

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU | DECEMBER 2025

Financial Literacy Annual Report



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1. Introduction

The Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 (CFPA) mandates that the Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) submit to Congress an annual report on the CFPB’s financial literacy activities and strategy to improve the financial literacy of consumers.¹

One of the CFPB’s primary statutory functions is “conducting financial education programs.”² The CFPA specifically requires the CFPB to maintain an Office of Financial Education with responsibilities to develop and implement initiatives to educate and empower consumers.³ Congress further mandated the CFPB’s Office of Financial Education to develop and implement a strategy to improve the financial literacy of consumers, and to provide opportunities for consumers to access activities and information on a broad range of financial capability topics.⁴

To that end, the CFPB works to increase financial well-being in individuals across the United States.⁵ The CFPB shares evidence-based approaches with practitioners to increase the effectiveness of their financial education programs.⁶ The CFPB’s resources are set on a foundation of research that extends throughout its materials, programs, and activities for adults and for young people.

The CFPB maintains a suite of online resources and publications that serve millions of adults and young people every year. These materials help guide individuals and families through common money topics such as managing debt, saving, making large purchases (e.g., buying a car or home), paying for college, and understanding credit scores, among other topics.

The CFPB’s flagship educational resource, *Ask CFPB*, provides clear, impartial answers to hundreds of consumer-oriented questions about financial services and products and topics such as credit, debt, savings, and borrowing. In 2024, *Ask CFPB* was the most widely used financial education resource on consumerfinance.gov, serving 12.6 million visitors with 15 million pageviews.

¹ 12 U.S.C. § 5493(d)(4).

² 12 U.S.C. § 5511(c)(1).

³ 12 U.S.C. § 5493(d)(1).

⁴ 12 U.S.C. § 5493(d)(2).

⁵ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Financial Well-Being Resources*. <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/financial-well-being-resources/>

⁶ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *2023 Financial Literacy Annual Report*. https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_financial-literacy-fy-2023_annual-report_2024-08.pdf

The CFPB also designs educational resources to service specific communities. For example, the Office of Financial Education collaborates with the Office for Servicemember Affairs to understand the financial education needs of servicemembers.

For youth and young people, the CFPB's financial education strategy is founded in research that suggests the knowledge, skills, and behaviors associated with adult financial well-being stem from three building blocks developed in youth. When financial literacy skills are developed in children using age-appropriate resources and are consistently reinforced throughout childhood, young people gain more chances to develop positive habits and behaviors. This is why the CFPB supports financial education in classrooms from kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) and works with teachers, parents, and communities in this effort.

This report first summarizes the CFPB's approach to financial education. It then focuses on the CFPB's work on its youth financial education program, discussing:

- Why youth financial education is important
- What makes youth financial education effective
- How the CFPB supports effective financial education

This report describes CFPB activities from January 2024 through December 2024.

2. The CFPB’s approach to financial education

The CFPB works to be a source of unbiased, objective information consumers can trust by developing guides, programs, and resources for both consumers and educators. The CFPB also strives to disseminate evidence-based approaches for practitioners to increase the effectiveness of financial education.

The CFPB’s digital tools and resources span a broad range of money topics. For example, *Ask CFPB* is the agency’s flagship education tool that provides clear, impartial, just-in-time answers to hundreds of consumer-oriented questions about financial services and products. In 2024, *Ask CFPB* was the most widely used financial education resource on [consumerfinance.gov](https://www.consumerfinance.gov), serving 12.6 million visitors with 15 million pageviews. *Ask CFPB* accounted for 42% of the top 100 webpages on [consumerfinance.gov](https://www.consumerfinance.gov).⁷

People using search engines create 78% of the web traffic to *Ask CFPB* and, in CY24, the CFPB implemented 238 schemas with search engine optimization (SEO) to help consumers easily find authoritative answers to their financial questions when they need them.

The CFPB’s financial education publications provide straightforward information about money management and other financial topics like credit products, debt collection, reading credit reports and building credit, buying a home and how to avoid foreclosure, and many other topics. Using the American Customer Satisfaction Index, satisfaction among professional users of the CFPB’s publications received a score of 89 on a 100-point scale, far higher than the federal government aggregate score of 65.⁸

In 2024, more than 158,000 subscribers to the Office of Financial Education’s lists received updates and educational messages. Over the course of the year, more than 8 million individual messages were delivered, targeted to the lists. The messages contained news and information for individuals and for the organizations that serve them – from webinar invitations and research updates to tips on recovering financially from natural disasters.

The Office of Financial Education also developed, and is implementing, a strategy to measure financial well-being and improve financial literacy through a set of principles for effective

⁷See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Ask CFPB*, <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/ask-cfpb>.

⁸ Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Publications: Customer Satisfaction Survey*, 2021. Unpublished.

financial education. We use the *CFPB Financial Well-being Scale*⁹ to encourage researchers, practitioners, and others to measure financial well-being, learn how to improve it, and find ways to bring this tool to their communities to improve financial literacy. As of 2024, 18 countries and approximately 100 U.S. organizations use the scale to measure financial well-being in their populations.

