

Tips for Employment Specialists/Case Managers and Needs Assessors

Welcome to the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) Resource for Job Seekers. You can use the OSP as a platform to help clients explore options, build a portfolio and prepare for next steps.

So, what is the Ontario Skills Passport?

The Ontario Skills Passport is a web-based resource that provides clear descriptions of the Essential Skills and work habits employers are looking for. Essential Skills, such as Document Use and Problem Solving, are used in nearly all occupations and are the foundation for learning other skills, including technical skills. Work habits, such as reliability and initiative, are also important for success in the workplace. Essential Skills and work habits are transferable from school to work, job to job and sector to sector.

How can the OSP help your clients?

The OSP can help your clients assess and build their Essential Skills and work habits and transfer them to a job or further education and/or training. The flexible nature of this resource allows you and your clients to choose the OSP tools that will best meet their needs. Some clients may be ready to independently use the various OSP tools and resources outlined in the OSP Action Plan in the order that best suits their research and job search efforts.

Other clients, however, may feel more hesitant because they feel that they don't have adequate skills or they did not have the opportunity to use a range of skills in their previous job(s). You can use the OSP to help these clients understand that they do have valuable Essential Skills and work habits that they are using every day at home, in the workplace, as learners and as volunteers in their community. Once clients have built some awareness and confidence in their abilities, they can use the OSP tools to practice and build their Essential Skills and work habits and then transfer them to a job or further education or training. This can open up possibilities they had not considered.

When it comes down to it, your clients want to be able to show employers they have the Essential Skills and work habits for the job. The OSP can help them do that.

Let's get started.

Begin by printing an [OSP Action Plan](#). Make notes as you work through the resource and think about how you can integrate it into what you currently do. Encourage clients to keep the OSP Action Plan in their portfolio along with other OSP documentation such as OSP Work Plans or OSP Training Plans.

The next step for you and your clients is to become familiar with two key sections of the OSP website. Start by clicking on [Essential Skills and Work Habits](#). In this section, you will learn about the Essential Skills and work habits and see how people use them in everyday life. Then click on [Occupations and Tasks](#) to see how Essential Skills are used on the job and get

other relevant employment information about occupations of interest. As clients explore this section they can begin to think about how to transfer their Essential Skills to different occupations. They may also identify Essential Skills that they need to develop further. They can use the activity sets in the [Check-Up Tools](#) to practice and build their Essential Skills.

After you and your clients have visited these two key sections of the OSP website, click on any of the other icons on the webpage to access OSP tools and resources to learn more about Essential Skills and work habits and how to transfer them to a job or further education or training. This might just open up some possibilities clients have not yet considered.

Tip: Circle sections of the OSP Action Plan for clients to complete before their next appointment; this can help keep them motivated and focused on their goals between meetings with you. You may also want to direct clients to the [Employment Ontario](#) website to find more information on programs and services and to the [211 Ontario](#) website to access community, social, health and related government services in Ontario so clients can access further supports during their job search.

Once again, welcome to the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) Resource for Job Seekers! When you are ready, go to the Essential Skills and work habits section of this resource for more helpful tips.

Essential Skills and Work Habits

Why do Essential Skills and work habits matter?

Essential Skills, such as Document Use and Problem Solving, are the generic skills used in nearly all occupations. We also use these skills in everyday life, such as when we are using a bus schedule to identify which bus will get us work on time or when we are figuring out how to deal with a scheduling conflict.

Essential Skills are the foundation for learning other skills, such as technical skills. They also help us adapt to change. It is no surprise that we say these skills are transferable from school to work and further education or training, as well as from job to job and sector to sector.

It is important to note, however, that we use these skills at different levels of complexity or skills levels when performing tasks in work, learning and life. For example, a Personal Support Worker ([NOC 3413](#)) is using Document Use at skill level 1 when reading lists of patient names, their requirements and care needs. When completing hospital admission forms a Personal Support Worker is using Document Use at skill level 2 because this task is more complex. An even more complex Document Use task at skill level 3 would be when we complete a multi-page job application form. These sample tasks show us that we use our Essential Skills in a variety of ways, at varying skill levels, in our daily life.

Since good work habits are important for success in the workplace, they are included in the Ontario Skills Passport, too. These work habits include working safely, reliability and excellent customer service. There are no skill levels associated with work habits in the OSP.

So, when clients are doing research into employment trends and opportunities, perhaps they are looking at occupations that are very different from what they have done before, it is helpful to look at the Essential Skills and work habits because they are common across occupations. However, it is also important to see how Essential Skills are used on the job by looking at the different skill levels required to perform job tasks for this occupation. This can help clients figure out what Essential Skills they can bring to a business or organization and then communicate with employers about how their previous experiences can help them succeed in a new workplace. It can also help them identify the Essential Skills to further develop to get the job they want.

Helpful Tips

Here are some helpful tips to keep in mind as you explore the Essential Skills and Work Habits section of the OSP.

