you would have to spend for food and household items for the first two weeks when living independently.

**To be purchased:**

**I would need \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### **Furniture, Appliances, and Household Items**

Before you move into your own apartment, you will need at least basic furniture, household items, and appliances. Some things you might be able to get from relatives, friends, or foster parents while it will be necessary to purchase others. You might choose to buy some items used, although some might only be found in department stores. (For more information, refer to Module IV.)



#### **ACTIVITY**

Use the following checklist to estimate the costs of listed items by pricing them in new and used furniture stores, flyers, newspaper ads, and department stores.

#### **Furniture/Appliances/Household Items**

Item	Have It	Need It	Cost
Bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Couch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Table	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Lamp	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Bed sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Towels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Pots & Pans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Dishes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Silverware	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Cooking utensils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Toaster	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Microwave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Can opener	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Toilet plunger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Shelf	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Item	Have It	Need It	Cost
Dresser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Stereo system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Desk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
First Aid Kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
Curtains/blinds/shades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____
<b>Total</b>			\$ _____

After adding the prices of each individual item, how much would you budget for household items, furniture and appliances?

**I would budget \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## Miscellaneous and Emergency Costs

It would be a good idea to budget for some unexpected or miscellaneous costs when first moving out. For example, you should consider the cost of a moving van or rented truck if you are planning to use one.

Are there costs which are not yet covered in your start up expenses? Can you think of situations where some unexpected expense might come up? If so, describe.

How much would you budget for miscellaneous or unexpected expenses?

**I would budget \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

To estimate your start up costs, add up all individual items.

FIRST MONTH'S RENT AND LAST MONTH'S RENT/SECURITY DEPOSIT

UTILITY SECURITY DEPOSITS/INITIAL SERVICE FEES

FOOD, CLEANING SUPPLIES, PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

FURNITURE, APPLIANCES, HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

MISCELLANEOUS AND UNEXPECTED EXPENSES

---

TOTAL ESTIMATE OF START UP COSTS

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Your total estimate of start up costs might seem like a lot of money to you. As you did with your personal budget, however, you can review each item and evaluate whether or not you can get by with less money. Once you have established your final total, you will need to develop a savings plan.



### ACTIVITY

Estimate how much you will have to save each month to reach your goal prior to leaving care.

**I would have to save \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month.**

Will it be easy or difficult for you to save this money? Describe.

What could get in the way of reaching your savings goal?

Develop strategies with your foster parent, social worker, or program staff to help you save for your start up costs.

M y s t r a t e g i e s a r e :

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## CHECKING AND SAVING ACCOUNTS

You have now figured out how you're going to spend your money. As you probably already know, it's not practical to carry all your cash on you or to leave large amounts of money in your home. It's also not a good idea to send cash through the mail, as it can be stolen. Saving accounts and checking accounts are the most common methods of storing money. These are services offered by most banks and savings and loan associations. However, not all places with names that sound like the names of banks are financial institutions that are regulated by the federal government. When you deposit your money in the bank, make certain that it is protected by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). When using a savings and loan, be sure that it is protected by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC). The FDIC and the FSLIC guarantee that if a bank or savings and loan goes out of business, your deposit is protected up to \$100,000.00.



It is important to remember that all banks don't have the same interest rates, the same service charges, or the same minimum account balance amounts. A majority of larger banks offer online services to make banking easier. For example; sending bills and checking your account. If you have a computer you should see how you could get on line. Usually it is a free service, but check with your bank first. This could save you a lot of time and it could help you to manage your money more effectively. You must comparison shop for savings and checking accounts like you do for other things in order to get the services that suit you. When choosing either or both types of accounts, it is important to remember your financial goals and needs.

### Savings Accounts



As we saw in the budgeting section, it is important to build up some saved money, and even saving just a little bit of money at a time can help you reach your financial goals.

Money in a savings account earns interest. The bank pays you interest for the privilege of holding your money. Savings accounts can also be used to temporarily store money. If you have difficulty with balancing a checkbook or use checks irresponsibly, you can use saving accounts in combination with money orders to pay your bills.



# Independent Living Skills Module I

For what purposes would *you* use a savings account?



## ACTIVITY

Visit two different local banks and obtain the following information for each.

Bank A	Bank B
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Office Hours:	Office Hours:
Describe at least 2 types of savings accounts:	Describe at least 2 types of savings accounts:
What is the rate of interest on a passbook/savings account?	What is the rate of interest on a passbook/savings account?
What is the minimum amount of money you are required to keep in a savings account?	What is the minimum amount of money you are required to keep in a savings account?

## Independent Living Skills Module I

How do you withdraw money from the account?

Are there any fees or service charges associated with the account? If so, list them.

What happens if you lose a passbook?

How do you withdraw money from the account?

Are there any fees or service charges associated with the account? If so, list them.

What happens if you lose a passbook?

If you opened a savings account, which of the two banks would you choose? Why?



### ACTIVITY

If you don't have a savings account, open one at the bank which best suits your need.

## Checking Accounts



Checking accounts are different from savings accounts. They provide you with an alternative to cash. Instead of paying bills or purchasing items with cash, you can usually write a check for the amount of the bill. The bank will then subtract the amount of the check from your account and give your money to the agency to which you made out the check. You are responsible for keeping a record in the back of your checkbook of the checks you have written and the deposits you have made into your account. At the end of the month you will receive a monthly bank statement which summarizes your account activity and returns your canceled checks. (A canceled check is a check that has been cashed by the payee.) The canceled checks can be used as receipts for your purchases.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Many banks offer a telephone service, which enables you to call in at any time to inquire about your account balance, and have online services. (Some banks will not offer checking accounts to people under 18.)

For what purposes would you use a checking account?



### ACTIVITY

Visit two different local banks and obtain the following information for each.

Bank A	Bank B
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Office Hours:	Office Hours:
Describe at least 2 types of checking accounts:	Describe at least 2 types of checking accounts:
How do you open a checking account?	How do you open a checking account?

## Independent Living Skills Module I

<p>What does it cost to have a checking account? (Is there a cost per check cashed? Service charges?) What are some of the services the bank will charge you for?</p>	<p>What does it cost to have a checking account? (Is there a cost per check cashed? Service charges?) What are some of the services the bank will charge you for?</p>
<p>Is there a minimum balance you must maintain?</p>	<p>Is there a minimum balance you must maintain?</p>
<p>What is a canceled check?</p>	<p>What is a canceled check?</p>
<p>Should you keep canceled checks? Why or why not?</p>	<p>Should you keep canceled checks? Why or why not?</p>
<p>What happens if a check bounces? What does the bank charge you if they cover the check for you?</p>	<p>What happens if a check bounces? What does the bank charge you if they cover the check for you?</p>
<p>Does the bank have a 24-hour Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)? Is there a fee per transaction or a monthly fee to use the ATM?</p>	<p>Does the bank have a 24-hour ATM? Is there a fee per transaction or a monthly fee to use the ATM?</p>

## Independent Living Skills Module I

There are many types of checking accounts. Again, remember to comparison shop for the types of features (service charges, location, minimum balance) that best suits your needs.

Which of the banks would you choose? Explain.



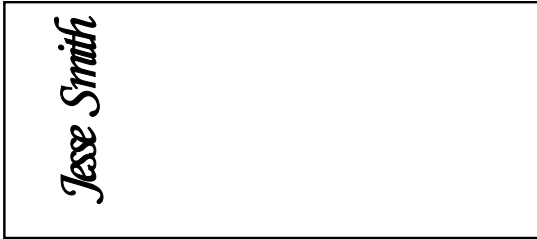
No matter what type of checking account you open, most have the same kinds of checks. You must take care to write checks properly so that the bank will do exactly what you want. Always follow these rules when you write a check:

1. Always write a check in ink.
2. Date the check the day you write it. Never pre- or postdate it. Write the amount of the check in numbers close to the dollar sign so that no one can insert a number before the amount you have written
3. Write the amount of the check in words starting of the far left side. After the last word, draw a line to fill the unused space.
4. Always sign the check the same way you signed the signature card at the bank.
5. Never sign a blank check.
6. Record each check in your check register *immediately* after it is written.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Types of Check Endorsements

In order to cash a check that is made out to you, you must first endorse it by signing your name on the back of the check. There are three types of endorsements: a) a blank endorsement, b) a restrictive endorsement, and c) a special endorsement.

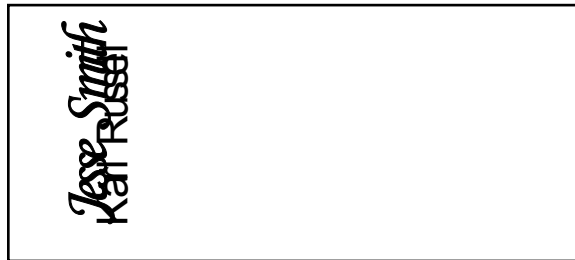


Blank



Restrictive

Use a restrictive endorsement if you are mailing your check to the bank.



Special

Use the special endorsement only when you are signing your check over to another person. These types of endorsements are seldom used. Many places will not accept the signing over of a check to another person (sometimes known as “third party” checks).

*Never endorse a check before you are ready to cash it.*

## The Check Below Is Filled Out Properly

JESSE SMITH	425
101 MAIN STREET	5-595-110
CAMFORD, MA 00031	
	<del>Order 22nd</del> 20 <b>05</b>
Pay to the	
Order of <b>David's Department</b>	<b>\$ 21.45</b>
<b>Twenty One and</b>	<b>49</b> 100 Dollars
BOSTON BANK	
Boston, Massachusetts	
Memo <b>Curtains</b>	<b>Jesse Smith</b>
0:110011897: 1 2090 : 2323 : 1431	

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Banking Skills



### ACTIVITY

Practice your banking skills by completing the following exercises with the blank check and deposit slips provided.

1. On May 4th of this year, you received a statement from the Boston Bank showing that you have \$116.42 in your checking account. Enter this in the register in the box marked “Balance “ on page 79.
2. On May 6th, you went to Honest Auto Repair to pick up your car. The mechanic charged \$45.00 to fix the fender, and you paid the shop with check #101. Write out the check, enter it in your register, and calculate the new balance.
3. On May 7th, you bought \$26.15 in groceries. You paid the Thrifty-Mart Grocery Store with check #102. After you write the check, enter it in the register and calculate the new balance.
4. On May 12th, you received a telephone bill for \$29.68. You pay it with check #103. Write out the check, enter it in your register, and calculate the new balance.
5. On May 15th, you received your paycheck of \$126.33. You put \$30.00 in savings and \$96.33 in checking. Fill out the deposit slips for both accounts. Enter the checking account deposit in the register and find the new balance. (Most check registers have a place to record your savings deposits at the very back of the register. Be sure not to mix up checking account and saving account deposits.)
6. On May 18th, you bought some new clothing from Her/Sir Fashions for \$36.17. You paid with check #104. Write the check, enter it into the register, and find the new balance.
7. On May 22nd, you bought more groceries from Thrifty Mart for \$52.76. You paid with check #105. Write the check and enter it into the register, then find the new balance.
8. On May 25th, you received a \$20.00 check for your birthday from your Aunt Esther. Fill out a deposit slip for your checking account, enter it in the register, and find the new balance.
9. On May 30th, you wrote a check for #106 for \$15.00 cash for the Memorial Day Weekend. Write the check and enter it into the register and find the new balance.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

HERE ARE SOME BLANK CHECKS FOR USE WITH THE ACTIVITY.

Your Name	101
Your Street Address	5-595-110
Your Town, MA, Zip Code	_____ 20_____
Pay to the Order of _____	\$ <input type="text"/>
_____	Dollars
BOSTON BANK Boston, Massachusetts	
Memo _____	_____
0:110011897: 1 2090 : 2323 : 1431	

Your Name	102
Your Street Address	5-595-110
Your Town, MA, Zip Code	_____ 20_____
Pay to the Order of _____	\$ <input type="text"/>
_____	Dollars
BOSTON BANK Boston, Massachusetts	
Memo _____	_____
0:110011897: 1 2090 : 2323 : 1431	

Your Name	103
Your Street Address	5-595-110
Your Town, MA, Zip Code	_____ 20_____
Pay to the Order of _____	\$ <input type="text"/>
_____	Dollars
BOSTON BANK Boston, Massachusetts	
Memo _____	_____
0:110011897: 1 2090 : 2323 : 1431	



# Independent Living Skills Module I

Your Name	104
Your Street Address	5-595-110
Your Town, MA, Zip Code	_____ 20 _____
Pay to the Order of _____	\$ <input type="text"/>
_____	Dollars
BOSTON BANK Boston, Massachusetts	
Memo _____	_____
0:110011897: 1 2090 : 2323 : 1431	

Your Name	105
Your Street Address	5-595-110
Your Town, MA, Zip Code	_____ 20 _____
Pay to the Order of _____	\$ <input type="text"/>
_____	Dollars
BOSTON BANK Boston, Massachusetts	
Memo _____	_____
0:110011897: 1 2090 : 2323 : 1431	

Your Name	106
Your Street Address	5-595-110
Your Town, MA, Zip Code	_____ 20 _____
Pay to the Order of _____	\$ <input type="text"/>
_____	Dollars
BOSTON BANK Boston, Massachusetts	
Memo _____	_____
0:110011897: 1 2090 : 2323 : 1431	

# Independent Living Skills Module I

USE THESE DEPOSIT SLIPS WITH THE ACTIVITY.

