

FAMILY EDITION



Independence Inventory for 8th - 12th Grade

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...And a whole lot more things teens can do!

Learn more about our school programs at LetGrow.org/schools.



Dear Parent,

Hello and welcome to The Let Grow Experience, an initiative designed to make all young adults, no matter how independent they already are, just a little moreso. The goal is to get young people accustomed to doing new things on their own — outside their comfort zone, and maybe a little outside yours, too.

As you've no doubt seen in your own life: When you tackle something new, even if you don't succeed at first, you feel more confident just because you took the plunge. That's how you break the chains of fear and inertia that hold us all down.

To succeed, your child will have to be breaking those chains, too. So the Experience is an exercise helping prepare your child for whatever they're doing next: more school, a job, living away from home, a gap year... Anything that takes some initiative and resilience.

In other words: Life.

The Experience will ask you and your high schooler to come up with some new activities they are ready to do on their own, without you, that for one reason or another they haven't done yet. These tasks will vary widely, depending on your child, neighborhood, and previous experiences. But everyone has some new frontier to conquer. And usually, it is outside the home.

Why is increasing high school students' independence so important?

- It allows young people to see how much they're capable of and prepare for life on their own.
- It allows us parents to see how much our kids are capable of and builds confidence that they will be able to handle being on their own, even if it's hard for us to let go.

When kids do something new on their own, both generations grow. Worry gets replaced by pride and joy.

And so, without further ado: Let the Experience begin!

— *Your Friends at Let Grow*



From Dependence to Independence

It took a lot of day-to-day moments of success, failure, frustration, joy (and maybe a bit of distress and discomfort, too) to grow your confidence and ease into adulthood. Your kids need to grow day by day, just like you did, even though the world has changed. Teens today have constant and instant access to a parent and vice versa, and society's insistence on overprotection isn't helping. Some kids may be so used to having things done for them or consulting you on every minor decision that they may not be motivated to change anything. You may have to push them a bit, or even refuse to do things they should learn to handle themselves. There will likely be some griping, but someday they'll thank you!

The Let Grow Experience invites your teen to build their “readiness to launch” through a series of real-life activities that build independence.

The Independence Inventory encourages discussion about what they're already doing independently, note gaps, and choose how to progress. Each activity is an opportunity to learn and practice the skills needed to build their own strengths, resilience, motivation, and sense of autonomy.

Your Role

Your teen will be able to do many of these activities without your involvement. For some activities, they might need a little bit of guidance or advice. That might come from you, or even a peer, a sibling, or another adult in their life.

Let your teen figure out when and who to ask for help. That, too, is an important step in building their independence!

Some independent activities will induce growing pains, and that's okay, beneficial even. Learning how to tolerate a little bit of discomfort, distress, or disappointment bolsters their ability to handle uncertainty and adapt. Share with them your own mishaps that turned out to be powerful learning opportunities!

Acknowledge their starting point, and encourage them to keep going and tackle even more activities from the Independence Inventory. As they progress, let them know you're noticing just how independent they're becoming, so they can see your growing trust and confidence in them.

What's in it for you

- Reassurance that no matter how fast the high school years fly by, building your teen's independence hasn't fallen by the wayside.
- Confidence and trust in your teen's capability to handle the complexity, challenges and joys of young adulthood and beyond.

Find support and more resources at letgrow.org.



Welcome to The Let Grow Experience!

Dear Future Adult,

As you move through your teen years, you're building your readiness for life beyond high school, for wherever your plans may take you, whether that's more school, a job, living away from home, an apprenticeship, or a gap year. Sure, your academics are one part of your "life prep" ... but a lot of it also happens outside the classroom, in those day-to-day moments and experiences that get you out of your comfort zone and grow your confidence in your ability to manage your own life. Together, they're kind of a package deal that positions you to move into young adulthood knowing "I've got this!"

- It's about knowing how to write an essay
AND having the confidence to email your teacher when you have a question or concern.
- It's about grasping the basics of cell biology
AND being able to shop for, prepare, and make dinner (and clean up afterward!).
- It's about the ability to solve an equation
AND knowing how to track your spending.
- It's about understanding key historical events
AND registering to vote when you're eligible.

Right now, your life is probably busy with academics, extracurricular activities, and maybe even a job, too! It's easy to see how those real-life experiences you need to build your independence can fall by the wayside. You've got a lot on your plate, so The Let Grow Experience helps you keep real-world readiness on your road map as you make your way through high school. Whew!