The Office of Financial Education coordinates with the Office for Servicemember Affairs to understand the financial education needs of servicemembers, support the Department of Defense Financial Readiness Office to use the *CFPB Financial Well-being Scale* to understand the financial needs of their active-duty members and military spouses and improve their financial literacy. The Office of Financial Education also coordinates with the Office of Older Americans on shared areas of financial well-being research, and to help people prepare for financial security later in life, retirement, health related financial decisions, and managing someone else's money.

The Director of the CFPB also serves as the vice chairman of the Financial Literacy and Education Commission,¹⁰ which develops and implements the National Strategy for Financial Literacy,¹¹ holds regular public meetings, and works to share insights, information, and programs on an interagency basis among the 24-member federal agencies.

⁹ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Financial Well-Being Resources*. <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/financial-well-being-resources/>

¹⁰ 20 U.S.C. § 9701 et. seq.

¹¹ See Fin. Lit. and Educ. Comm., *U.S. National Strategy for Financial Literacy 2020*. <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/US-National-Strategy-Financial-Literacy-2020.pdf>

3. The need for youth financial education

In 2013, the CFPB published a report: *Transforming the Financial Lives of a Generation of Young Americans*.¹² The report proposed strategies to impart personal financial management skills to young people. A 2012 FINRA Investor Education Foundation survey of 25,509 American adults found that 20% of American adults had a student loan and 36% of respondents ages 18 to 34 had student loan debt. Nearly 33% of respondents had used alternative, nonbank borrowing methods in the previous five years, with usage highest among young adults, at 43%.¹³ By failing to start young people on a path to successful personal money management, they may become consumers who do not recognize the risks of financial products, services, and decisions. The CFPB suggested the development of a coordinated and consistent framework to provide young people with the information, experience, and results they need to be informed and empowered managers of their money over their lifetimes.

At the time, programs designed to improve the financial knowledge and capability of youth included teaching financial education in K-12 schools, offering extracurricular programs, matching savings in special accounts, and using digital tools and resources. Still, an absence of program evaluation and research to measure the effectiveness of youth financial education offerings made it difficult to determine which strategies and programs to embrace and implement.¹⁴

Since the 2013 report was published, the CFPB and the worldwide financial education field have taken strides to develop effective programs and measure their impact. Two key examples of progress include:

- **Building blocks research.** In 2016, the CFPB developed a research model about when, where, and how youth develop their financial capability skills. Further research has refined these strategies and enabled the CFPB to develop a teaching pedagogy; self-tests for students, teachers, and families; and more.

¹² See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Transforming the Financial Lives of a Generation of Young Americans*, https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201304_cfpb_OFE-Policy-White-Paper-Final.pdf

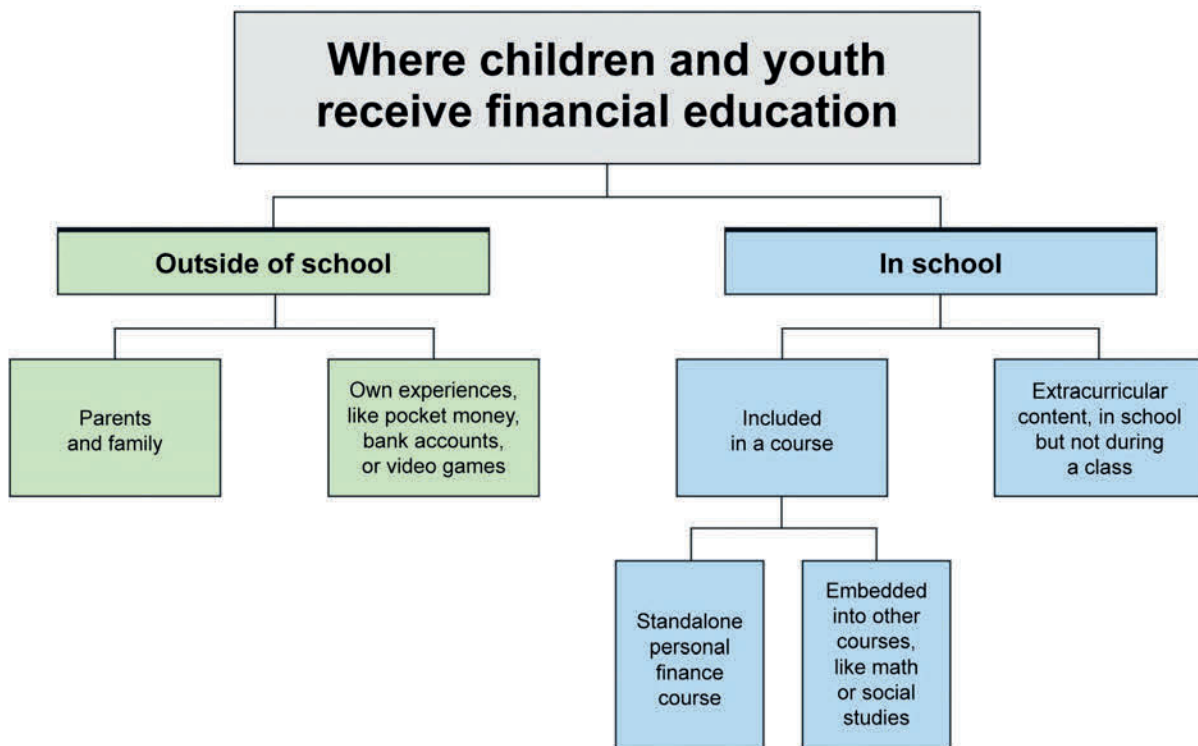
¹³ See FINRA Inv. Educ. Found. *Financial Capability in the United States Report of Findings from the 2012 National Financial Capability Study*, <https://finrafoundation.org/sites/finrafoundation/files/NFCS-2012-Report-Natl-Findings.pdf>