<b>CHECKING ACCOUNG DEPOSIT</b>			<b>Dollars</b>	<b>Cents</b>
Your Name	5-110-595	<b>Cash Total</b>		
Your Street Address		<b>List Checks</b>	Check #	
Your Town, MA, Zip Code				
_____ 20 _____				
BOSTON BANK				
Boston, Massachusetts				
50211   : 9099"   00":98976		<b>TOTAL</b>		

Be Sure Each Item Is Properly Endorsed.

<b>CHECKING ACCOUNG DEPOSIT</b>			<b>Dollars</b>	<b>Cents</b>
Your Name	5-110-595	<b>Cash Total</b>		
Your Street Address		<b>List Checks</b>	Check #	
Your Town, MA, Zip Code				
_____ 20 _____				
BOSTON BANK				
Boston, Massachusetts				
50211   : 9099"   00":98976		<b>TOTAL</b>		

Be Sure Each Item Is Properly Endorsed.

<b>SAVINGS ACCOUNG DEPOSIT</b>			<b>Dollars</b>	<b>Cents</b>
Your Name	5-110-765	<b>Cash Total</b>		
Your Street Address		<b>List Checks</b>	Check #	
Your Town, MA, Zip Code				
_____ 20 _____				
BOSTON BANK				
Boston, Massachusetts				
20211   : 9019"   00":98576		<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		
		Less Cash Back		
		<b>TOTAL</b>		

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



# Independent Living Skills Module I

You will find your checking account statement from the Boston Bank below. It covers your transactions (all deposits and checks cashed) for the month of May, the same transactions listed in the previous activity. Notice that one check did not reach the bank before the statement was printed. Notice also that you have been charged a service charge for using the bank's services.

<b>Boston Bank</b>				
PO Box 333				
Boston, MA 01234				
<b>PERSONAL CHECKING ACCOUNT</b>			ACCT # 0034-7654	
Statement Period: May 1- 30, 2005			Your Name	
Tax ID# 033-34-6676			Street Address	
			Town, MA Zip Code	
DATE OF POSTING	TRANSACTION	AMMOUNT	BALANCES	
			Checking	Loan
1-May	Previous Balance		116.42	
5-May	Check Paid #101	45.00	71.42	
7-May	Check Paid #102	26.15	45.27	
12-May	Check Paid #103	29.68	15.59	
15-May	Checking Deposit	96.33	111.92	
18-May	Check Paid #104	36.17	75.75	
22-May	Check Paid #105	52.76	22.99	
25-May	Checking Deposit	20.00	42.99	
29-May	Service Chage	5.00	37.99	
30-May	NEW BALANCE		37.99	

## CHECK SERIAL RECAP

DATE	SERIAL	AMOUNT	DATE	SERIAL	AMOUNT	DATE	SERIAL	AMOUNT
6-May	101	45.00	7-May	102	26.15	12-May	103	29.68
18-May	104	36.17	18-May	105	52.76			

<b>CHECKING ACTIVITY:</b>	CHECKS 5	DEPOSITS 2	DEPOSITED 2 Items
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# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Balancing Your Checkbook

You will know that your checkbook register is “balanced,” or correct, by comparing the balance in your register to the “New Balance” shown on the bank’s statement. To balance your checkbook, complete the following steps.

First you must obtain your new checkbook balance:

1. Enter the balance from your register on Line A. **A.** \_\_\_\_\_
2. Enter the amount of any service charge on Line B. **B.** \_\_\_\_\_
3. Subtract Line B from Line A. **C.** \_\_\_\_\_

This is your new checkbook balance.

Now you need to obtain the current bank balance.

Compare the check numbers and amounts on the statement with the checks listed on your register. Below, write down any checks written during the statement period and listed in your register but not in the bank’s statement.

Check Number	Amount
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
	<b>Total: \$</b> _____

2. Write down the new balance from the statement on Line D. **D.** \_\_\_\_\_
3. Enter any deposits shown in the register but not in statement on Line E. **E.** \_\_\_\_\_
4. Add Lines D and E; enter this subtotal on Line F. **F.** \_\_\_\_\_
5. Enter total amount of checks not shown in statement on Line G. (Total from Step 1 above). **G.** \_\_\_\_\_
6. Subtract Line G from Line F. Place result on line H. **H.** \_\_\_\_\_

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Line H should agree with your checkbook balance (Line C). If it doesn't, examine it carefully to see that you have correctly added and subtracted all the deposits and checks for the month. Also, make sure you have listed, in your register, all of the transactions (deposits and checks) you've made.

### Is a Checking Account Right For You?

Before you decide to open a checking account, you need to evaluate whether or not it is right for you.



#### ACTIVITY

List all the advantages and disadvantages of having a checking account at this time.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>

While checking accounts will give you the opportunity to conveniently store your money and pay your bills, they also bear certain risks, particularly for individuals who have difficulty managing money or balancing a checkbook.

**C**onsider the following:

Steven opened a checking account three weeks ago. Although he tries to keep track of his spending and deposits, he is getting confused because he does not take the time to record his transactions properly. Today, Steve gets a notice from his bank in the mail which states that three of his checks have bounced.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

What consequences could the bounced checks have for Steven?

What should he do?

### **Writing “bad checks” can have serious legal consequences!**

Sometimes checking accounts can be tempting, particularly if you don’t have your spending habits under control.

**C**onsider the following:

Amy opened a checking account one month ago and has always kept track of her spending and deposits. Today, Amy sees a really nice dress on sale for \$39.99, the only one left in her size. When Amy checks her check register, she discovers that she only has \$21.00 in her account and she won’t get paid for another 4 days. She debates whether or not to get the dress anyway, thinking that she could probably get \$18.99 somehow and deposit it before the check clears. What do you think? What would you do in Amy’s situation?

Can you think of any difficulties you might have with managing a checking account? If so, describe them below.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Can you think of strategies which would help you to handle a checking account responsibly?  
List them below.

**My Strategies Are:**



Remember, if you think that you're not ready for a checking account, you can always pay your bills with money orders. (For more information, refer to the "Money Orders" section in this module.)



### ACTIVITY

If appropriate, open a checking account at a bank of your choice.



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINES (ATMs)

Although ATMs are very popular, convenient, and easy-to-use to both deposit and withdraw money in either checking or saving accounts, they also bear certain risks for those of you who might have difficulty managing money. Because ATM machines allow you access to your money at all times, there may be a greater temptation to spend money in a way you hadn't planned.

Some ATM machines, if they are not affiliated with your bank, will not provide you with your account balance. This makes it difficult to keep track of your money, especially if you forget to record the ATM transaction in your checkbook register. Similarly, many grocery stores now offer customers the opportunity to pay for purchases with their ATM cards, again without giving a balance.

With this in mind, evaluate the advantages and disadvantages an ATM card would have for you.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>

Would you get an ATM card? Explain your decision.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

If you have decided that you will use Automated Teller Machines, here are a few helpful hints you should keep in mind.

- Choose your secret password very carefully. Don't use your name, initials, phone number, or birth date.
- Never write your password on your ATM card. If you lose the card, anyone who finds it would be able to withdraw your money.
- Don't announce your password to others. Remember, once you tell a secret to someone, it's not a secret anymore.
- Remember to take your receipt after each transaction, even when you're in a hurry. You'll need the receipt to help you balance your monthly statement and, if you have any questions about your transaction, you'll need the receipt to speak to the bank personnel.
- Be sure to enter all your transactions (deposits or withdrawals) in you checkbook/savings register so that you'll always know what your balance is.
- Don't forget your ATM card at the machine after you've finished your transaction!

## MONEY ORDERS

Money orders can be purchased for a fee ranging from \$.75 to \$2.00 at any bank or post office and in many convenient stores. Money orders can be used to pay bills (rent, utilities, etc.) in the same manner as a personal check. The amount of the bill is paid in cash to the teller or salesperson, who then issues the money order in the same amount. The order needs to be signed and dated, and information about the agency you are paying needs to be filled out in the appropriate spaces. After completing your money order, make sure to detach your receipt at the bottom and keep it in a safe place. This is your proof of purchase. If the person/company you were paying states that they never received it, you will have the receipt with its identification number to offer as proof of payment.

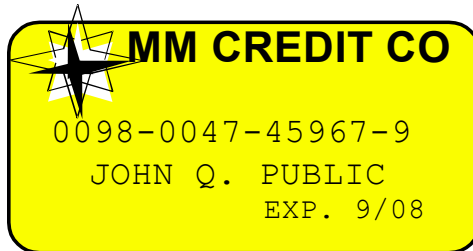
SAMPLE:

<b>MONEY ORDER</b>		789-0154-6249
First Federal Bank	Boston, MA	
		VOID IF OVER \$1000
Forty Three dollars and Twenty Five cents		\$ 0043.25
Pay To: _____		
Company Name		/ Address
Signature: _____		Date _____
KEEP THE YELLOW COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS		

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### UNDERSTANDING CREDIT AND CHARGE CARDS

Credit and charge cards are different from checking accounts. Checking accounts use only your money (i.e., you must have enough money in your account to cover any incoming checks), while credit and charge cards are a form of a loan from the credit company to you. While this type of loan seems to make shopping more convenient, keep in mind that it also bears certain risks (like overspending.) In addition, many credit institutions have a yearly membership fee. Some credit and charge card accounts also include an additional “service charge” or interest fee for certain kinds of transactions. It is important to understand how and when these additional fees are included.




In order to get a credit or charge card from a bank, service, or store, you must fill out an application form. Approval will be based upon a number of considerations, including your present income, length of employment, the balance and activity in your checking or savings account, and your credit history (Have you ever had credit/charge cards before? Did you pay your bills on time? Have you bounced checks?). Approval is not automatic. If you have just begun full-time employment or do not have a credit history, your application might not be approved. You can always re-apply, however, at a later date.

A credit card allows you to borrow only up to a certain amount, called your “credit limit.” When you purchase something with a credit card, the credit card company is actually paying for you. At the end of the month, the credit card sends you a statement telling you how much money you owe them. If you have a charge card from a particular store, similar loaning and billing procedures are followed.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

This is an example of a credit card statement:

 <b>MM CREDIT CO</b> P.O. Box 008 Boston, MA 02116	<i>Return top portion with your check or money order.</i>										
	Due Date: <b>6/30/05</b>										
Your Name Street Address City, State Zip	Amount Enclosed:										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Account Number</td> <td>Exp. Date</td> <td>Credit Line</td> <td>Available Credit</td> </tr> <tr> <td>382-792-730-6</td> <td>9/08</td> <td>\$500</td> <td>\$377.67</td> </tr> </table>	Account Number	Exp. Date	Credit Line	Available Credit	382-792-730-6	9/08	\$500	\$377.67			
Account Number	Exp. Date	Credit Line	Available Credit								
382-792-730-6	9/08	\$500	\$377.67								
Total Account Balance:	<b>\$122.33</b>	Total Minimum Payment:	<b>\$40.00</b>								
<b>DETAILED TRANSACTION SUMMARY FOR PERIOD OF 5/01/95 to 5/31/95</b>											
<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Merchant ID#</b>	<b>Bank</b>								
05/11/05	\$46.12	LA Boutique	458875344								
05/21/05	\$76.21	Al Cleaners	842196002								
<b>Monthly Percentage Rate 1.5%</b>											

The total balance is the amount of money you owe the credit card company for charging things during a specific period. The total minimum payment is the part of the total balance that **must** be paid by the payment date. The available credit lets you know how much more you can borrow before reaching your credit line. “Credit line” means the same thing as “credit limit,” and you can’t charge more than your limit. If you do, the credit card company may cancel your card. Transaction date, amount, and merchant ID# show when and where you used your card, and how much you charged.

You have two ways to pay off your credit card charges:

1. You can pay the total balance (\$122.33) all at once and be finished with it.
2. You can pay anywhere between the total minimum payment (\$40.00) and the total balance (\$122.33), and pay the rest over several months.

**Option 1** is good, but you may not have that much money available. You may only be able to pay a little bit at a time, which is your second option. When you use **Option 2**, however, the credit card company charges interest. They charge you for the privilege of putting off payment until later. In the end, you’re paying for your loan ( the things you charged) *and* the interest on the loan, which means that your total payment will exceed the amount of the original loan.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Which option should you use? **Option 1** means you end up paying back only the money you borrowed. **Option 2** means paying only a small amount of money at any given time but paying back extra money on interest.

Try to pay off your loans from the credit card company as soon as possible. If you wait, you can end up paying a lot of excess interest.



### ACTIVITY

Go to a department store and a bank to research additional information about credit and charge cards.

As stated in the beginning of this section, although there are advantages to credit and charge cards, they also bear risks.