You do you.

The Let Grow Experience will be different for everyone. You're unique, so your path to adulthood will be too. You won't necessarily do all of the activities on the Independence Inventory. You might also add some of your own activity ideas that are particularly relevant and useful to you and your growing independence (yup, there's a spot on there to add those!).

The Independence Inventory is designed to help you take stock of what you've already done (or are doing) independently, note any gaps, and take on the independent activities you're ready for next. Each activity on the list is an opportunity to try out and practice the skills needed to tap into your strengths, resilience, motivation, and build your sense of autonomy.

The Inventory is simply your starting point to map your journey a little bit more easily, and helps you keep moving towards a life that doesn't depend on your mom or dad managing everything for you.



Go solo, or get some guidance? You decide.

Some of the activities you'll decide to tackle on your own or along with a friend or group. For others, you might need guidance or advice from someone else, such as a peer, a sibling, a parent, or another trusted adult in your life. Fortunately, giving yourself some practice figuring out when, from whom, and if to ask for help is a wonderful strategy for growing your independence!

Communication is key.

Some of your independent activities will have you moving out into the world a little more than before, widening your circle of where you go and who you meet. And that can make parents feel a bit worried. Your parents love you, so of course they worry. It's kind of a package deal! It's only natural that they might find it hard to step back a bit more.

Always keep the lines of communication open, and make sure your parents are aware of what you're up to with your independence activities. You should talk with them, acknowledge and address their concerns, negotiate for common ground, and get their agreement first. You might have to start with smaller steps to help them (and you) build confidence and trust. Communicating clearly and regularly with them is also a great way to signal to them your readiness to take on some more independence.

- *"What are you afraid would happen?"*
- *"What would reassure you that I can be trusted to handle any unexpected bumps in the road?"*

Don't forget the "Yay, me!" part. (Seriously.)

Building your independence is a pretty big deal. We're talking real life stuff here. And that is worth recognizing and celebrating! As you take on and complete different activities on your Independence Inventory, periodically take a moment to step back and reflect. Take note of just how many new experiences you've tried, and congratulate yourself on spreading your wings, even when it may have felt a bit uncomfortable or more challenging than you had anticipated (especially then - that's when the biggest leaps of growth happen!). Notice how it's changing your confidence in your competence as you move through the world (and know that the people around you are noticing that in you, too).

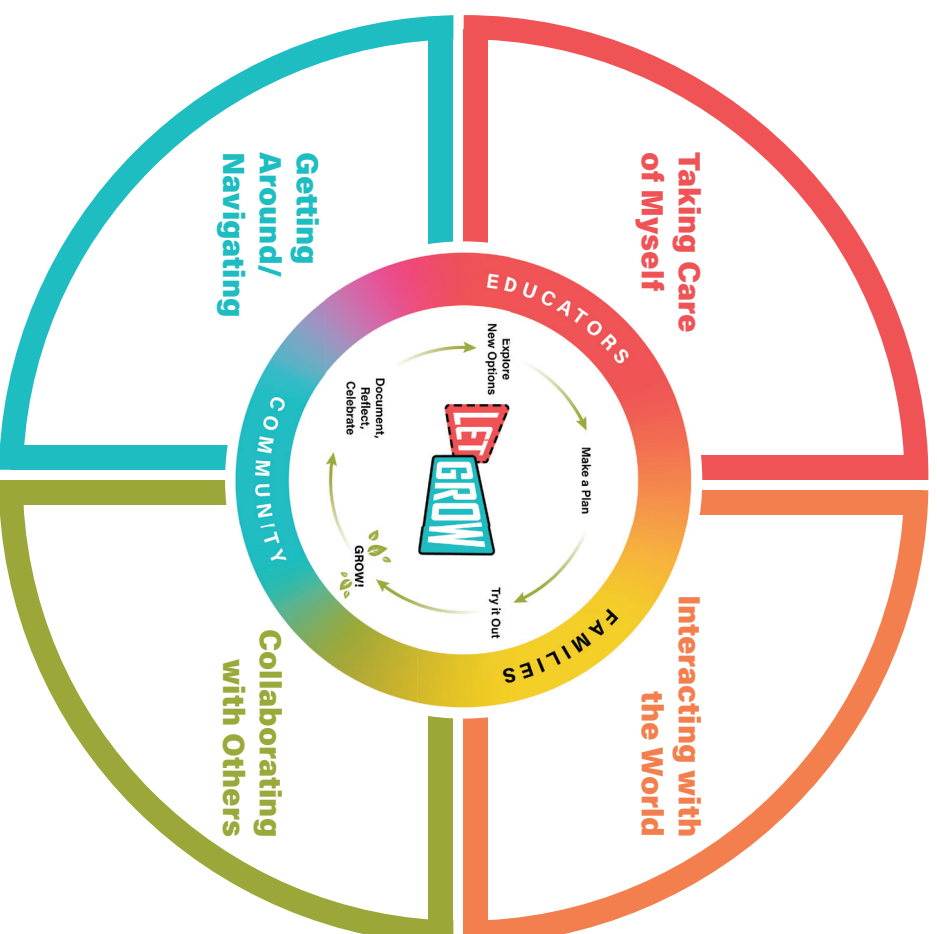
Let's Go with Let Grow.