¹⁴ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *From Financial Education to Financial Capability: Opportunities for Innovation*, https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201304_cfpb_OFE-Policy-White-Paper-Final.pdf

- **PISA global metrics.** Data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), a triennial standardized test, show that financially literate students are more likely to demonstrate healthy financial behaviors. They are more likely to save, less likely to overspend, and less likely to report buying something because their friends had it.¹⁵

Equipped with more effective programs and metrics, the CFPB and the financial education field are now better able to meet evolving needs and demands, when and where youth financial education can be delivered (see, e.g., Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 TYPICAL SOURCES OF FINANCIAL EDUCATION



¹⁵ Since 2012, the CFPB has participated along with the Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to administer the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), a tri-annual standardized test. Fifteen-year-old students from more than a dozen countries take the test to measure how well they are prepared for adult life. PISA assesses three core subject areas (math, reading and science), and it also measures financial literacy, providing much-needed data about gaps in financial skills among young people. The PISA financial literacy assessment is currently the only nationally representative study in the United States that measures the financial literacy behaviors of 15-year-olds and whether they have the skills needed to effectively manage financial products and services.

Young people are using complex digital financial products

Young people have access to digital financial products and services from a young age. This can create several challenges and risks, given young people’s limited financial experience and lack of financial literacy. Handling a growing number of financial choices puts young people at a greater risk for financial insecurity.

Young people tend to be unbanked or underbanked at higher rates than adults, and are using a variety of newer, uninsured financial products.¹⁶ While earlier generations of Americans had to choose among providers of savings and checking accounts and mortgage and auto lenders, today’s youth must choose from a larger array of financial products and services. For example, to make purchases, they use prepaid cards, digital wallets, mobile wallets at point-of-sale, Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) options, and person-to-person (P2P) payments.¹⁷

Virtual worlds and online video games allow participants to store and exchange valuable assets. Gamers can participate in digital marketplaces that allow users to buy, sell, and trade assets by converting dollars into currencies used in these platforms.¹⁸

Despite the introduction of an array of innovations and new options for consumers over the last decade, less educated consumers were significantly less likely to adopt them.¹⁹ Because these financial products are complex, young people need education and resources to help improve their financial knowledge and capability.

¹⁶ See Fed. Deposit Ins. Corp., *FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households*, 2023. <https://www.fdic.gov/household-survey/2023-fdic-national-survey-unbanked-and-underbanked-households-report>

¹⁷ See Fed. Res. Board of Gov., *Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2024*. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/files/2024-report-economic-well-being-us-households-202505.pdf>

¹⁸ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Banking in video games and virtual worlds 2024*. https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_banking-in-video-games-and-virtual-worlds_2024-04.pdf

¹⁹ See Fed. Res. Bank of Boston, *Consumer Payment Behavior by Income and Demographics*, 2024. https://www.bostonfed.org/-/media/Documents/Workingpapers/PDF/2024/WP2408POST_2.pdf

Digital tools support earning and spending

Employers have been hiring workers for tasks or short-term assignments for a long time, but the way hiring occurs for this type of job has changed in recent years.²⁰ Now many companies connect workers with jobs through websites or mobile applications. This type of occasional work is part of the “gig economy.” The Federal Reserve’s 2024 Survey of Household Economics and Decision-making survey found that 13% of adults made money by selling things in the gig or resale sectors, and 9% made money by doing short-term tasks such as giving rides, delivering takeout, or doing odd jobs.²¹ A meaningful share of those performing these types of gig activities said that without them they would have trouble making ends meet, though many said they wished the pay was more consistent.

As young people begin to participate in the gig economy, the CFPB has tools they need to understand the benefits and drawbacks and to help them decide whether earning money this way works for them.

Social media has advantages and disadvantages

Social media has become a popular source for financial advice.²² This is especially true for younger generations looking for advice on financial topics such as budgeting, saving, and investing. This has led to an increased number of “finfluencers.” Finfluencers are social media influencers who post on topics related to personal finance.²³ The information is free, quick, easy to access, and engaging.