- Click on any Essential Skill to learn about [skill levels](#).
- Click on the “work, learning and life” icons to [view videos](#) that show how you use your Essential Skills and work habits in everyday situations like going to the pharmacy. “The Essential Skills and Work Habits in Action” video shows the transferability of

these skills within the workplace and to everyday life. Clients may be surprised how many Essential Skills and work habits they use every day!

Next Steps

After exploring this section, clients can go to the Occupations and Tasks section to see how experienced workers use Essential Skills on the job and get other employment-related information.

Occupations and Tasks

The Occupations and Tasks section of the OSP begins with a list of occupations included in the OSP, as well as the level of occupation or training required for each occupation. If you click on the checkmark beside any occupation title, you will see a chart that illustrates the Essential Skills and skill levels used in this occupation. You will also find sample workplace tasks, grouped by Essential Skill and skill level, which show you how people use their Essential Skills on the job. You can print different OSP Occupational Profiles for future reference.

But that's not all. Scroll down the page in any occupational profile for links to information on career exploration, education and training as well as employment trends and opportunities. Click on the Canada Futures link in any profile to get information on wages and salaries and job requirements for that occupation. As you can see, the OSP Occupational Profiles allow you and your clients to access a lot of employment information in just one place.

The OSP currently has over 350 occupations in the database with more on the way. If your client is interested in an occupation is not currently in the OSP, go to the National Occupational Classification (NOC). The NOC provides information on the duties and responsibilities as well as the level of education and training required for different occupations.

Next Steps

After clients have visited the Occupations and Tasks section and written down some NOC codes of occupations they are interested in, they are ready to go to the next section of this resource or return to the homepage to check out another OSP tool.

The flexible nature of this resource allows you and your clients to move through it in the order provided or skip to another section so you can customize it fit the needs of your clients.

Check-Up Tools

Clients can choose an OSP Self-Assessment to get information on their Essential Skills and work habits based on tasks they do or think they can do.

Clients who have not yet had a lot of work experience can choose the first self-assessment which focuses on tasks they do in everyday life. It can be a real confidence booster for clients who think they do not have any skills.

The second self-assessment is designed for clients who have had work experience and the third self-assessment is an option for any client who wants to complete a general self-assessment of tasks they think they can do in the workplace.

All of these options will allow clients to:

- Compare their results to occupation(s) they are interested in
- See how their Essential Skills can be transferred to different settings
- Decide which Essential Skills they need to develop for the job they want
- Decide which OSP [activity sets](#) can help them practice and build their Essential Skills
- Use the information to create and update their résumé
- Use the results to prepare for a job interview
- Explore other options, including registering for a literacy, college, apprenticeship or university program

When clients have completed a self-assessment please encourage them to keep it in their portfolio for future reference. They can also complete real workplace [activity sets](#) to help them practice and build their Essential Skills.

[Check out](#) the OSP Self-Assessments.

Next Steps

At this point, clients can create an OSP Training Plan to understand how experienced workers use their Essential Skills and work habits in occupations they are interested in.

Clients entering training programs such as [Ontario Skills Development](#), [Second Career](#) or [Literacy and Basic Skills](#) can create an OSP Training Plan with their Trainer/Adult Educator so they can use real workplace tasks to practice and build their Essential Skills and work habits. Clients entering a work placement in a program such as [Job Connect](#) can create an OSP Work Plan where employers can record the demonstration of Essential Skills and work habits in the workplace.

All clients have the option to return to the homepage to check out other OSP tools and resources.

As an Employment Specialist/Case Manager or a Needs Assessor, you may want to take this opportunity to find out about the OSP Check-In Tool to see if this is something that you could incorporate into your intake interview with clients. The [OSP Check-In Tool](#) is a resource that you can use to informally assess their Essential Skills and work habits. This information can help individuals understand their Essential Skills and work habits and plan for next steps.

OSP Work Plan and OSP Training Plan

Create OSP Work Plans or an OSP Training Plans to help clients:

- Understand how experienced workers use their Essential Skills and work habits in occupations they are interested in
- Identify training opportunities
- Practice and build their Essential Skills and work habits
- Record the demonstration of Essential Skills and work habits in a training program or work placement

So, what is the difference between an OSP Work Plan and an OSP Training Plan?

- OSP Work Plans can be created for **work placements** in programs such as [Job Connect](#). **Employers** record progress in this work plan.
- OSP Training Plans can be created for clients enrolled in **training programs** such as [Ontario Skills Development](#), [Second Career](#) or [Literacy and Basic Skills](#). **Trainers/Adult Educators** record the demonstration of Essential Skills and work habits in the training program.

Information on how to create an OSP Training Plan with clients is shown below followed by a section on how to create an OSP Work Plan with clients and employers.

How to Create an OSP Training Plan with Clients

You can use the information in the OSP Training Plan to help clients understand how experienced workers use their Essential Skills and work habits in occupations they are interested in. Clients could also use this information to identify Essential Skills and work habits they need to develop to get the job they want.