It's go time! With support from your parents, get started with your Let Grow Experience, and take yourself along your path to becoming a confident and independent adult. You've got this.

— *Your Friends at Let Grow*



Independence Inventory



Welcome to Your Independence Inventory

Here's your starting point to get inspired, make a personalized plan, and get out there and grow your independence! Each activity on the list is an opportunity to try out and practice the skills needed to keep you moving towards a life that doesn't depend on your mom or dad managing everything for you.

Some of the activities you'll decide to tackle on your own or along with a friend or group. For others, you might need guidance or advice. You can seek that from a classmate, a friend, a sibling, a parent, or another trusted adult in your life. And don't hesitate to look to Google or YouTube as a resource. Even adults rely on those to learn new things and build up the confidence to do something themselves.

It's go time.

First,

Look through the list of activities, and check off any you have already done (or are doing). This is Step 1 of personalizing your Independence Inventory to fit you and your goals!

Next,

Explore the remaining activities on the list. Which ones do you think you're ready for next? (And then go ahead and check off "Planning On It"!) Independence and doing new things is something you'll do all your life, so this Inventory isn't a complete list. You should add other activities and goals of your own as you go.

Then,

Make a plan for when, where, and how you'll take on those next activities. And then get out there and grow your independence! Don't forget to keep your parents in the loop. Discussion and negotiation will likely be necessary to ensure their support.

Remember to periodically step back to take note of your progress and celebrate just how capable you're becoming!

Notes:

Competence creates
CONFIDENCE.



Taking Care of Myself

Planning on it	GROCERY SHOPPING AND BASIC COOKING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn how to prepare two simple meals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make dinner for yourself.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make dinner for your family.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pack your lunch every day for a week.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan for, shop, and prepare a meal. Share and enjoy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice comparing grocery prices. Consider ways to save, such as sales, coupons, and unit price comparisons.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean up the kitchen after dinner.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Planning on it	FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Track your expenses for two weeks.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Analyze your spending.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Open a bank account (or gym membership).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bank both online and in-person.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	File your income tax return.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apply for financial aid or scholarships. (Check out Let Grow's Think for Yourself Scholarship.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Compare pricing plans for data/cellular services.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn how to tip.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Try negotiating a lower price for an item or service (i.e., at a garage sale, flea market, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Memorize your social security number.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Call and get car insurance estimates.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Planning on it	AUTO MAINTENANCE/UPKEEP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check fluids (oil, windshield washer fluid).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know when and where to get an oil change, and what is a reasonable price for that service.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handle a flat tire (Change a tire? Call AAA service?).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check tire pressure and add air.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace windshield wiper blades.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get vehicle inspection sticker updated. (Check your state's requirements.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Planning on it	BASIC HOUSEHOLD CLEANING, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do your own laundry, start to finish. (Don't forget to clean out the lint filter in the dryer.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the household laundry. (And sew a button back on if needed.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean the bathroom, vacuum and/or mop the floor, wash windows.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pitch in with household maintenance: dehumidifier, trash/recycling, houseplants, yard care, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace batteries in fire alarm/smoke detector/carbon monoxide detector.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain appliances (filters, dryer hose, pilot lights, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unclog a drain or toilet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn how to turn off the water valve (individual shut-off valves or main valve).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn basic tool use - screwdriver, hammer, wrench, pliers, etc. Build your own tool kit.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Planning on it	HEALTH AND MEDICAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn about your health coverage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get to know your family medical history.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Strive for **PROGRESS** not perfection.