**C**onsider the following:

Susan has been working full-time as a nurse's aid for the past twelve months. She is on a fairly tight budget and, after paying for rent, utilities, food, and transportation, Susan has approximately \$100 a month for miscellaneous expenses. A few months ago, Susan was approved for a credit card with a \$500 credit line. As soon as she got the card, Susan went shopping and charged \$200 for clothes. Two days later, Susan bought a new TV for \$280. When Susan got her statement in the mail three and a half weeks later, she was a little surprised. She had not anticipated that she had to pay for all these items and interest as well. Actually, it almost felt as if the items she charged were free, since charging did not have an influence on her cash flow.

How do you think Susan will pay the money back?

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How long do you think it will take her to pay off her credit card balance?

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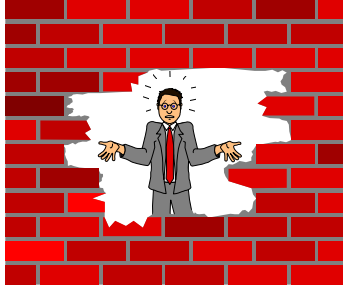
---

Do you think Susan would have bought the items if she had not had a charge card?

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## Independent Living Skills Module I



Many people get themselves into dangerous “credit holes,” meaning they buy much more than they can afford because it seems so simple to use the credit card now and pay later. Most of these people can never pay off the debt they owe, and the high interest rate on credit cards makes things worse. Some people spend years paying off debts that they have created through careless charging.

While credit and charge cards can be helpful in establishing a good credit history, necessary to apply for larger bank loans or to finance a car for example, they can negatively impact your ability to get credit if they are misused. You should be aware of the long range effects of bad credit.

**C**onsider the following:

Susan struggled for quite some time to pay off the charges for her purchases. She was late with her payments several times and actually missed one or two. Now, three years later, Susan (who has gotten a promotion and a raise at work) is shopping for a used car. After looking around she finds a car she likes and can afford, with reasonable monthly payments. She then applies at the car dealership for financing. The salesperson checks Susan’s credit history through one of the computerized credit rating companies and informs her that her loan has been disapproved.

What do you think has happened?

---

---

After evaluating all the information, do you feel that credit and charge cards are a good option for you now or in the future? Explain your choice.

If you think that credit cards are a good option for you, remember to be very cautious when using them and never charge more than you can afford!

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR PAYCHECK

Most employers pay their employees by check and, for many people, receiving that check is a very satisfying experience! Some people, however, are confused about why their check is less than they expected.

To avoid unwelcome surprises, you should know that there are a number of deductions that are taken from your paycheck. Your check stub (attached to your check) will identify your **gross pay**, which is the total amount of money that you earned, and your “take-home pay” or **net income**, the amount that is left for you after all the deductions are taken.

The standard payroll deductions are:

- Federal income tax
- State income tax
- Social Security/Retirement

Other possible deductions:

- Health and hospital insurance
- Life insurance
- Union dues

***Keep your check stubs!!! They are an important record of your earnings and deductions.***

PAYROLL CHECK	<b>CARSON'S DEPARTMENT STORE</b> 123 Elm Street Anytown, MA 01234	51-42 321
<i>Pay to the Order of</i>	<b>JESSE SMITH</b>	
		<b>\$ 145.62</b>
	<b>ONE HUNDRED FORTY FIVE AND SIXTY TWO/100</b>	
BOSTON NATIONAL BANK Boston, Massachusetts 0:075341 2090 : 231112 : 1		<i>Ροβερτ Ω. Χαρσον</i> Robert W. Carson. President

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Below is a sample payroll check stub. Often, a paycheck stub will also include year-to-date totals on all earnings and deductions, a breakdown of the hourly wage(s), and other necessary information.

<b>CARSON'S DEPARTMENT STORE</b>		Date of Issue: 10 July 2005	
<b>NAME: JESSE SMITH</b>		Pay Period: 7/1/05 - 7/8/05	
<b>EMP. #: 504</b>		Check #: 324	
<b>SS#: 001-01-0011</b>			
Regular Hours: 30	<b>GROSS EARNINGS:</b>	<b>\$202.25</b>	
Overtime Hours: 0	Current		
		<u><b>Deductions</b></u>	
Hourly Rate: \$6.75	Federal Tax	34.38	
Overtime Rate: \$8.00	State Tax	8.10	
	FICA	14.15	
<b>NET EARNINGS</b>		<b>\$145.62</b>	

Jesse's net pay, his take home pay, is \$145.62. Although he earned \$202.25 for the week of July first through eighth, his employer is required to deduct \$34.38 for Federal tax, \$8.10 for State tax, and \$14.15 for F.I.C.A. (Social Security). This leaves Jesse with \$145.62 for himself.



### ACTIVITY

Take a look at your paycheck and answer the following questions

What is your gross income?

---

How much do you pay in Federal taxes?

---

How much do you pay in State taxes?

---

How much do you pay to F.I.C.A.?

---

Do you have any other deductions? If so, describe.

---

What are your net earnings?

---



## **Independent Living Skills Module I**

### **THE W-4 FORM**

When you start a job, you are asked to complete a W-4 Form so your employer can withhold the correct amount of Federal income tax. Read the instructions and fill in the sample on this and the following pages. Complete State Form M-4 (see page 92) only if you claim a different number of exemptions for Massachusetts and United States income taxes. If you have questions call, your local Internal Revenue Service Office, or call 1-800-424-3676 (toll free).

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Form W-4 (2005)

**Purpose.** Complete Form W-4 so that your employer can withhold the correct federal income tax from your pay. Because your tax situation may change, you may want to refigure your withholding each year.

**Exemption from withholding.** If you are exempt, complete only lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 and sign the form to validate it. Your exemption for 2005 expires February 15, 2006. See Pub. 505, Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax.

**Note.** You cannot claim exemption from withholding if (a) your income exceeds \$800 and includes more than \$250 of unearned income (for example, interest and dividends) and (b) another person can claim you as a dependent on their tax return.

**Basic instructions.** If you are not exempt, complete the Personal Allowances Worksheet below. The worksheets on page 2 adjust your withholding allowances based on itemized deductions, certain credits, adjustments to income, or two-

earner/two-job situations. Complete all worksheets that apply. However, you may claim fewer (or zero) allowances.

**Head of household.** Generally, you may claim head of household filing status on your tax return only if you are unmarried and pay more than 50% of the costs of keeping up a home for yourself and your dependent(s) or other qualifying individuals. See line E below.

**Tax credits.** You can take projected tax credits into account in figuring your allowable number of withholding allowances. Credits for child or dependent care expenses and the child tax credit may be claimed using the Personal Allowances Worksheet below. See Pub. 919, How Do I Adjust My Tax Withholding? for information on converting your other credits into withholding allowances.

**Nonwage income.** If you have a large amount of nonwage income, such as interest or dividends, consider making estimated tax payments using Form 1040-ES, Estimated Tax for Individuals. Otherwise, you may owe additional tax.

**Two earners/two jobs.** If you have a working spouse or more than one job, figure the total number of allowances you are entitled to claim on all jobs using worksheets from only one Form W-4. Your withholding usually will be most accurate when all allowances are claimed on the Form W-4 for the highest paying job and zero allowances are claimed on the others.

**Nonresident alien.** If you are a nonresident alien, see the instructions for Form 8233 before completing this Form W-4.

**Check your withholding.** After your Form W-4 takes effect, use Pub. 919 to see how the dollar amount you are having withheld compares to your projected total tax for 2005. See Pub. 919, especially if your earnings exceed \$125,000 (single) or \$175,000 (married).

**Recent name change?** If your name on line 1 differs from that shown on your social security card, call 1-800-772-1213 to initiate a name change and obtain a social security card showing your correct name.

### Personal Allowances Worksheet (Keep for your records.)

<b>A</b> Enter "1" for yourself if no one else can claim you as a dependent. . . . .	<b>A</b> _____
<b>B</b> Enter "1" if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are single and have only one job; or</li> <li>• You are married, have only one job, and your spouse does not work; or</li> <li>• Your wages from a second job or your spouse's wages (or the total of both) are \$1,000 or less.</li> </ul>	<b>B</b> _____
<b>C</b> Enter "1" for your spouse. But, you may choose to enter "-0-" if you are married and have either a working spouse or more than one job. (Entering "-0-" may help you avoid having too little tax withheld.) . . . . .	<b>C</b> _____
<b>D</b> Enter number of dependents (other than your spouse or yourself) you will claim on your tax return . . . . .	<b>D</b> _____
<b>E</b> Enter "1" if you will file as head of household on your tax return (see conditions under Head of household above) . . . . .	<b>E</b> _____
<b>F</b> Enter "1" if you have at least \$1,500 of child or dependent care expenses for which you plan to claim a credit . . . . .	<b>F</b> _____
<b>G</b> <b>Child Tax Credit</b> (including additional child tax credit): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your total income will be less than \$54,000 (\$79,000 if married), enter "2" for each eligible child.</li> <li>• If your total income will be between \$54,000 and \$84,000 (\$79,000 and \$119,000 if married), enter "1" for each eligible child plus "1" additional if you have four or more eligible children.</li> </ul>	<b>G</b> _____
<b>H</b> Add lines A through G and enter total here. (Note. This may be different from the number of exemptions you claim on your tax return.) ▶	<b>H</b> _____

For accuracy, complete all worksheets that apply.   

- If you plan to itemize or claim adjustments to income and want to reduce your withholding, see the Deductions and Adjustments Worksheet on page 2.
- If you have more than one job or are married and you and your spouse both work and the combined earnings from all jobs exceed \$35,000 (\$25,000 if married) see the Two-Earner/Two-Job Worksheet on page 2 to avoid having too little tax withheld.
- If neither of the above situations applies, stop here and enter the number from line H on line 5 of Form W-4 below.

Cut here and give Form W-4 to your employer. Keep the top part for your records.

Form <b>W-4</b> Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service	<h3>Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate</h3> <p>▶ Whether you are entitled to claim a certain number of allowances or exemption from withholding is subject to review by the IRS. Your employer may be required to send a copy of this form to the IRS.</p>	OMB No. 1545-0010 <b>2005</b>
1 Type or print your first name and middle initial _____ Last name _____		2 Your social security number _____
Home address (number and street or rural route) _____		3 <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Married, but withhold at higher Single rate. Note. If married, but legally separated, or spouse is a nonresident alien, check the "Single" box.
City or town, state, and ZIP code _____		4 If your last name differs from that shown on your social security card, check here. You must call 1-800-772-1213 for a new card. <input type="checkbox"/>
5 Total number of allowances you are claiming (from line H above or from the applicable worksheet on page 2) _____		5 _____
6 Additional amount, if any, you want withheld from each paycheck _____		6 \$ _____
7 I claim exemption from withholding for 2005, and I certify that I meet both of the following conditions for exemption. • Last year I had a right to a refund of all federal income tax withheld because I had no tax liability and • This year I expect a refund of all federal income tax withheld because I expect to have no tax liability. If you meet both conditions, write "Exempt" here _____ ▶		
Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this certificate and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Employee's signature _____ (Form is not valid unless you sign it.) ▶		
8 Employer's name and address (Employer: Complete lines 8 and 10 only if sending to the IRS.) _____		Date ▶ _____
9 Office code (optional) _____		10 Employer identification number (EIN) _____

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Deductions and Adjustments Worksheet

**Note.** Use this worksheet *only* if you plan to itemize deductions, claim certain credits, or claim adjustments to income on your 2005 tax return.

- 1 Enter an estimate of your 2005 itemized deductions. These include qualifying home mortgage interest, charitable contributions, state and local taxes, medical expenses in excess of 7.5% of your income, and miscellaneous deductions. (For 2005, you may have to reduce your itemized deductions if your income is over \$145,950 (\$72,975 if married filing separately). See *Worksheet 3* in Pub. 919 for details.) . . . . . 1 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Enter:  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \$10,000 \text{ if married filing jointly or qualifying widow(er)} \\ \$ 7,300 \text{ if head of household} \\ \$ 5,000 \text{ if single or married filing separately} \end{array} \right\}$  . . . . . 2 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Subtract line 2 from line 1. If line 2 is greater than line 1, enter "-0-" . . . . . 3 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Enter an estimate of your 2005 adjustments to income, including alimony, deductible IRA contributions, and student loan interest . . . . . 4 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Add lines 3 and 4 and enter the total. (Include any amount for credits from *Worksheet 7* in Pub. 919) . . . . . 5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Enter an estimate of your 2005 nonwage income (such as dividends or interest) . . . . . 6 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Subtract line 6 from line 5. Enter the result, but not less than "-0-" . . . . . 7 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Divide the amount on line 7 by \$3,200 and enter the result here. Drop any fraction . . . . . 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Enter the number from the **Personal Allowances Worksheet**, line H, page 1 . . . . . 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Add lines 8 and 9 and enter the total here. If you plan to use the **Two-Earner/Two-Job Worksheet**, also enter this total on line 1 below. Otherwise, stop here and enter this total on Form W-4, line 5, page 1 . . . . . 10 \_\_\_\_\_

### Two-Earner/Two-Job Worksheet (See *Two earners/two jobs* on page 1.)

**Note.** Use this worksheet *only* if the instructions under line H on page 1 direct you here.

- 1 Enter the number from line H, page 1 (or from line 10 above if you used the **Deductions and Adjustments Worksheet**) . . . . . 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Find the number in **Table 1** below that applies to the **LOWEST** paying job and enter it here . . . . . 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 If line 1 is more than or equal to line 2, subtract line 2 from line 1. Enter the result here (if zero, enter "-0-") and on Form W-4, line 5, page 1. Do not use the rest of this worksheet . . . . . 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Note.** If line 1 is less than line 2, enter "-0-" on Form W-4, line 5, page 1. Complete lines 4-9 below to calculate the additional withholding amount necessary to avoid a year-end tax bill.

