

Guiding questions for reflecting on your career goals

Goals represent your visions and your dreams. Understanding your own unique strengths and interests in after-school and youth work is an important part of planning and assessing your professional growth. Most of us are familiar with the process of planning by setting goals and taking action to see that we reach them: directors are required to set budget goals; staff are asked to set goals to improve interactions with children; students set career goals with their advisors and counselors. The following questions are designed to help you reflect on your own interests and experiences—your answers can be used to inform your thinking about your own career goals and training needs.

1. Why did you enter the field of after-school and/or youth work? What motivates you to stay in the field?
2. What are your particular interests on the job and off?
3. What do you believe is the most important purpose of after-school and youth work?
4. Who has inspired you to become an excellent staff person or supervisor?
5. Have you developed any curriculum or creative projects?
6. What is your greatest area of strength in working with young people and families?
7. What do you most enjoy about your work?
8. What do you find most challenging or difficult in your job?
9. Can you identify some areas you want to work on? What training will help you achieve your goals?
10. What do you see yourself doing in five years?
11. What does your community need to better support young people and their families? Can you see yourself playing a part in that?
12. Do you have any leadership roles? How could you further develop your leadership skills?

Adapted from *A Guidebook for Professional Growth Planning and Documentation*, California Department of Education, Nancy Brown, March 2000.