Interacting with the World

Planning on it		☑ Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce a friend to a family member. Introduce a family member to a friend. Introduce yourself to a coworker.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Take steps toward getting your driver's license and/or state ID and/or passport.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule your own appointment (dentist/vision/doctor, haircut).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Go to an appointment on your own.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Return something at a store. In-person.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communicate directly with your teacher with your question or concern. ■ If needed, sign yourself up for any after school extra help offered by your teacher. ■ Speak up to your coach if you have concerns or questions. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do an errand at the post office.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit your local library. Check out a book or other resource.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Register and vote (when you're eligible).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact a company if there's a service outage or a billing issue.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apply for a job (summer or part-time employment), or create your own job by starting a business.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reach out and interview or job-shadow a family friend or community member working in a field/industry that interests you.	<input type="checkbox"/>



Getting Around/Navigating

Planning on it		☑ Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use a map app to go somewhere new (walk, bike, or drive).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use public transit (including purchasing fare/pass, navigating bus or train routes, reading schedules) to get to your job, visit a friend, or visit a family member.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan an outing with friends and use public transportation to get to your destination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn what to do in case of a car accident.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set up an account (or join your family account) on a ride-share app.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan a vacation (family vacation, dream vacation, day trip).	<input type="checkbox"/>



Collaborating With Others

Planning on it		☑ Did it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organize a gathering/event/outing with friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in or organize your own service project. Do your own research, make those calls, and fill out any forms necessary. Keep yourself in charge of ongoing communication and scheduling necessary for your participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Go geo-caching.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organize and coordinate group or team projects for fun or fundraising. Audience could be other groups, younger kids at other schools or grades, senior center: For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a local scavenger hunt ■ Create and run an escape room ■ Flash mob 	<input type="checkbox"/>

If it doesn't
CHALLENGE YOU,
it doesn't **CHANGE YOU.**

Planning on it

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Did it!

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Family Discussion Starters

When kids do something new, both generations benefit. With every brave step a teen takes, the parent is expanding their own comfort zone to let go and let grow a little bit more. And throughout that process, there are so many opportunities for each to learn from each other.

If you're looking for an opportunity to open discussion, here are a few conversation starters.

Where do you picture your child at age 25?

At what age do you hope your child will be managing their own life? (And what do you think are your child's ideas about how that will happen?)

How will you know your child is prepared to thrive as an adult? What will that look like?

"At what age do you hope to be managing your own life? How do you think that will happen?"

"I can't believe that time I [..], but you know what? I've never forgotten what it taught me ..."

"What do you feel you're ready for next?"

What were the moments, experiences, or competencies that prepared you to thrive as an adult and manage your own life?

How did you know you were ready for "the next thing"? What were the signs and cues that helped you know?

How do you handle it when something ends up being more challenging than you thought? Share how you dealt with some unexpected barriers or circumstances.

What would you need to see or hear from your teen to feel comfortable they are ready for some independent activity?

"Learning new things takes time. What do you think you'd do differently next time?"

"If you want to talk about how that went, I'm here to listen."

"I see you trying new things, even when it feels a bit uncomfortable or uncertain. I'm proud of you."



THE **LET GROW** EXPERIENCE

Independence Check-In

Now that you've tackled (and completed) some of your independent activities, it's time to take a moment to check in with yourself. Chart your progress, choose your next steps, and don't forget to celebrate your growth, too. (Fist pump, bust a move, happy scream, pat yourself on the back, whatever. You do you!)

Trying out and practicing independence? Check!

On your Independence Inventory, check off the activities you've completed recently.

Under the surface: What's really happening?

How did you feel doing those recent independent activities?

Which one of your recent independent activities sticks with you most? Why?

What, if any challenges, discomfort, or uncertainty did you encounter while doing any of those activities? How did you handle that?

Is there anything you would do differently next time if/when you do one of these same (or similar) activities again?

How might you apply this to other experiences?

What did you gain from these activities that could be useful in another situation or setting in your life now?

What do you think it will help you handle in the future?

What's next?

What are you ready for now? What feels right for you to tackle next?

Head to your Independence Inventory and check off your next activities you plan to do soon. Make a plan for when those will happen.