- 4 Enter the number from line 2 of this worksheet . . . . . 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Enter the number from line 1 of this worksheet . . . . . 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Subtract line 5 from line 4 . . . . . 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Find the amount in **Table 2** below that applies to the **HIGHEST** paying job and enter it here . . . . . 7 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Multiply line 7 by line 6 and enter the result here. This is the additional annual withholding needed . . . . . 8 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Divide line 8 by the number of pay periods remaining in 2005. For example, divide by 26 if you are paid every two weeks and you complete this form in December 2004. Enter the result here and on Form W-4, line 6, page 1. This is the additional amount to be withheld from each paycheck . . . . . 9 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Table 1: Two-Earner/Two-Job Worksheet**

Married Filing Jointly				All Others			
If wages from HIGHEST paying job are—	AND, wages from LOWEST paying job are—	Enter on line 2 above	If wages from HIGHEST paying job are—	AND, wages from LOWEST paying job are—	Enter on line 2 above	If wages from LOWEST paying job are—	Enter on line 2 above
\$0 - \$40,000	\$0 - \$4,000	0	\$40,001 and over	30,001 - 36,000	6	\$0 - \$6,000	0
	4,001 - 8,000	1		36,001 - 45,000	7	6,001 - 12,000	1
	8,001 - 18,000	2		45,001 - 50,000	8	12,001 - 18,000	2
	18,001 and over	3		50,001 - 60,000	9	18,001 - 24,000	3
\$40,001 and over	\$0 - \$4,000	0	60,001 - 65,000	10	24,001 - 31,000	4	
	4,001 - 8,000	1	65,001 - 75,000	11	31,001 - 45,000	5	
	8,001 - 18,000	2	75,001 - 90,000	12	45,001 - 60,000	6	
	18,001 - 22,000	3	90,001 - 100,000	13	60,001 - 75,000	7	
	22,001 - 25,000	4	100,001 - 115,000	14	75,001 - 80,000	8	
	25,001 - 30,000	5	115,001 and over	15	80,001 - 100,000	9	
						100,001 and over	10

**Table 2: Two-Earner/Two-Job Worksheet**

Married Filing Jointly		All Others	
If wages from HIGHEST paying job are—	Enter on line 7 above	If wages from HIGHEST paying job are—	Enter on line 7 above
\$0 - \$60,000	\$480	\$0 - \$30,000	\$480
60,001 - 110,000	800	30,001 - 70,000	800
110,001 - 160,000	900	70,001 - 140,000	900
160,001 - 280,000	1,060	140,001 - 320,000	1,060
280,001 and over	1,120	320,001 and over	1,120

**Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice.** We ask for the information on this form to carry out the Internal Revenue laws of the United States. The Internal Revenue Code requires this information under sections 3402(f)(2)(A) and 6109 and their regulations. Failure to provide a properly completed form will result in your being treated as a single person who claims no withholding allowances; providing fraudulent information may also subject you to penalties. Routine uses of this information include giving it to the Department of Justice for civil and criminal litigation, to cities, states, and the District of Columbia for use in administering their tax laws, and using it in the National Directory of New Hires. We may also disclose this information to other countries under a tax treaty, to federal and state agencies to enforce federal nontax criminal laws, or to federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies to combat terrorism.

You are not required to provide the information requested on a form that is subject to

the Paperwork Reduction Act unless the form displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a form or its instructions must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any Internal Revenue law. Generally, tax returns and return information are confidential, as required by Code section 6103.

The time needed to complete this form will vary depending on individual circumstances. The estimated average time is: Recordkeeping, 45 min.; Learning about the law or the form, 12 min.; Preparing the form, 58 min. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of these time estimates or suggestions for making this form simpler, we would be happy to hear from you. You can write to: Internal Revenue Service, Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SEW:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, IR-0406, Washington, DC 20224. Do not send Form W-4 to this address. Instead, give it to your employer.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

FORM  
M-4

## MASSACHUSETTS EMPLOYEE'S WITHHOLDING EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

Rev. 7/98



Print full name .....  
Print home address .....

Social Security No.  
City.....

State

Zip Code

**EMPLOYEE:**

File this form or Form W-4 with your employer. Otherwise, Massachusetts Income Taxes will be withheld from your wages without exemptions.

**EMPLOYER:**

Keep this certificate with your records. If the employee is believed to have claimed excessive exemptions, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue should be so advised.

**HOW TO CLAIM YOUR WITHHOLDING EXEMPTIONS**

1. Your personal exemption. Write the figure "1". If you are age 65 or over or will be before next year, write "2".
2. IF MARRIED and if exemption for spouse is allowed, write the figure "4". If your spouse is age 65 or over or will be before next year and if otherwise qualified, write "5". See Instruction C .....
3. Write the number of your qualified dependents. See Instruction D .....
4. Add the number of exemptions which you have claimed above and write the total.....
5. Additional withholding per pay period under agreement with employer \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - A.  Check if you will file as head of household on your tax return.
  - B.  Check if you are blind.      C.  Check if spouse is blind and not subject to withholding.
  - D.  Check if you are a full-time student engaged in seasonal, part-time or temporary employment whose estimated annual income will not exceed \$8,000.

**EMPLOYER: DO NOT withhold if Box D is checked.**

I certify that the number of withholding exemptions claimed on this certificate does not exceed the number to which I am entitled.

(Date)

(Signed)

**THIS FORM MAY BE REPRODUCED**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS • DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE**

**A. NUMBER** — If you claim **MORE** than the correct number of exemptions, civil and criminal penalties may be imposed. You may claim a smaller number of exemptions. If you do not file a certificate, your employer must withhold on the basis of no exemptions.

If you expect to owe more income tax than will be withheld, you may either claim a smaller number of exemptions or enter into an agreement with your employer to have additional amounts withheld.

You should claim the total number of exemptions to which you are entitled to prevent excessive overwithholding — unless you have a significant amount of other income.

**IF YOU WORK FOR MORE THAN ONE EMPLOYER AT THE SAME TIME, YOU MUST NOT CLAIM ANY EXEMPTIONS WITH EMPLOYERS OTHER THAN YOUR PRINCIPAL EMPLOYER.**

If you are married and if your spouse is subject to withholding, each may claim a personal exemption.

**B. CHANGES** — You may file a new certificate at any time if the number of exemptions **INCREASES**. You **MUST** file a new certificate within 10 days if the number of exemptions previously claimed by you **DECREASES**. For example, if during the year your dependent son's income indicates that

you will not provide over half of his support for the year, you must file a new certificate.

**C. SPOUSE** — If your spouse is not working or if she or he is working but not claiming the personal exemption or the age 65 or over exemption, generally you may claim those exemptions in line 2. However, if you are planning to file separate annual tax returns, you should not claim withholding exemptions for your spouse or for any dependents that will not be claimed on your annual tax return.

If claiming a wife or husband, write "4" in line 2. Using "4" is the withholding system adjustment for the \$4,400 exemption for a spouse.

**D. DEPENDENT(S)** — You may claim an exemption in line 3 for each individual who qualifies as a dependent under the Federal Income Tax Law. In addition, if one or more of your dependents will be under age 12 at year end, add "1" to your dependents total for line 3.

**YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CLAIM "FEDERAL WITHHOLDING DEDUCTIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS" UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS WITHHOLDING SYSTEM.**

**IF YOU HAVE INCOME NOT SUBJECT TO WITHHOLDING, YOU ARE URGED TO HAVE ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS WITHHELD TO COVER YOUR TAX LIABILITY ON SUCH INCOME. SEE LINE 5.**

**IF YOU CLAIM THE SAME NUMBER OF EXEMPTIONS FOR MASSACHUSETTS AND U.S. INCOME TAXES, COMPLETE U.S. FORM W-4 ONLY.**  
150M 7/97 CRP0198

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## FILING TAXES

Everybody who earns money (unless it is tax free) has to file for taxes. If you fail to do so, you might be prosecuted by the IRS (Internal Revenue Service, an agency responsible for tax collection). At the end of each year, your employer will send you a W-2 form, which lists the amount of money you have earned and the deductions taken out of your paycheck during that year.

To file your taxes, you will need to obtain the W-2 form and both a federal and a state income tax form. These are usually available, along with an instructional brochure, at a post office or bank and often mailed directly to your residence. You can either file your own taxes (utilizing the information on your W-2 and by following the instructions provided in the instructional brochure) or seek out professional help. In any event, be aware of the deadlines associated with filling taxes! Depending on your status, you will either get a refund by mail or you may have to pay out additional taxes that were not collected through your paychecks.



### ACTIVITY

Obtain an instructional booklet and the appropriate forms and practice filing taxes with your social worker, foster parent, or group care staff.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## BUYING A CAR

Before making such a major purchase as a car, you will have to consider your needs, preferences, and your budget. You will not only have to plan for the purchase and the costs of putting a car on the road, but also for its maintenance.

### Purchasing

Evaluate your income, savings, and expenses. How much do you think you could afford to spend for the purchase of a car? (If you are not ready to buy a car yet but are interested in buying one in the future, estimate how much money you would need in order to buy a reliable car and develop a savings plan accordingly).

**I could/would spend:**

Explain your estimate:

If you need to borrow money, where could you borrow it and how much will your down payment be?

---

How much would you have to pay in sales tax (5% of purchase) ?

---

In summary, I could spend \$\_\_\_\_\_ on the purchase of a car, including sales tax?

Now that you have established how much money you can spend for the purchase of a car, you can determine what kind of car you might be interested in.

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

To help you think about what type of car would be best for you, think about the following questions.

1. What Would I Use the Car For?	<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Most of the Time</i>
a. Riding Alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Carrying One Passenger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Carrying More Than One Passenger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Driving Long Distances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Driving in the City	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Transporting Many Things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Other: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Other: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What Do I Want In A Car?	<i>I Can Do Without It</i>	<i>It Would Be Nice</i>	<i>I Must Have It</i>
a. Easy Driving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Easy Parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Power Steering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Smooth Ride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Quiet Ride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Good Gas Mileage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Front Wheel Drive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Good Looks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Good Radio/Tape Deck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Independent Living Skills Module I

- j. Storage Space
- k. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- l. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. What Really Bothers Me?	<i>Doesn't Bother Me At All</i>	<i>Sometimes Bothers Me</i>	<i>I Can't Stand It</i>
a. Noisy Engine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Rattles and Squeaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Gas Guzzling / Poor Mileage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			
e. Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			

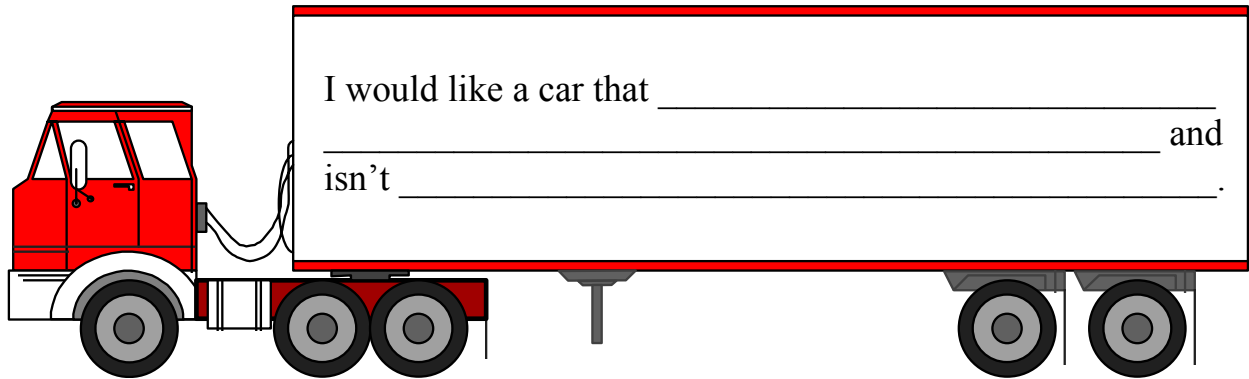
## 4. Are There Any Extra Options That I Would Like In My Car? Can I Afford Them?

Luxuries	Cost
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## IN SUMMARY



Are there certain types of cars which interest you and meet your needs? If so, list them below.