Research shows that 79% of Americans ages 18 to 41 have gotten financial advice from social media.²⁴ Of those who obtain advice from social media:

²⁰ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Researching the gig economy, Building Blocks Teacher Guide, 2022.* https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_building_block_activities_researching-gig-economy_guide.pdf

²¹ See Fed. Res. Board of Gov., *Survey of Household Economics and Decisionmaking, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, 2024.* <https://www.federalreserve.gov/consumerscommunities/shed.htm>

²² See Fed. Reserve Bank of Phil. *How Americans Use Social Media for Financial Advice, Federal Reserve Bank Philadelphia, 2025.* <https://www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/FRBP/Assets/Consumer-Finance/Reports/how-americans-use-social-media-for-financial-advice.pdf>

²³ See Ca. Dept. of Fin. Prot. And Innov., *Social Media Finfluencers – Who Should You Trust?*, undated. <https://dfpi.ca.gov/news/insights/social-media-finfluencers-who-should-you-trust/>

²⁴ See Forbes Advisor, *Nearly 80% Of Young Adults Get Financial Advice From This Surprising Place, 2023.* <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/nearly-80-of-young-adults-get-financial-advice-from-this-surprising-place>

- 76% believe financial content on social media has made it less taboo to talk about money
- 62% feel empowered by their access to financial advice on social media
- 50% have made money as a direct result of financial advice they received on social media

However, there are concerns about the quality and accuracy of the information being provided.²⁵ Many influencers lack expertise or professional training in household finance, which can lead to inaccurate and unreliable information. Some influencers are paid by financial firms to promote certain products and services, prompting them to focus more on marketing than providing sound financial advice.

Parents and schools want youth financial education support

Given the increasing complexity of the financial services landscape, young people have a greater need for resources and education to guide their financial decisions and improve their financial capability than was necessary for earlier generations of Americans.

Yet, the unfortunate fact is that young people are often unprepared to navigate this complex landscape. A 2024-2025 national survey by Everfi found that 74% of students felt that they need financial education right now and 21% felt that it was already too late.²⁶

It appears that neither parents nor schools are adequately preparing students to manage their finances. A 2024 survey conducted by National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) found that 83% of parents believe that the state they live in should require a semester- or year-long course focused on personal finance as a graduation requirement and 82% of respondents who attended high school wish they had been required to complete a personal finance class.

²⁵ See Ca. Dept. of Fin. Prot. And Innov., *Social Media Finfluencers – Who Should You Trust?*, undated. <https://dfpi.ca.gov/news/insights/social-media-finfluencers-who-should-you-trust/>.

²⁶ See Everfi, *Teen Financial Literacy in 2025*, <https://res.cloudinary.com/everfi/images/v1742824688/state-of-financial-literacy-research-report-2025/state-of-financial-literacy-research-report-2025.pdf>.

A 2020 survey conducted by U.S. News & World Report found that more than 68% of parents surveyed have taught their children about savings and 53% about budgeting. Still, 19% say they have not tried to help their children become financially literate.²⁷

Many young people are not prepared to manage their finances when they reach adulthood. In fact, a 2023 financial literacy survey found less than 30% of young people are financially literate – a much lower percentage than the overall 43% of the general population.²⁸ They are eight times more likely to spend 20 hours or more per week thinking about and dealing with issues and problems related to personal finances.²⁹ At the same time, the current financial services marketplace is becoming increasingly complex.

Relying on financial education in the home can leave vulnerable youth behind

The home is typically where young people begin to learn about money. But vulnerable youth might not have access to financial guidance in the home and one survey found that 19% of parents did not try to help their kids become financially literate.³⁰ To ensure all youth, including youth in foster care and youth experiencing homelessness, receive needed financial knowledge and skills, schools and communities can play a role. Adopting requirements for K-12 financial literacy education is a way to ensure all young people get a basic financial education.

²⁷ See U.S. News and World Report, *Survey: Majority of Parents Want High Schools to Teach Personal Finance*, 2020. <https://money.usnews.com/credit-cards/articles/survey-majority-of-parents-want-high-schools-to-teach-personal-finance>

²⁸ See Glob. Fin. Lit. Excellence Center, *Financial Literacy Around the World: Insights from the Standard & Poor/s Ratings Services Global Financial Literacy Survey*, 2015. https://gflec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FinLit_paper_16_F2_singles.pdf

²⁹ See Glob. Fin. Lit. Excellence Center, *TIAA Institute/GFLEC Personal Finance Index 2025*. <https://gflec.org/initiatives/personal-finance-index/>

³⁰ See US News and World Rpt., *Survey: Majority of Parents Want High Schools to Teach Personal Finance*, 2020. <https://money.usnews.com/credit-cards/articles/survey-majority-of-parents-want-high-schools-to-teach-personal-finance>

4. Youth financial education demonstrates results

Educators see the aim of financial literacy education as improving the financial capability of future generations.³¹ Young people need financial knowledge and skills to help them achieve financial well-being in adulthood.