Please note that the OSP Training Plan can also be used to support the development of but not replace an individualized educational training plan or a Return to Work Action Plan (RTWAP).

STEP 1: Choose to create an OSP Training Plan. Clients may want to create an OSP Training Plan that includes all the Essential Skills or they may want to focus on a few skills at a time. Once you have created the OSP Training Plan, review it with the clients. Check any tasks in the right hand column clients feel they have already demonstrated in previous work or learning experiences. This can help build confidence and familiarize clients with the structure of the training plan. Clients can also use this information to help them create or update their résumé or prepare for an interview.

STEP 2: The OSP Training Plan serves as a useful resource for planning further skills development. Clients meeting with a Needs Assessor can use the information in the OSP Training Plan to have a focused discussion about the Essential Skills and work habits they have developed in previous work experiences as well as those they need to develop further to get the job they want. Clients should be encouraged to continue working towards the skill level demands of the occupation with the understanding that while they may not be required to satisfactorily demonstrate the most complex tasks when first entering a job, they need to

continually develop their Essential Skills and work habits to keep a job and progress in the workplace.

Clients are encouraged to keep a copy of their OSP Training Plan(s) in their portfolio. These skill demonstrations can come in handy when preparing for job interviews to show employers what they can do. They can also use the OSP Tracker to track and plan their skills development over time.

How to Create an OSP Work Plan with Clients and Employers

The OSP Work Plan includes sample tasks, organized by Essential Skill and skill level, performed by experienced workers and not by individuals preparing for or entering the occupation for the first time. Employment Specialists/Case Managers and Needs Assessors can use this information to discuss the kinds of the tasks that a client will have an opportunity to develop/demonstrate at a workplace.

STEP 1: Choose to create an OSP Work Plan and then create a customized work plan for the work placement. Choose the skills (with a check mark) to include in the OSP Work Plan. Refer to the job ad or description so that you can include skills that have been identified as important for that particular workplace. Discuss with clients which skills they would be interested in developing. Click on the “Next” button when you are ready.

STEP 2: Sample tasks, listed by Essential Skill and skill level, have been pre-selected with a check mark. Delete any tasks that are inappropriate due to age requirements, licensing restrictions or that are not applicable for a particular workplace. Use the “Add tasks” button at the bottom of the page to add skills and tasks from other occupations to further customize the work plan. After reviewing the work plan, click on the “Next” button at the bottom.

STEP 3: Continue to follow the prompts to personalize the OSP Work Plan with the client’s name and placement information and then save the OSP Work Plan in MS Word or WordPerfect so changes can be made later. Print a copy of the OSP Work Plan and meet with the client and employer to discuss the work plan prior to placement.

STEP 4: During the meeting, the employer may suggest adding or deleting tasks from the original work plan. Additional tasks from outside the OSP database can be added to the “Other tasks” section of the work plan. Please do not assign a skill or skill level to tasks that are from outside the OSP database. Explain that the employer can use the OSP Work Plan to record the demonstration of skills and work habits at anytime during the placement.

Please note that the OSP Work Plan can be used to complement, but not replace, mandatory documentation such as the Job Connect Participant Training Plan.

STEP 5: At the end of the placement, employers sign the OSP Work Plan. Clients can keep a copy in their portfolios.

Clients can continue to use OSP Work Plans to:

- develop their skills and work habits by creating new work plans which focus on different skills and tasks, perhaps at higher levels of complexity
- update their résumé and communicate their skills in an interview

[Create](#) an OSP Work Plan or OSP Training Plan.

Next Steps

Clients can now create an OSP Transition Plan to transfer their Essential Skills and work habits to a job or further education or training or return to the homepage to check out other OSP tools and resources.

OSP Transition Plan

Encourage clients to create an OSP Transition Plan to transfer their Essential Skills and work habits to a job or further education or training. They can use this information to help them create a résumé and cover letter that are targeted to a job ad. Encourage clients to keep a copy in their portfolio.

This information can also help clients prepare for an interview. Creating an OSP Transition Plan can help them figure out what Essential Skills they can bring to a business and communicate with employers about how their previous experiences can help them succeed in a new workplace.

Encourage clients to keep a copy of the OSP Transition Plan in their portfolio.

[Create](#) an OSP Transition Plan.

Next Steps

Check out other useful resources in the OSP or return to the homepage.

Resources

Clients can access useful resources such as the OSP Action Plan and the OSP Tracker. They can also go to the OSP SkillsZone to show what they know about Essential Skills, work habits and the OSP.

[Download](#) an OSP Tracker and other OSP Promotional Materials.

Skills development is a lifelong journey. Clients need to continually develop their Essential Skills and work habits to get a job, keep a job and progress in the workplace. The OSP can help clients identify, practice and build their Essential Skills and work habits and then transfer them as they move to different jobs and workplaces or further education or training.

[Go](#) to Resources.