	MAKE	MODEL	YEAR
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____



### ACTIVITY

Using *Consumer Reports* magazine and the *Official Used Car Guide*, familiarize yourself with the quality and price ranges of the cars you are interested in. Record your findings in the chart below.

MAKE:	MAKE:	MAKE:
MODEL:	MODEL:	MODEL:
YEAR:	YEAR:	YEAR:
Price Range:	Price Range:	Price Range:
Good Features:	Good Features:	Good Features:
Bad Features:	Bad Features:	Bad Features:

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Buying a car will be a major purchase for most of you. To make sure that you stay within your budget and get the most for your money, you will not only need to be an educated consumer, but you must also make good decisions.

**C**onsider the following:

Lyle wants to buy a used car and has estimated that he can spend about \$2000 by putting \$400 down and paying the rest in monthly installments of \$110. While Lyle was at a used car dealership, he spotted a pick-up truck he really liked for \$3200. Lyle knows he can't afford it but debates whether or not he should buy the pick-up anyway.

What would you do in Lyle's situation?



What could the consequences be if Lyle buys the pick-up?



Aaron has saved \$2400 over the past two years toward a car purchase. He plans to pay the full price in cash, since he has no credit history nor a co-signer. Aaron needs a reliable car with good gas mileage because he plans to travel 16 miles to and from work each day. When Aaron arrived at a used car dealership, he saw a great looking black sports car on the lot for \$2350. The car had leather seats, a sunroof, and a tape deck. When Aaron asked about the mileage, the salesperson explained away the car's 186,000 miles, saying that it looked as good as new. When Aaron asked about how many miles the car got to the gallon, the salesperson replied that even though it would use up a lot of gas, Aaron should just think about how he would impress everybody with such a great-looking car. Aaron took the car out for a test drive. It had lots of power and was really fun to drive, but Aaron detected an odd noise in the engine. When he asked about it, the salesperson told him, "It's nothing. If you turn up the stereo, you won't even hear it." Aaron is now debating whether or not he should buy the car.

What would you do?



## Independent Living Skills Module I

Does that car have the qualities Aaron was initially looking for?



What do you think will happen if Aaron buys the car?



When you go car-shopping, whether you do it through the newspaper or used car dealerships, keep the following tips in mind:

- **Comparison Shop!!** Check the classified ads, check out used car lots. Don't be satisfied with the first or even the second one you visit. Shop around.
- New car dealerships often sell used cars, too.
- Some dealers offer a limited warranty on used cars. Ask about it!
- Try to shop for a used car with someone who knows a lot about them.
- Test drive the car! Listen for any noise that might warn you about problems.
- Don't allow yourself to be pressured by sales people. Take your time. Ask questions. Remember it's your money!
- Check for signs of rust.
- Check the oil. If it is dirty, the previous owner probably didn't follow the proper maintenance schedule. If there is water in the oil, don't buy the car unless you're prepared for high repair bills.
- Have a mechanic (not the one at the dealership) check out the car for you.
- Check the tires, brakes, and steering.
- Make sure all the equipment is working (the heater, defroster, windshield wipers, etc.).
- Check the mileage. If it's high, repairs might soon be necessary.
- Ask for the owner's care manual.
- Be certain that the papers, especially the title, are in order.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### ACTIVITY

Evaluate the newspaper listings below and circle the car which best meets your needs and fits your budget.

1984 Volkswagon Rabbit - 150,000 miles Some rust, runs well. \$1000 or best offer Call 593-8905.	90 Honda Civic. 110,000 mi. New parts, lmtd warranty. SUPERCAR dlrshp. Call 439-3464	88 Ford Escort. 90,000. Runs great. 5 spd, \$1800 firm. Call 579-5960.	85 black Corvette. 105,000 mi. Leather Interior. POWER. \$5200 or best offer. Call 465-8342
'86 Toyota Pickup. 82,000 miles. Needs some enginework. \$600/BO. Call 620-6640.	89 Mustang, 5 speed 120,000 mi, mostly highway. Extras. \$6000 firm. Financing possible. Call Dealer Motors, 468-0656	87 Nissan, automotive. Needs body work, runs great. \$1000/BO.	92Jeep Wrangler. Soft top, great shape, fun car. \$8200. Financing avail. Call Dealer Motors, 468-0656
91 Hundai. 54,000 mi. New tires, new exhaust. \$3000/BO 897-0431	86 Chevy custom. Runs and looks well. 140,000 miles \$800/BO. 785-0722	91 Pontiac. Only 60000 miles! Very clean. For sale by owner. \$3400. Call 645-3874	82 Caprice. 175,00 miles. Runs OK, some rust. \$575/BO. Call 468-0813.
97 Saturn. 12,000 miles. CD player, A/C, like new. \$10,500. 541-5460	89 Mazda, 125,000 Mi. New brakes, transmission, tires. \$2600 firm. Call 650-7891	Mechanic's Dream! 70 Cadillac. Needs paint, needs overhaul. \$150. 513-4606	85 Dodge Dart. Needs new muffler. Some damage to body, perfect frame. \$500/BO. 498-0415

Explain your choice:

## Independent Living Skills Module I

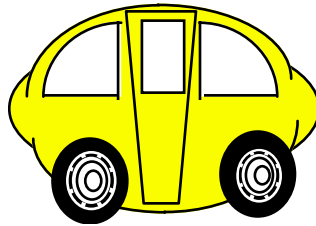


### ACTIVITY

Go to several used car dealerships and comparison shop for a car which meets your needs and budget.

Did you find a car you liked? If so, describe below.

Even if you are prepared, car shopping can be difficult. Unless you are a mechanic, you may still end up with a “lemon.” However, if you buy a car that needs repairs shortly after the purchase date (approximately 30-60 days), you might be protected by the “Lemon Law”.



Research the stipulations of the Lemon Law and record them in the box below:

Note: It is important to remember that you have the right to ask the owner or the dealer to see the paperwork/history of any used car. The car’s history should include a description of all the work that has been done to the car, a record of oil changes, tune-ups or accidents, etc.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Start-Up Costs for Automobiles

Certain costs are incurred when you are putting a car onto the road for the first time, including registration and insurance fees.

### Registration

Each car has to be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles.



#### ACTIVITY

Check with the DMV regarding the registering of a car and record your findings in the box below.

**Registering my car would cost:**

### Insurance

Each car in the state of Massachusetts has to be insured. Driving without insurance is against the law and can have serious legal consequences.



#### ACTIVITY

Research the costs of car insurance by inquiring with at least two different insurance companies. Discuss different options with the agents and record your findings in the chart below.

Insurance A		Insurance B	
	Cost		Cost
Liability		Liability	
Collision		Collision	

**NOTE:** *When you first insure a car, insurance companies will usually require the first three monthly installments up front.*

Which insurance would you choose and at what cost?

---

# Independent Living Skills Module I

Explain your choice:

Each car must also pass an initial Safety and Emissions inspection. If your car does not pass, it may require some costly repairs and replacement parts before your car can legally be on the road. Check with a garage that provides Safety and Emissions inspections to find out the price.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Complete the following:

In addition to the costs related to purchasing a car and providing that my car passes the Safety and Emissions inspection, I will have to add a minimum of  to put my car on the road.

	Registration		
+		Insurance	
			<b>Total</b>

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Car Maintenance Costs

How much will you spend on the upkeep/maintenance will greatly depend on the number of miles you plan to drive.



### ACTIVITY

Estimate how many miles you can expect to drive per week and record your findings below.

I would drive  miles each week.

How many miles can your car run on one gallon of gas?

My car gets  miles to the gallon.

Use the figures above to estimate your average anticipated monthly cost for gasoline.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \boxed{\phantom{000}} & \div & \boxed{\phantom{000}} & = & \boxed{\phantom{000}} & \times & \boxed{4} & = & \boxed{\phantom{000}} & \times & \boxed{\phantom{000}} & = & \boxed{\phantom{000}} \\ \text{Miles} & & \text{Miles} & & \text{Gallons} & & \text{Weeks} & & \text{Total} & & \text{Price of} & & \text{Total Amount} \\ \text{per} & & \text{per} & & \text{per} & & & & \text{Gallons} & & \text{One Gallon} & & \text{for Gasoline} \\ \text{Week} & & \text{Gallon} & & \text{Week} & & & & \text{per Month} & & \text{of Gas} & & \text{per Month} \end{array}$$

If you want your car to last as long as possible, you will have to take good care of it. And although you will have to invest some money into car maintenance, it will help you to avoid expensive repairs.

**C**onsider the following:

Kim bought a used car five months ago and has been driving a lot. She has never checked her oil and has never had the oil changed because she thinks that her car is still “new” and shouldn’t have any problems yet. Today, while she was driving on the highway, Kim’s car suddenly overheated and began to smoke.



# Independent Living Skills Module I

What do you think happened?

How could she have prevented this problem?



## ACTIVITY

Research the prices of an oil change and a tune up. List them in the appropriate boxes below.

How often does the average car need an oil change?

\_\_\_\_\_

Cost of an Oil Change

How often should a car have a tune up?

\_\_\_\_\_

Cost of a Tune Up

In addition to the above maintenance costs, it is helpful to budget additional money for unexpected repairs or replacements, i.e. new tires, headlights, etc.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Utilize the work space below to estimate you total monthly cost relative to the upkeep of a car.

Average cost per month for maintenance (oil change, tune up, etc.)

Monthly insurance payment

Average cost of gas

Money budgeted for unexpected repairs/replacements

---

**Total Maintenance/Upkeep Cost per Month**

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## SHOPPING SKILLS

### Comparison Shopping

You've probably worked hard to earn your paycheck or allowance. Therefore, you want to get the most for your money. Nothing is more frustrating than finding an item you have purchased selling for a lower price at another store. Checking the price of a item takes a little time but often saves a great deal of money. If you know exactly what you want in advance (which brand, which size), you can do a price check by scanning newspaper advertisements or calling several stores.

Utilize the comparison shopping skills you learned in the budgeting section to complete the following exercise.



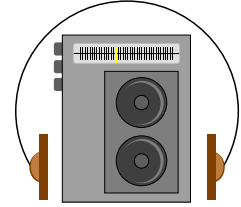
#### ACTIVITY

Do a price check on an item that you are thinking of buying (a stereo, bicycle, record, pair of jeans, etc.) Compare the price for exactly the same item at 3 different stores and list the results below.

	Item	Price
<i>Store 1:</i>		
<i>Store 2:</i>		
<i>Store 3:</i>		

Keep in mind that there are additional factors to consider when you want to determine the best value, such as the quality of the product, warranty, and style.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



**C**onsider the following:

Richard and Ariel both want to buy a new walkman. Ricard finds one at a drug store for \$14. It has an auto-rewind tape player, a radio, and headphones. Ariel finds a walkman at a department store for \$28 which is a different brand name but has all the same features as Richard's. Is the cheaper walkman necessarily the better buy? What do you think?

Aside from price, what other factors should be considered when purchasing an item like a walkman?

The cheapest item might not always be the best buy. The quality and durability has to be considered as well. Additionally, as in the walkman example above, you would have to ask yourself how many batteries each walkman uses, what the warranty is, etc. And while the cheapest item may not be the best bargain, the opposite may also be true: the most expensive items are not necessarily better quality!

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### Checking the Warranty

Since January 1, 1977, federal law requires that warranties on consumer products costing more than \$15.00 must be available for you to look at before you buy the product. Read the warranty very carefully; it, not what the salesperson tells you, describes what type of service you can get when you have bought a defective product.

There are two types of warranties. A full warranty usually means that a defective product reported within a specific period of time will be fixed or replaced at no cost to you. A limited warranty means that some feature provided by the full warranty is missing. For example, it may only cover the cost of parts, not labor, or it may cover only certain parts of the product.

Make sure that you understand exactly which services are covered by the limited warranty.

### Understanding Warranty Information

Carefully read the warranty that is printed below and then answer the questions that follow.

#### **FULL ONE YEAR WARRANTY**

Rituchi Stereo warrants that this stereo compact disc player will be free from defects for a period of one year from the date of purchase. This warranty does not cover damages resulting from accident, abuse or misuse.

If your stereo CD player system fails to operate properly under normal conditions within the warranty period, return it to one of the twelve Rituchi Repair Centers in the United States. If the stereo CD player system is found to have defective parts or workmanship, Rituchi will repair or replace it, free of charge. Send your name, address, copy of sales receipt and the reason for the return along with the CD player. Allow 8-10 weeks for mailing and servicing.

Rituchi Stereo Systems.  
Sakawa, Japan

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### *Questions:*

1. Under what conditions will the CD player be repaired free? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Where does the CD player have to be sent to be repaired? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who must pay for mailing the CD player to be repaired? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Are there any service or handling charges? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What do you have to send with the CD player? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How long do you have to wait for the CD player to be repaired and returned? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What can you do if you broke the CD player by dropping it while you were setting it up? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Reading the Fine Print

Read the advertisement below and answer the questions which follow.