Research is beginning to show the impact of financial education on money decisions and behaviors later in life. For example, research published in 2020 showed that 18- to 45-year-old adults who attended high school in states that required financial education before graduation show higher levels of financial well-being.³²

Borrowing and financing behaviors

The same study found evidence of improvements to students' post-secondary paths. For example, required financial education in high school consistently results in more responsible student loan borrowing. And, for those who do not pursue post-secondary education, state-required financial education increases credit scores, lowers rates of loan delinquency, and reduces the use of costly payday loans.

As young people enter their adult working lives and experience situations where credit reports are commonly used, such as employment, rental housing, property insurance, and loans, possessing better credit records and behaviors can help them remain on a positive path.

Fighting scams and fraud

Young adults, ages 20 to 29, are losing money to fraud more often than older people, ages 70 to 79.³³ Young adults do not lose as much money, because they do not have as much to lose.

³¹ See Banzai, *The Impact of Financial Literacy Mandates in Schools*, 2024. <https://blog.banzai.org/the-impact-of-financial-literacy-mandates-in-schools/>

³² See Center for Fin. Sec. *How Does Financial Education in High School Affect the Subjective Financial Well-being of Adults?*, Jeremy Burke, J. Michael Collins, and Carly Urban, 2020. https://cfs.wisc.edu/2020/09/10/state_mandated_fin_ed/

³³ See Fed. Trade Comm., *Consumer Advice, Top Scams of 2024*, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2025/03/top-scams-2024>

Despite being digital natives, young people may be more likely to be victims of online fraud because they engage in riskier behaviors online. Their inexperience with personal finance makes them more susceptible to fraudsters.

Young people are more likely to lose money when shopping online via a payment app or service after being contacted through social media.³⁴ A survey of young people ages 16 to 34 found that they are very likely to share personal information online. Two-fifths of young people share their financial and payment details online (42% of 16- to 24-year-olds and 46% of 25- to 34-year-olds). This opens them up to frauds and scams, including identity theft and fraudulent investment offers.

P2P payment platforms allow people to send and receive electronic money transfers and accept direct deposits, but consumers often have limited remedies when mistakes or fraud occur. Although the FBI estimates scam-related losses of \$10.55 billion, there is no government-wide estimate.³⁵ Effective financial education can teach young people to recognize scams and to report something suspicious when using these platforms. Lessons on how to place a credit report security freeze could help prevent identity theft and monetary losses.

Financial education can reduce instances of identity theft and fraud and increase the financial resilience of young people during a time in their lives when they are more likely to be living paycheck-to-paycheck and experiencing financial anxiety.³⁶

³⁴ See Fed. Trade Comm., *Public Tableau*, 2025.
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/federal.trade.commission/viz/AgeandFraud/Infographic>

³⁵ See U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO-25-107088, *Consumer Protection: Actions Needed to Improve Complaint Reporting, Consumer Education, and Federal Coordination to Counter Scams*, 2024.
<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107088>

³⁶ See FINRA Inv. Educ. Found., *Bouncing Back? The Financial Resilience of Americans*, FINRA, 2021.
https://www.finrafoundation.org/sites/finrafoundation/files/2024-10/bouncing-back-the-financial-resilience-of-americans_1_0.pdf

5. How the CFPB supports youth financial education

Ongoing and promising practices exist now in financial education for children and youth. State and local policy leaders utilize CFPB materials as they develop and implement financial education strategies for K-12 students.

Four key strategies can help young people

The CFPB is a source of plain-language, objective information that families and educators can integrate into a variety of settings. Using an evidence-based approach, we have developed research and resources that can be used to teach young people money management in the home, classroom, and in the community.

Four strategies from the CFPB report: *Transforming the Financial Lives of a Generation of Young Americans* and summarized below were validated by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a group of more than 125 member countries that administers the PISA assessment and helps sets the standards and best practices for youth financial education. OECD recommends introducing financial literacy throughout the school curriculum, integrating financial literacy across a range of grades, and starting financial education early with age-appropriate content.³⁷

- **Strategy 1: Provide opportunities throughout childhood to build and practice money management.** Children begin learning about money at a young age, even as young as three years old, and their understanding develops as they grow. CFPB supports this strategy with the original building blocks research described below, which provides the framework for resources and materials created for educators and families, including [Money as You Grow](#) for parents and caregivers, a [searchable database](#) of financial literacy activities for educators, and a college financing tool for students and families called [Your Financial Path to Graduation](#).

³⁷ See Org. of Econ. Coop. and Dev., *Policy Handbook on Financial Education for Young People in the Commonwealth of Independent States*, 2019. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/policy-handbook-on-financial-education-for-young-people-in-the-commonwealth-of-independent-states-cis_9689a23e-en.html

- **Strategy 2: Introduce key financial education concepts early and build on the foundation consistently throughout the K-12 school years.** The number of states requiring financial education for high school graduation has increased from seven states in 2015 to 29 states as of June 21, 2025.³⁸ CFPB supports this strategy by conducting targeted outreach to states that have adopted a standalone financial education course as a graduation requirement for high school students.
- **Strategy 3: Help train K-12 educators to teach financial management to their students.** CFPB research indicates that a majority of educators do not feel qualified to teach to their state’s financial literacy standards or have not taken a college level course in financial education. CFPB developed a set of training materials to support educators as they use financial literacy activities in the classroom.
- **Strategy 4: Encourage parents and guardians to discuss money management topics at home.** Parents can start introducing basic financial concepts as early as age three and can build upon them as children mature. CFPB supports this strategy by providing family financial engagement tools and initiatives like Money as You Grow.

