



# YES!

YOUR ECONOMIC SUCCESS



The “Middle School Slump” is a well-documented period during which students often begin to disengage from school due to increased peer pressure and the challenging transition from elementary to middle school. Many students who previously performed well academically may start to lose interest during this time. A study by the Bridgespan Group, a leading consulting firm, found that Junior Achievement programs are especially effective at re-engaging students during this critical stage. These programs help students recognize the value of education and understand its impact on their future success. The study also emphasized the positive influence of community volunteers in the classroom, a key element of the JA experience.

Junior Achievement’s YES! (Your Economic Success) program plays a vital role in this effort by introducing students to career possibilities and financial literacy. Through this blend of career exploration and personal finance education, the program helps students make meaningful connections between their education and long-term economic success.

## Comments about YES!

"I enjoyed how the program helped me to look towards the future for a possible career path." ~student

"I really enjoyed the "games" within each session. I thought each game presented real life scenerios for students to prepare for, and I especially liked how they had a chance to explore various career/job clusters and work through a monthly budget." ~Jessica

Rauhauser, teacher,  
Wilson Middle School

"These are topics a middle school student typically doesn't have to deal with and may only hear bits and pieces of from their parents. YES! gives students a chance to get accurate and important information that is age-appropriate and broken down into manageable chunks. Surely this knowledge helps them get ahead when they face these topics in the "real" world." ~Sara Weiser,  
JA Volunteer

## Overview of YES!

**YES! (Your Economic Success)** is a morning program designed for middle school students that introduces them to the impact career and financial decisions will have on their future. Coordinated by Junior Achievement, the program features a series of interactive activities that help students understand the connection between education, career planning, and financial responsibility. Throughout the morning, community volunteers guide the students through the sessions, sharing their personal and professional experiences to bring real-world context to the lessons.

### What grade level is the YES! program designed for?

This program is designed for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.

### Which students should participate in the YES! program?

**YES!** is designed to give every student an opportunity to realize the importance that career and financial decisions will play in their lives as young adults. As a result, we ask that the program be provided to all students at grade level.

### What is the charge to schools for the YES! program?

Junior Achievement provides this program to schools for **free of charge**. There is some work required by the school to run the event such as preparing student schedules and providing breakfast and water for volunteers.

### When during the day does the YES! program run?

Volunteers typically arrive at the school around 7:30 AM. Students gather for an opening and then go to classrooms for four, thirty minute activities. The event concludes by 11:00AM.

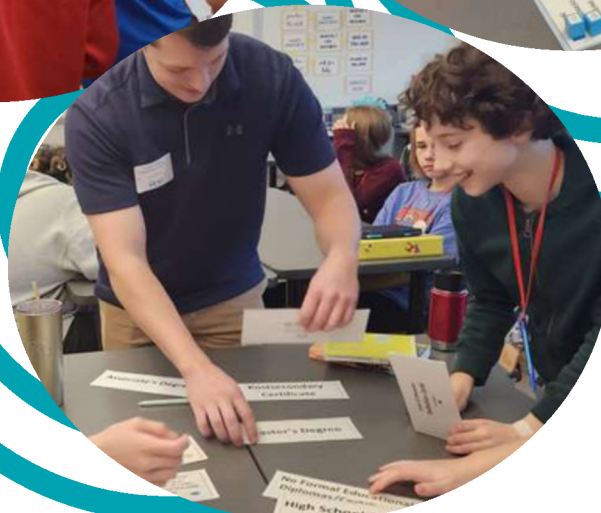
# What a YES! Day Looks Like

At the start of the day, students either gather for the opening video or watch it in the classroom.

The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade programs each consist of four activities. Each activity is designed to be approximately 30 minutes.

The volunteer remains in a classroom to do the same activity four times with four different groups of students. Teachers can remain in the classroom or rotate with a group of students.

The students rotate through the four activities during the morning.





## 6th Grade Curriculum

The 6th grade program provides valuable information about entrepreneurship, careers, and the skills needed to succeed the work place. Each student will work through four, thirty-minute activities.

### The Trades

Students will learn about trade jobs and their importance in our community and their daily life through an interactive game. Students will also gain an understanding of the levels of education required for trade careers.

### Business Concept

Students will explore business planning by developing a business to solve a community problem. Teams of students will complete a full business plan by determining the need for the business, the customer base, the idea behind the business resources needed, steps to get started, as well as identifying potential obstacles.

### Entrepreneur

Students will watch a video based on the life of entrepreneur, Milton Hershey. Afterwards, they will play a board game similar to Chutes & Ladders, called Ladders to Success answering questions that pertain to the video on Milton Hershey and how his entrepreneurial spirit led him to create Hershey's Chocolate.

### Teamwork

Students will learn the importance of teamwork through two, hands-on activities that highlight the importance of communication, problem solving, creativity, and flexibility.



# 7th Grade Curriculum

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The 7th grade program provides practical information about preparing for the working world while still a middle school students. Each student will work through four, thirty-minute activities.

## Manufacturing & Distribution

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Students will watch a video that highlights the many aspects of manufacturing and distribution including the education and/or training required for various jobs along with potential earnings. While the Starbucks York Roasting Plant is the subject of the video, discussion expands to include many familiar M&D companies. Students will play a board game that reviews information presented in the session.

## Career Paths

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Students will complete a career interest survey to explore career possibilities. Student scores will point them to one of sixteen career clusters in which they will uncover possible career options.

## Am I Qualified?

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Students will discuss different levels of education and relate educational levels to different career opportunities through an interactive, team matching game. From jobs that require advanced degrees to jobs that require technical certifications students will have an opportunity to better understand the education requirements for various jobs.

## Soft Skills

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Students will recognize the difference between soft skills and technical skills and their importance for a future career by playing a hands-on game. A student will assess their own soft skills through a self-evaluation.

YES! – 7th Grade

# YES! – 8th Grade

## 8th Grade Curriculum

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The 8th grade program provides practical information about personal finance and the importance of identifying education and career goals. Each student will work through four, thirty-minute activities.

### Interviewing Tips

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Students will discover interview strategies during a fun and informative game based on Pictionary and Charades. Each tip will be expanded upon during the game. The lesson will wrap up with an interviewing video that shows a positive and negative interview example.

### Keeping Your Balance

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Students will understand the basics of making and keeping a budget. They will analyze their budget and focus on gross and net pay, savings, and monthly expenses.

### Problem Solving

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Students will participate in a problem-solving activity. As they participate in teams, they will learn to work through failures and brainstorm solutions.

### Resume Building

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Students will explore the importance of creating a well-written resume. They will critique several resumes as well as build a strong resume using a list of tips provided after viewing a short video.

# Importance of Career and Financial Education

## Students need a chance to discover career opportunities!

As students begin their journey into young adulthood, it is essential that they understand the wide range of opportunities available to them and recognize how their decisions and educational experiences directly influence their future economic success. Junior Achievement introduces these concepts through engaging, hands-on programs that make learning relevant and impactful. When these lessons are delivered by supportive community volunteers, they are further reinforced with real-world insight and encouragement—helping students internalize the message and motivating them to achieve.

Choosing a career is less about making a final decision and more about exploring possibilities. Middle school students, in particular, benefit from learning about career clusters and beginning to reflect on their interests and strengths. These clusters offer a meaningful framework for students to see how academic subjects connect to real-world careers, while also helping them identify skills needed within specific industries.

Ready to get your students involved? Please contact Monty Montgomery, JA Programs Manager. (423) 614-8776 | [monty.montgomery@ja.org](mailto:monty.montgomery@ja.org).





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