**TEN CDs FREE!**  
(A \$120 Value)

Yes, get 10 CDs free!  
All you have to do is sign up with the Music Fan CD Club and buy an additional 12 CDs at full club price during the next year.

*Allow 8-10 weeks for delivery.*

**Music Fan Club**  
123 Downtown Street  
Boston, MA.

Would you sign up with the Music Fan CD Club?

Do you think it's a good buy? Why or why not?

## **Independent Living Skills Module I**

You've probably seen advertisements like this one in magazines and newspapers. It seems to offer you 10 CDs free. But, read the fine print in the ad and find out what you are obligated to do before you sign up.

On the surface, the Music Fan Club might seem like a good idea. But remember, you must buy 12 CDs during the next year. If you don't listen to CDs frequently, then this may not be the right deal for you. What if you cannot find 12 CDs on their sales lists which interest you? Well, that's too bad; you promised to buy 12 CDs, no matter what. Also, it is not mentioned in the ad, but frequently you have to pay the cost of having the CDs mailed to your home, which can add up to quite a bit.

These mail-order offers are not necessarily bad, but they do involve many obligations. Therefore, be very careful and check out everything (cost, quantity, penalties, etc.) before signing up. Sign up only if the purchase is one you planned to make anyway. Don't forget to consider the quantity of the items as well as the price.



## Independent Living Skills Module I

### Unethical/Deceptive Practices

Most business people are honest. They value their reputations and want customers to return. Unfortunately, there are a few companies that will try to trick you into buying merchandise that is more expensive than you want or need. If you are alert, you will not fall into these traps:

*Bait and Switch* occurs when you enter a store to buy an advertised item, only to have the salesperson steer you to a different, more expensive item. For example, you go to a store to buy house paint that has been advertised for \$6.99 a gallon, and the salesperson immediately tells you that the advertised paint is poor quality and tries to convince you to buy paint which is selling for \$20.00 a gallon. If you decide for yourself that you don't like the advertised item after you have seen it and ask to be shown another, you are not involved in "Bait and Switch." In this instance, the salesperson is only doing his/her best to show you something that will satisfy you.

*Lowballing* occurs when a business doesn't sell an item, like a car, at the advertised price. A dishonest car dealer, for example, tells you that "luxuries," like window and tires, are not included in the sales price and will cost extra.

The following practices are not unethical, but they are common ploys used to attract customers:

*Loss Leaders* is a situation that occurs when a store sells only a few items at a very low price to attract customers. The store owners hope that customers will purchase more expensive items while they are there, rather than comparison shop for a better value. Be wise. Buy only the sale items. Wait to comparison shop for other purchases. It will be worth it.

*Conditional Purchases* are also common. This occurs when you are required to purchase a non-sale item to get another item at sale price, or when you must purchase more than one of the sale items in order to pay the sale price (such as "Buy One, Get One Free" sales). This is not a bad thing as long as you want or need all the items you purchase.

Remember, according to the law, you have these rights:

If you are shopping by mail, you have the right to cancel your order if the merchandise does not arrive within the stated time.

If a warrantor does not honor a written or implied warranty on merchandise purchased after 7/4/75, you have the right to sue the warrantor under the Warranty Act.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Smart Shopping

To shop wisely and make your money last, keep the following in mind:

- Replace things only when they wear out.
- Check several stores to compare prices.
- Check newspapers and flyers for sales.
- Examine quality, quantity, and durability.
- Decide what you will buy and buy only that item.
- Save money, rather than borrow, to buy a costly item.
- Try to buy things while they are on sale.
- Read all labels and tags carefully.
- Never buy clothing without trying on each item. Sizes may vary.
- Compare warranties.
- Always read the fine print.
- Evaluate any obligations.
- Always save sales slips, receipts, and warranties.
- Before you buy, you should ask yourself these questions:
  - ◊ Am I certain the merchandise is exactly what I want?
  - ◊ Will the store give a refund? Remember, some stores (such as factory outlets) have a policy that all sales are final.
  - ◊ Do I need the sales receipt and/or price tag to get an exchange or refund?
  - ◊ Is this a “Final Sale” item?
  - ◊ Does the item have a written warranty?
  - ◊ Before signing a contract: Do I fully understand it? Will I have a copy to keep?

If you know your rights, avoid traps, and follow the advice in this section, you'll be a very smart shopper indeed. Being a smart shopper, like anything else, takes some practice, but it's well worth the money you'll save.

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

Choose a fairly major item you plan to purchase within the next 12 months (clothing, furniture, stereo equipment, bicycle, etc.) Comparison shop at three different stores and list your findings below.

### Store One:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Quality/ Durability</i>	<i>Warranty</i>	<i>Exchange Policies</i>	<i>Other things to be considered:</i>

### Store Two:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Quality/ Durability</i>	<i>Warranty</i>	<i>Exchange Policies</i>	<i>Other:</i>

### Store Three:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Quality/ Durability</i>	<i>Warranty</i>	<i>Exchange Policies</i>	<i>Other:</i>

In which of the three stores would you be likely to purchase your item? Explain your choice.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## HOME MANAGEMENT

### SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify home management /housekeeping skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

*I do not know how to do this*      *I need to know more about this*      *I can do/have done this*

1. Know how to make a bed and how frequently I should change the sheets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Know how to clean up after a meal (clear the table, put food away, wash the dishes with hot, soapy water, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know how to use the different cleaning products that are specially made for each particular cleaning job such as bathtubs, ovens, windows, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Know how to keep room/apartment clean by sweeping and washing floors, dusting furniture, vacuuming rugs, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know the importance of keeping the bathroom sink, toilet, tub, tile floor, etc., clean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Understand the need for properly storing, bagging, and disposing of garbage. Participate in re-cycling glass, aluminum, and plastic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know what causes sinks and toilets to clog and what to do to prevent clogs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Know how and when to defrost the refrigerator, if it is not frost free.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Know when to call the landlord for maintenance and repairs and when to “do it myself.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Independent Living Skills Module I

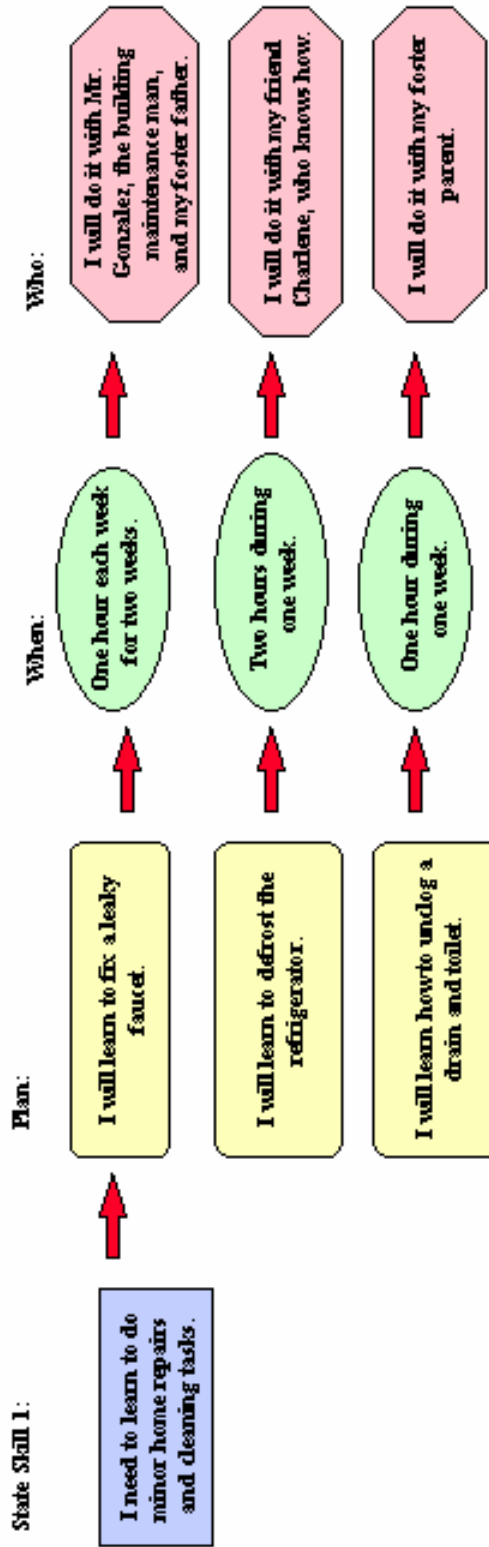
	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
<b>10.</b> Understand the danger of using furniture polish or waxing stairs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11.</b> Know how to keep pests and rodents out of my home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12.</b> Know how to unclog a toilet or sink with a plunger or drain cleaner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>13.</b> Know how to change a light bulb using the correct wattage, change a fuse, and/or reset a circuit breaker.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>14.</b> Know how to use a dishwasher and garbage disposal safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>15.</b> Know how to check smoke detectors to see if they are working and can replace the battery, if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>16.</b> Can maintain a regular house cleaning schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Independent Living Skills Module I

You have now completed the assessment section and identified those skills in home maintenance that you would like to strengthen in order to be better able to do things on your own. The following guide can help you in planning how you can learn about and practice these skills. Choose a few skills that you want to develop, and with your team, write down your plan of action. Remember, once you accomplish these goals you can go back to your assessment tool and select new goals to build on your new skills.

### **EXAMPLE** **GOAL: TO IMPROVE HOME MAINTENANCE SKILLS**



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### GOAL: TO IMPROVE HOME MAINTENANCE SKILLS

**State Skill 1:**  
to be developed  
and/or improved



**Plan:**  
how do you plan to learn,  
develop and improve this skill?



**When:**  
when, where, and how often will you  
work on this skill and by when will you  
have mastered this?



**Who:**  
will assist you?

**State Skill 2:**  
to be developed  
and/or improved



**Plan:**  
how do you plan to learn,  
develop and improve this skill?



**When:**  
when, where, and how often will you  
work on this skill and by when will you  
have mastered this?



**Who:**  
will assist you?

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### HOME MANAGEMENT / HOUSEKEEPING

The kind of environment you live in can greatly influence your well-being. Having a clean place to live is important for several reasons. Keeping your living space clean reduces the risks of germs, bacteria, pests, and rodents which can have a harmful effect on your health. A clean home will also make you feel better about yourself and help you to stay organized.

In order to keep your home clean, you will have to utilize the appropriate disinfectants, cleaning supplies, and techniques for various chores.



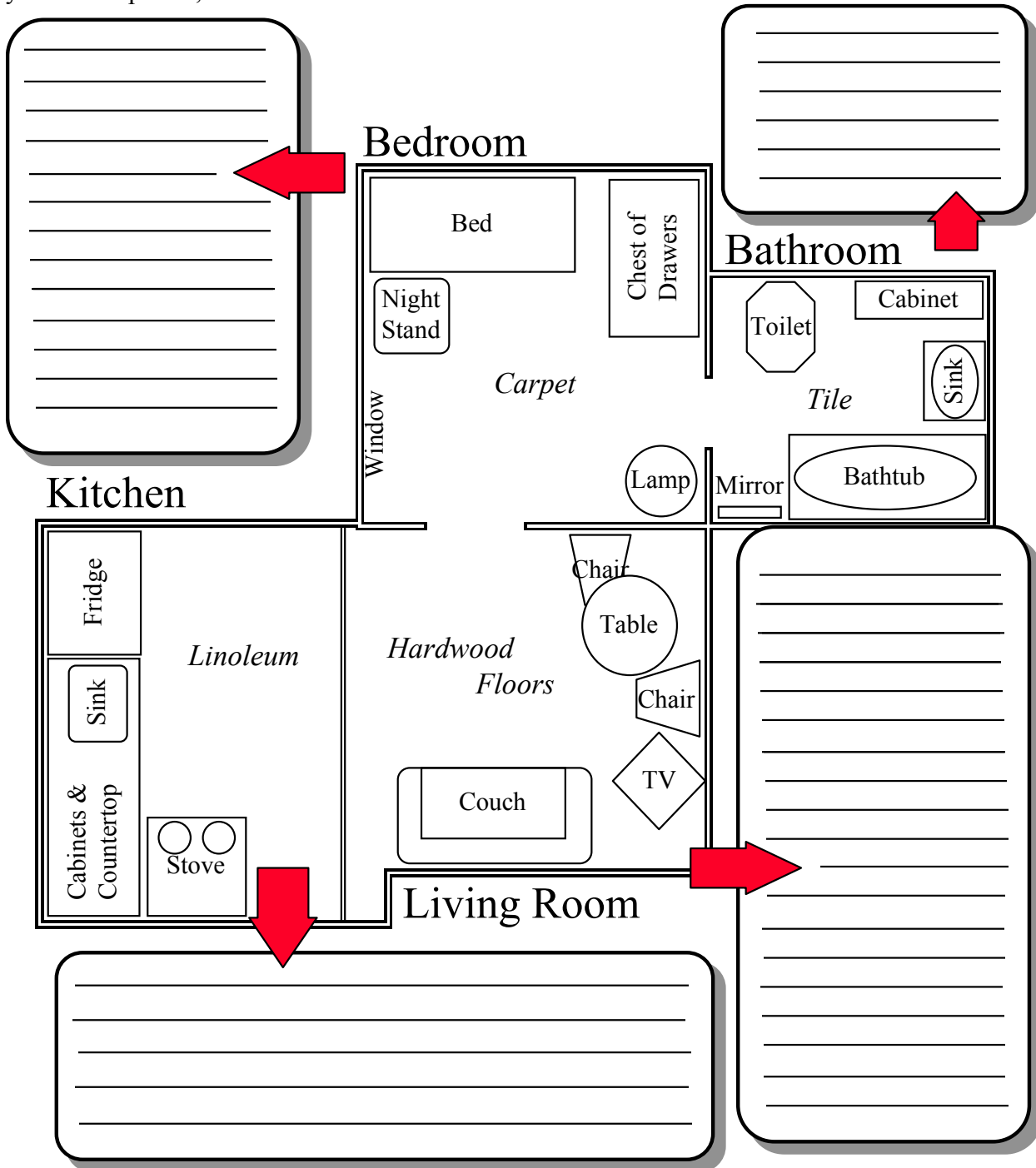


# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

Look at the following apartment floor plan and describe in the designed spaces how and with what kind of cleaning supplies you would clean each of the rooms. Discuss the outcome with your foster parent, social worker or staff.