Supporting strategy 1: Researching the origins of youth financial capability

Financial skill is widely understood to be a key element of financial literacy and capability.³⁹ In addition to research into what makes up adult financial well-being, the CFPB developed a “skill scale” to assess financial skills.⁴⁰ The concept of financial skill reflects an individual’s ability to find, process, and act on financial information.

The CFPB also conducted research into when, where, and how youth develop their financial capability skills. The resulting “building blocks” findings suggests that the knowledge, skills, and behaviors associated with adult financial capability stem from three interconnected building

³⁸ See Next Gen Personal Fin., *Live U.S. Dashboard*, <https://www.ngpf.org/live-us-dashboard/>.

³⁹ See Org. of Econ. Coop. and Dev., *Policy Handbook on Financial Education for Young People in the Commonwealth of Independent States*, 2019. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/policy-handbook-on-financial-education-for-young-people-in-the-commonwealth-of-independent-states-cis_9689a23e-en.html

⁴⁰ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Measuring financial skill: A guide to using the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection’s Financial Skill Scale*, 2018. <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/measuring-financial-skill/>.

blocks developed in youth. The building blocks form a framework for youth financial literacy education.⁴¹

By understanding how, when, and where youth acquire the foundational knowledge and skills of financial capability, educators can select relevant programs and introduce innovative financial education strategies to nurture this development of financial concepts. Parents and families can use resources built around age-appropriate milestones to have conversations with their children about managing money. They can use everyday financial decisions to help youth understand how to make choices for themselves in the future.

The three building blocks of financial capability

The building blocks described below provide a framework for youth financial literacy education, explaining how young people learn the skills and knowledge they need to achieve financial well-being in adulthood.

- **Executive function**

Executive function is the ability to plan ahead, remember information, multitask, solve problems, and control impulses. Executive function lays the foundation for financial capability. The associated skills help people save money, set financial goals, make buying and saving decisions, stick to a budget, and resist impulses.

- **Financial habits and norms**

Financial habits and norms are the values, standards, routine practices, and rules to live by that people use to navigate daily financial activities. Financial habits and norms help guide day-to-day behaviors and money management routines for spending and saving. They shape the way people carry out common financial tasks.

- **Financial knowledge and decision-making skills**

Financial knowledge and decision-making skills include familiarity with financial concepts and competency in research and analysis. Financial knowledge and decision-making skills help people identify times when they need credible financial information, process and compare the information they find, and lay out steps to act on that information.

⁴¹ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Building Blocks to Help Youth Achieve Financial Capability: A new model and recommendations*, 2016. <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/research-reports/building-blocks-help-youth-achieve-financial-capability/>.

Integrating the building blocks of financial capability throughout K-12 education represents a promising opportunity to reach young people at pivotal points in their development and in their financial lives.

Supporting strategy 2: Sharing the building blocks

Schools, families, and community organizations have a role in helping youth acquire financial capability. The CFPB supports educators, parents, and community leaders to help youth build a rich foundation for financial capability in adulthood. Engaging with state, national, and international stakeholders in youth financial education creates opportunities for shared learning and peer-to-peer support.

Additionally, the CFPB works with key intermediaries, including the Financial Literacy and Education Commission. In the past, CFPB has facilitated discussions on state financial education high school graduation requirements, teacher training, vulnerable youth populations, financial technology (fintech), and emerging opportunities and challenges in youth financial education.

The CFPB is committed to optimizing how we reach our intended audiences with the tools and resources they need to help youth achieve financial well-being in adulthood. We continue to encourage research to inform best practices in youth financial education.

Supporting strategy 3: Empowering teachers

CFPB offers a wide range of free resources for educators to support the development of youth financial capability. The resources include K-12 classroom activities (with teacher guides and supplemental materials, such as student handouts, worksheets, classroom posters and story books), a glossary, training materials, and videos.

Personal finance pedagogy

Pedagogy, the art and science of teaching, is an essential part of the U.S. education system. Every day teachers bring lessons to life through accessible, understandable, and actionable teaching techniques. The CFPB has created a personal finance pedagogy to guide educators as they teach youth personal finance skills.

The CFPB's personal finance pedagogy takes into account behaviors, skills, and attitudes that develop as children mature. Teachers can incorporate developmentally appropriate teaching

strategies in their lesson plans to help children gain the skills they need for making sound financial decisions. The personal finance pedagogy, featuring the CFPB building blocks, is not meant to replace existing tools for teaching financial literacy. Rather, it is meant to be a valuable addition to the existing resources created by teachers, schools, and other organizations.

Paying for college

The CFPB's Your Financial Path to Graduation (Grad Path) tool helps families to comparison shop during the financial aid process. It is the only government tool that factors in both federal and private student loan debt. Unlike other tools and comparisons, Grad Path is designed for consumers to input information about their specific financial aid offers to provide clear, accurate, and comprehensive information about the costs of attendance – including the cost of borrowing.

CFPB created a lesson plan to help educators teach high school students how to use Grad Path.⁴² The lesson plan offers the opportunity to practice using the tool through scenario data. A family focused guide was also designed to help families talk about how to pay for higher education.

Supporting strategy 4: Engaging families

CFPB explored the connection between home and school for financial education. The purpose of the work is to determine whether and how financial education at school encourages young people to talk more with their parents about personal finance topics and if those conversations affect the financial knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of parents, caregivers, or other household members.

To gain more insight into these questions, the CFPB conducted research on family engagement through school-based financial education in the United States. The analysis included a review of existing research and a national online survey of 1,000 young people.⁴³

CFPB research suggests several benefits of engaging parents and other adults in youth financial education. First, youth financial education increases the likelihood that students discuss financial issues with their families, raising student knowledge and improving outcomes. Second, parents who are explicitly involved may improve their own knowledge and financial behaviors.

⁴² See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Planning your financial path to college graduation*, 2025. <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/youth-financial-education/teach/activities/planning-financial-path-college-graduation/>

⁴³ International Coaching Federation, *Family Engagement in Youth Financial Education*, 2022. Unpublished.

Third, school-based financial education can help expand awareness of other financial education resources targeted to adults, such as *Ask CFPB*.

Discussing financial issues at home

According to CFPB’s survey, young people who receive formal personal finance education had more frequent conversations with their parents or guardians about money than those who have never taken a personal finance course. Among students who were currently taking or had taken a course primarily focused on personal finance topics, 48% had weekly conversations with their parents or guardians. In contrast, only 33% of students who were never exposed to personal finance education talked to their parents about money on a weekly basis. Students who learned about personal finance during another course rather than in a stand-alone course were in between, with 43% reporting speaking to parents or guardians about money at least once a week.

Many parents and students described instances when their family talked about personal finance topics in response to something a student learned about at school, increasing the student’s mastery of the topic. Specific examples included discussions about the meaning of compound interest; how mortgages work; how to earn credit card points; how to pay for college; and the benefits and risks of credit, debt, and investing.

Making a home-school connection

Students, parents, and educators discussed specific ways that families are or could be engaged in youth financial education. These tended to cluster into three general strategies:

- Giving assignments that provided opportunities for family conversations about personal finance topics
- Sharing financial resources through newsletters or other direct communication with parents
- Offering school events for parents and youth, like Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) nights or after-school financial education events

Assignments that create family conversations

Assignments can be as simple as asking students to discuss financial topics or home finances with their parents, or they can place greater demands on parents’ time and effort, such as watching educational videos or completing homework activities together.

One educator said she suggests students “continue the classroom conversation at home, but I never do it as part of the class, part of their grade, or an assignment.” One student described

sharing with her parents some resources on investing that she received from a financial education class, which led her parent to learn more about stocks and bonds and ultimately choose to invest money.

Many educators were interested in communicating general financial knowledge to parents. They sent home newsletters that described what students are learning in their financial education courses, provided financial information or resources specifically for parents, and included activities for families to do at home. Teachers liked the newsletter model because parents could take or leave the information as they saw fit.

Sharing financial resources with the community

After-school events can be opportunities for engaging communities. Beyond their core function of educating children, schools often serve as community hubs, partnering with families and organizations to provide support and services for students, families, and the wider community, aiming to improve student outcomes and create stronger, healthier neighborhoods. As such, schools can offer to communicate with and share resources with adults.

After-school events often involve collaboration between the school and external partners, such as financial institutions, public institutions, and nongovernmental organizations. Some events are associated with Financial Literacy Month in April and involve exhibits or activities for both youth and adults. Other events are smaller or more targeted. For example, some organizations work with bank branches to organize family events for elementary schools. During these events, volunteers facilitate activities and games to spur the whole family to learn about personal finance topics. CFPB's Money Monsters and Money as You Grow resources are developed with these types of activities in mind.

Offering school events for parents and youth

Finally, many study participants mentioned college financial aid as an issue where family engagement is particularly important. For example, one student commented that their parents would not have known about the FAFSA form if the school had not explained it to parents. School events are a particularly useful way to achieve this communication. One teacher reported that their school “offers workshops and a financial aid night where we try and bring parents in and they’re learning along with their student [about] financial aid and paying for college.”

Summary of CFPB survey on family engagement

The CFPB understands that engaging families in youth financial education is an effective tool for increasing student financial literacy. CFPB's research indicates that rigorous, school-based financial education increases the number of discussions youth have with their parents about financial topics. Specific assignments appear to prompt conversations, providing opportunities

for parents to examine their own levels of financial knowledge or reflect on their financial habits. Schools with financial education programs can also use newsletters and events to disseminate reliable resources to parents or to connect parents with financial institutions in the community.