## **Independent Living Skills Module I**

### ***Helpful Hints:***

- The easiest way to clean a room or apartment is to first put everything away where it belongs. (If you are just moving into an apartment, it will be much easier to do your cleaning before you move your furniture and belongings in.)
- Wash and dry the dishes and put them away. (Load the dishwasher if you have one.)
- Wipe off the table and counter tops with a sponge.
- Put your clothes in the closet or drawers, remembering to sort those items that need to be washed or dry cleaned.
- Make the beds. If the sheets need to be changed, wash them.
- Dust your wooden furniture using a cloth and furniture polish.
- Use a damp cloth in place of furniture polish for non-wood surfaces.
- Vacuum your rugs/floors.
- You should sweep the kitchen floor, however, and then wash it.
- Using a sponge and soapy water, clean the top of the stove. Be certain that the burners are off while you are cleaning.
- Clean the mirrors using paper towels.
- Empty your wastebaskets and take out the garbage.

### ***Less Frequent Tasks***

- Using a sponge or damp cloth and soapy water, clean the inside of the refrigerator.
- If you do not have a “frost-free” refrigerator, you will also have to defrost the freezer every two or three months, or according to the appliance maintenance directions.
- Clean the oven when it is cold. Make sure the oven setting is on “off.” Use a damp sponge to wipe it out. Newer ovens may be self-cleaning; check for directions inside the door.
- Try to become familiar with some of the various cleaning products on the market. There are many!
- One cleaning product may be more expensive than another, but it is not necessarily better. Shop wisely.

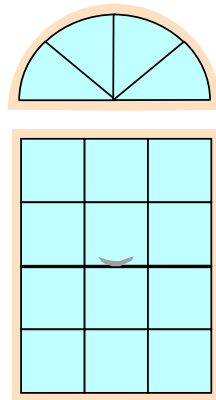
## Independent Living Skills Module I

### ***Cleaning the Bathroom***

- Using a cleaning product and sponge, clean the sink, tub, and tiles.
- Always use a separate sponge or brush to clean the toilet bowl. Wash the floor. If you have a scatter rug in the bathroom, don't forget to wash it too.
- Put out fresh towels and washcloths.

**Congratulations! You have a neat and clean home.**

*Every six months or so you should plan to really clean your whole apartment - curtains, windows bedspreads, blankets, walls, etc. Some people call this “spring cleaning.”*



### **Laundry Hints**

- Wash light and dark colored clothing separately.
- Read clothing labels for washing instructions. Some clothes must be “hand washed” or washed in cold water.
- Do not wash clothing marked “dry clean only.”
- Follow the directions on the laundry detergent package which will tell you how much detergent and what water temperature to use.
- If shrinkage is a possibility, remember to use **cold** water.
- Use bleach carefully. It can discolor and damage clothing if not used properly. Read the directions on the bottle or box.
- “Color-safe” bleach is available for use on colored clothing.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Now that you know how to clean different items, you have to decide how often you will have to perform different chores. While some tasks (like vacuuming, emptying the garbage, or cleaning the dishes) have to be done fairly often, others (washing the windows, defrosting the freezer) don't need to be performed as frequently. A cleaning chart will be helpful in keeping track of which chores need to be done and arranging tasks around your schedule.



### ACTIVITY

Utilize the house cleaning chart on the next page to schedule when and how frequently you would clean various items.

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## CLEANING CHART

<b>Kitchen</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>How Often</b>
Wash Dishes		
Clean Sink		
Wash Windows		
Clean Counter Tops		
Clean Refrigerator		
Defrost Freezer		
Clean Stove Top/ Range		
Empty Garbage		
Others:		
_____		
_____		
_____		

<b>Bathroom</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>How Often</b>
Clean Tub/Shower		
Clean Sink		
Clean Toilet		
Wash Floor		
Clean Cabinets		
Clean Rug/Mats		
Clean Light Fixture		
Others:		
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____		

<b>Bedroom</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>How Often</b>
Make Bed		
Wash Sheets		
Sweep/Vacuum Floor		
Wash Windows		
Clean/Dust Bureau		
Clean/Dust Dresser		
Clean/Dust Nightstand		
Clean Lamps		
Clean Fan		
Others:		
_____		
_____		
_____		

<b>Living/Dining Rooms</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>How Often</b>
Clean Couch		
Clean/Dust Table		
Clean Chairs		
Sweep/Vacuum Floor		
Clean/Dust Television		
Clean/Dust Shelves		
Clean Light Fixtures		
Clean Fan		
Others:		
_____		
_____		
_____		

## Independent Living Skills Module I

In addition to cleaning your home, you will also have to perform minor repair and maintenance tasks. Professional services through repairmen are expensive and unnecessary for many repairs you could do on your own.

To test your knowledge about maintenance tasks, answer the following questions and discuss the outcome with your social worker, foster parent, or group care staff.

a) How would you change a lightbulb using the correct wattage?

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b) How would you unclog a toilet or a sink?

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c) How would you change a fuse and/or reset a circuit breaker?

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d) How do you properly fit shades and curtains for a window?

---

---

e) How would you plaster a hole in the wall?

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---

Aside from the repairs and tasks listed above, you might also encounter problems like the following:

Beth moved into her own apartment three months ago. Although she kept her apartment very clean and emptied the garbage regularly, she discovered roaches in her kitchen. She's not sure what to do.

What would you do in Beth's situation?

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Even if your home is clean, roaches can appear. You should try to get rid of them as soon as possible. You can buy different roach control products at drug stores and supermarkets but you should call your landlord for assistance in obtaining professional pest control services.

**Additional Hints:** Don't leave food lying around! Make sure all your food is properly stored. It may also be helpful to clean all cabinets and counter tops.

**C**onsider the following:

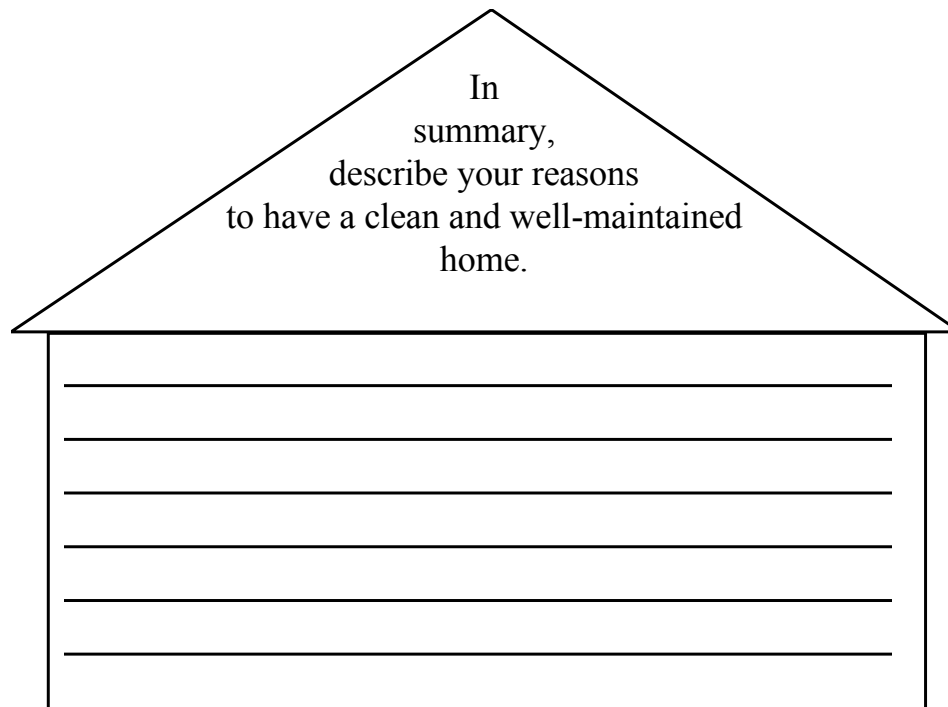
Brian has been sharing an apartment with a roommate for six months. One morning, he sees a bad leak in the ceiling of his bathroom. Water is dripping down the wall onto the floor. Brian is not sure what to do.

What would you do in Brian's situation?



Unless otherwise specified in the lease, landlords are responsible for structural repairs/problems (plumbing, wiring, etc.) which were not caused by you.

**NOTE:** For more information on lease agreements, please refer to Module IV.



In  
summary,  
describe your reasons  
to have a clean and well-maintained  
home.

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# Independent Living Skills Module I

## FOOD MANAGEMENT

### SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify food management skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
1. Can prepare a simple meal for myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Know which foods are nutritious/healthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Can shop for items on a grocery list using coupons and checking for sales.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Know how to cook and bake using the right cooking utensils and appliances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know how to store food to prevent its spoiling and can identify food that has spoiled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Know how to check packaged food for freshness and to check for the date of expiration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know how to prepare packaged, frozen, or canned foods according to the directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Use good consumer skills in grocery shopping. Choose fruit and vegetables for freshness and check freshness dates on dairy and meat products.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Using a food budget, can plan a menu of nutritious meals for a week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Am able to cook nutritious meals for a week using a planned menu.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Independent Living Skills Module I

	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
<b>11.</b> Can cook using recipes from a cookbook and know how to increase or decrease the ingredients to feed more or fewer people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12.</b> Can shop for the ingredients and prepare a traditional dish from my own cultural background.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

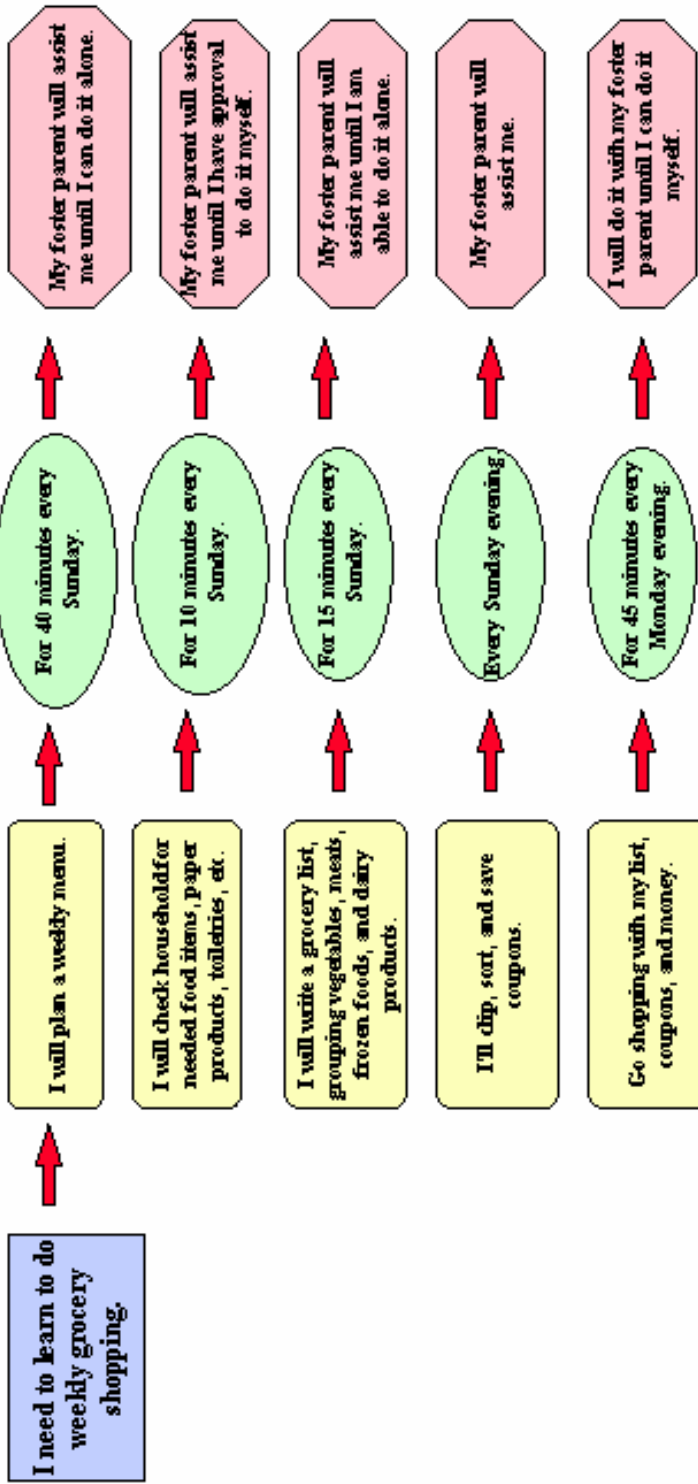
# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Independent Living Skills Module I

You have now completed the assessment section and identified those skills in food management that you would like to strengthen in order to be better able to do things on your own. The following guide can help you in planning how you can learn about and practice these skills. Choose a few skills that you want to develop, and with your team, write down your plan of action. Remember, once you accomplish these goals you can go back to your assessment tool and select new goals to build on your new skills.