Delivering publications

In the last 20 years, the number of people accessing content digitally has grown significantly.⁴⁴ However, research demonstrates that financial literacy education providers need printed, paper items that they can give to the people they work with as a takeaway, as “read at home” content, and to support classroom instruction.

More than nine in ten parents of minor children say it is important to them that their children read print books—81% say it is “very important,” and an additional 13% say it is “somewhat important.”⁴⁵ Very few say having their children read print books is “not too important” (3%) or “not important at all” (3%). When it comes to sharing books or reading with a child, most adults (not just parents) in the United States who have read both print and e-books think that print books are the better option.

The CFPB’s financial education publications provide straightforward information about money management and other financial issues. The CFPB’s electronic delivery options for its publications provide educators, parents, and learners with instant access to up-to-date content that can be easily printed in the classroom or at home. The research-based resources for students and families, K-12 teachers, administrators, education leaders, researchers, caregivers and post-secondary educators, and community organizations include:

- A plain-language description of the building blocks of youth financial capability
- Money as You Grow activities for parents and caregivers
- Money as You Grow Bookshelf for parents, caregivers, and community groups
- Money Monsters books for educators, parents, caregivers, and community groups
- Grade-level guides for parents and caregivers

⁴⁴ See Pew Rsch. Ctr., *Mobile Fact Sheet*, 2024. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/#mobile-phone-ownership-over-time>

⁴⁵ See Pew Rsch. Ctr., *In a digital age, parents value printed books for their kids*, 2013. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2013/05/28/in-a-digital-age-parents-value-printed-books-for-their-kids/>

- Paying for college guidance for families and students

The Money Monsters book series, available at consumerfinance.gov/money-monsters-stories, helps introduce young people to key financial concepts. The Money Monsters books for K-7 classrooms include six story books and a chapter book. Over two million youth Money Monsters story books, chapter books, and activity books have been distributed since they launched in October of 2020.⁴⁶

Supporting community educators

There are many opportunities to provide financial literacy education in communities. They include when young people earn their first paycheck, fundraisers for after-school activities, driver's education, and many other experiences. Entrepreneurship activities in and out of school, such as raising funds for a trip, are an effective way to teach money management skills. A discussion of transportation costs and budgeting could be embedded into driver's education programs. Community organizations can include financial education activities or programs into youths' lives as part of events they already participate in.

In addition, financial institutions within communities can be a good source of financial education. Some banks and credit unions provide access to youth accounts that incorporate counseling, protection against high fees and interest, and limits on the damage to credit scores if financial challenges occur. These account features can lower risks to both the financial institution and young account holders. Long-term financial institution investment in these kinds of youth accounts can result in adults who easily qualify for mortgages and car loans and manage their credit responsibly.⁴⁷

CFPB's youth financial education activities and resources can be integrated into the work of youth-serving programs and organizations:

- **Childcare centers** are perfect places to integrate activities geared for young children and to reach their parents and caregivers with valuable information

⁴⁶ See Consumer Fin. Prot. Bureau, *Meet the Money Monsters!*, <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/youth-financial-education/teach/money-monsters/>

⁴⁷ See U.S. News and World Rpt., *What to Know About Kids Bank Accounts, 2025*.
<https://www.usnews.com/banking/articles/what-to-know-about-kids-bank-accounts>

- **Afterschool programs, camps, and clubs** where young people spend time outside of school and home provide a safe environment to explore what it means to be financially independent and practice key money management skills
- **Mentors**—whether through a formal mentoring program or informal relationships—provide invaluable opportunities to help young people develop critical financial knowledge and skills
- **Libraries and other community-based organizations** can offer workshops to help youth and young adults learn key financial concepts
- **Community colleges** can teach financial life lessons using CFPB paying for college resources
- **Organizations that serve young people** transitioning out of state systems of care, such as juvenile justice and foster care systems, can use CFPB financial literacy activities to help them build financial skills and habits

6. Conclusion

Financial capability is critical to the success and achievement of people in the United States. We know that at a relatively early age, young people face challenging and life-changing financial decisions. Yet many people lack the personal financial management skills to be successful.

Congress tasked the CFPB with the substantial responsibility for protecting consumers and improving the financial literacy of people in the United States. The ultimate financial education goal for the CFPB is to educate and empower consumers to make better informed financial decisions and improve the financial literacy of all consumers in the United States.

Across the country, policymakers, teachers, nonprofit leaders, and parents are pursuing a wide range of approaches for teaching financial education and capability early in life. This multifaceted approach delivers an opportunity to provide young people with the information, experience, and results they need to be informed and empowered managers of their money over their lifetimes.

The CFPB continues to strengthen the delivery of financial education in the United States by providing teachers, policymakers, researchers, youth organizations, community groups, families, teens and young adults, and financial institutions the financial education tools and resources they need to ensure that young people today and in future generations develop the skills, habits, and knowledge they need to achieve financial well-being in adulthood.