### EXAMPLE GOAL: TO IMPROVE FOOD MANAGEMENT SKILLS

State Skill 1:



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### GOAL: TO IMPROVE FOOD MANAGEMENT SKILLS

**State Skill 1:**  
to be developed  
and/or improved



**Plan:**  
how do you plan to learn,  
develop and improve this skill?



**When:**  
when, where, and how often will you  
work on this skill and by when will you  
have mastered this?



**Who:**  
will assist you?

**State Skill 2:**  
to be developed  
and/or improved



**Plan:**  
how do you plan to learn,  
develop and improve this skill?



**When:**  
when, where, and how often will you  
work on this skill and by when will you  
have mastered this?

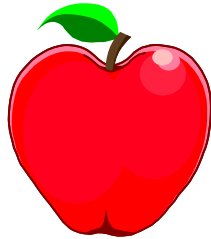


**Who:**  
will assist you?

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## FOOD MANAGEMENT

We have already worked on some food management skills in the budgeting section. However, in these following exercises we will work on food management in depth, with particular focus on meal planning and nutrition.



Eating nutritional foods and following a well-balanced diet is important in keeping healthy and fit.

Name some healthy foods.

What are some “not-so-healthy” foods?

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### ACTIVITY

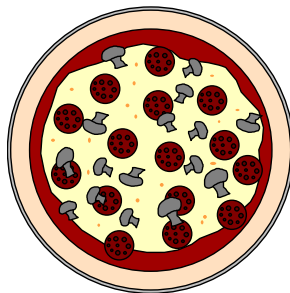
From the groups provided below, circle the more healthful food:

1.	Pear	Bag of Potato Chips
2.	Non-Fat Frozen Yogurt	Ice Cream Cone
3.	Glass of Milk	Chocolate Chip Cookies
4.	Cheese and Crackers	Strawberry Shake
5.	Apple	Chocolate Pudding
6.	Canned Fruit Cocktail	Fresh Peaches
7.	Non-Fat Yogurt	Bagel and Cream Cheese
8.	Carrot Sticks	Granola Bar
9.	Cream of Wheat	Sugar Frosted Flakes
10.	Peanut Butter Sandwich	Hot Dog
11.	Canned Green Beans	Fresh Garden Salad
12.	French Fries	Baked Potato
13.	Hot Chocolate	Cottage Cheese with Fresh Fruit
14.	An Orange	Bag of Cheese Curls
15.	Pizza	Fluffer Nutter Sandwich

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## ANSWERS:

1. **Pear** A pear has fewer calories and more nutritional value than a bag of chips.
2. **Non-Fat Frozen Yogurt** This is your best choice for nutrition and weight watching.
3. **Glass of Milk** Milk has more nutritional value.
4. **Cheese and Crackers** You get calcium and protein without the sugar.
5. **Apple** Fruits are a necessary staple in your diet.
6. **Fresh Peaches** Always choose fresh fruits and vegetables when you can. They have no preservatives and no artificial ingredients.
7. **Non-Fat Yogurt** A healthy way to get part of your daily requirements for calcium.
8. **Carrot Sticks** An alternative health food to junk food.
9. **Cream of Wheat** Cream of wheat has less sugar and more vitamins.
10. **Peanut Butter Sandwich** A peanut butter sandwich has more protein, less salt, and if you use a multi-grain bread, more fiber.
11. **Fresh Garden Salad** A fresh garden salad with oil and vinegar dressing is lower in sodium, has fewer calories, and more nutritional value. Canned foods are generally high in sodium.
12. **Baked Potato** Better to get your carbohydrates without extra fat.
13. **Cottage Cheese with Fresh Fruit** Cottage cheese with fresh fruit has a better variety of nutrients.
14. **An Orange** An orange is a good source of Vitamin C as opposed to the “empty calories” of cheese curls.
15. **Pizza** Pizza gives you selections from 3 of the 4 food groups.



# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Nutrition Quiz:

a) There are four major food groups. Can you name them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) Under what food group would you put:

1. Cookies? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Broccoli? \_\_\_\_\_
3. A cheese pizza? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ketchup? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Peanuts? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Chicken? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Mayonnaise? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Spaghetti? \_\_\_\_\_

# Independent Living Skills Module I

To make sure that you get all the nutrients your body needs, it is important to eat a variety of foods. Look over the following facts about nutrients to learn which foods contain essential protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals.

## Facts About Nutrients

### Protein

Protein is needed for growth of new tissue and for repair of body cells. Proteins come from animal sources, such as meat, fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, milk, and cheese; or vegetable sources, such as cooked dried beans, peas, nuts, and peanut butter.

### Fats

Foods that contain fats are high in calories. Fats supply energy and make foods taste good. In addition, some fats provide Vitamins A, D, E, and K and other essentials for good health.

Fats from vegetable sources include cooking and salad oils, margarine, and vegetable shortenings; butter, bacon, and lard are major sources of animal fats. Meats, poultry, fish, whole milk, and cheese contain smaller amounts of fat.

### Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates include both sugars and starches, which the body changes into energy. Some starches contain minerals, vitamins, and small amounts of protein. Carbohydrates are found in breads and cereals, dried beans and peas, rice, flour, sugars and other sweets, and fruits and vegetables.

### Minerals

Many minerals are needed to maintain good health. Here are some of them: **Iron** is used for building blood. Foods that are good sources of iron and other minerals include lean meat, liver, dried peas, dried beans, dark green leafy vegetables, enriched bread and cereals, and dried fruits such as prunes and raisins.

**Calcium** and **phosphorus** are needed for the development of bones and teeth. Milk and milk products such as cheese are major sources of calcium and phosphorus, along with other minerals.

### Vitamins

Vitamins are nutrients that are needed in very small amounts to help the body cells work. Each vitamin plays a different role. When daily meals do not contain enough vitamins, body cells do not develop and work properly.



## Independent Living Skills Module I

**Vitamin A** must be present in the foods you eat for normal growth and normal vision. It is mainly found in dark green leafy and yellow vegetables.

**Vitamin C** is needed for healthy gums, bones, and teeth. It is found in oranges, tangerines, grapefruit, tomatoes, and dark green leafy vegetables.

**Vitamin D** works with calcium and phosphorus to develop bones and teeth and keep them healthy.

**Thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin** are B complex vitamins needed for healthy cells. Thiamin is found in whole-grain and enriched breads and cereals, meat, poultry, and eggs. Milk and cheese are particularly rich sources of riboflavin. Meat, poultry, and cooked dried beans and peas are good sources of niacin.

**Folic acid** helps protect the body against anemia. It is found in dark green leafy vegetables, liver, and many other foods.

For good health, your body needs small amounts of other vitamins and minerals. These are supplied by the foods that make up balanced meals.

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### ACTIVITY

Listed below are some ideas for simple and nutritious meals. Describe in the spaces designed how you would prepare them.

#### *Spaghetti with meat sauce and a fresh garden salad.*

Spaghetti	Meat Sauce	Garden Salad
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#### *Steak, baked potato, green beans*

Steak	Baked Potato	Green Beans
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#### *Filet of cod, rice, carrots*

Filet of Cod	Rice	Carrots
--------------	------	---------

It is helpful to remember that the way you cook something can change it from being healthy and low in fat to not so healthy and higher in fat. For example, filet of cod is healthier baked rather than fried. You even have to watch those garden salads since added ingredients like bacon bits, cheese and salad dressings may add fat and calories.

## Independent Living Skills Module I

Some meals you can probably cook without following a recipe. For others, particularly dishes and meals that are new to you, you might want to follow written directions. In order to be able to follow recipes, you will need to be familiar with weights and measurements. Utilize the following exercise to test your knowledge.

1. There are \_\_\_\_\_ quarts (qts.) in a gallon (gal.).
2. One pint (pt.) contains \_\_\_\_\_ cups.
3. One quart contains \_\_\_\_\_ pints.
4. There are \_\_\_\_\_ tablespoons in one cup.
5. One tablespoon is equal to \_\_\_\_\_ teaspoons.
6. There are \_\_\_\_\_ cups in one quart.
7. "Tsp." is an abbreviation for \_\_\_\_\_.
8. "Tbs." is an abbreviation for \_\_\_\_\_.
9. One pound (lb.) equals \_\_\_\_\_ ounces (oz.).
10. If a soup recipe calls for one-half liter of milk and you have a quart of milk, do you have enough milk to make the soup? \_\_\_\_\_.

### ANSWERS:

1. Four
2. Two
3. Two
4. Sixteen
5. Three
6. Four
7. Teaspoon
8. Tablespoon
9. Sixteen
10. Yes

## Independent Living Skills Module I



### Optional Activity

Bake the Chocolate Cookies featured in the recipe below.

### **Chocolate Refrigerator Cookies**

---

- 1  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cocoa
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (1 stick) margarine, softened
- 1 tablespoon skim milk
- 1 egg
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup ground walnuts

In a small bowl, combine flour, cocoa, baking powder, and cinnamon; set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, beat sugar and margarine until creamy. Beat in milk and egg. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in walnuts. On waxed paper, shape dough into 1½-inch diameter log; roll in waxed paper. Refrigerate 2 to 3 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut log into ¼-inch thick slices. Place on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 10 minutes. Let stand on cookie sheet 2 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet; cool completely on wire racks.

*Makes about 4 dozen cookies.*

Recipe Source: Family Classics

***Practice following recipes by continuing to plan and cook nutritious meals with your foster parent or group care staff.***

# Independent Living Skills Module I



## ACTIVITY

Now that you are aware of your budget, nutritional requirements and have practiced how to prepare meals, you are ready to use the following meal-planning sheets to develop a menu for one week.

### Day One:

*Breakfast:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Snack:* \_\_\_\_\_



### Day Two:

*Breakfast:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Snack:* \_\_\_\_\_

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Day Three:

*Breakfast:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Snack:* \_\_\_\_\_



## Day Four:

*Breakfast:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Snack:* \_\_\_\_\_

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Day Five:

*Breakfast:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Snack:* \_\_\_\_\_



## Day Six:

*Breakfast:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Snack:* \_\_\_\_\_

# Independent Living Skills Module I

## Day Seven:

*Breakfast:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Lunch:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Dinner:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Snack:* \_\_\_\_\_



### ACTIVITY

Develop a grocery shopping list according to your planned menu.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_



Estimate the approximate costs for your week's worth of groceries utilizing any applicable coupons and your comparison shopping skills.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Did you stay within your budget? Explain.



**ACTIVITY**

In order to keep your food fresh and prevent spoiling, you will need to store it in the right places. *Describe where you would store the following items.*

	<b>WHERE?</b>
Potatoes	_____
Milk	_____
Open Box of Rice	_____
Jelly	_____
Bread	_____
Onions	_____
Butter	_____
Tomato	_____
Banana	_____
Lettuce	_____

## Independent Living Skills Module I

### Grocery Shopping Hints

- Plan your menu for the week, and check your refrigerator and cupboards for the food items you'll need for the meals.
- Check the newspapers/store flyers for sales
- Always make a shopping list and buy only what is on your list.
- Shopping at a large grocery store will be less expensive than at a convenience store, small neighborhood store, or specialty store.
- Look for coupons in magazines and newspapers. Use them only to buy items you normally buy. If you use a coupon to buy something you don't really need, you are not saving any money.
- Don't feel you have to buy only the items you see advertised on television and in magazines. These are brand name items and usually more expensive. Cheaper brands may be just as good and save you money.
- Check the items marked "For Quick Sale." Bread and pastry that are still properly packaged and just one or two days old may be a good buy. Canned foods that are dented are generally not. Remember to consider the quality of the food along with the price.
- It's best not to go grocery shopping when you are hungry. Chances are you will buy a lot more than what is on your list.
- Check items to see if they are dated. Some foods, like milk, meat, bread, and cheese, have expiration dates so you'll know when they're fresh.
- Most items will have a "unit price" listed for each brand of that item. Compare these unit prices to see which brand and which size is the better buy for you.