The six activities provide children with the opportunity to learn consumer and financial literacy skills in a fun way using ‘real life’ situations such as planning a birthday party or a family outing and fundraising for an endangered animal.

The activities cover a range of topics including the history and value of money, international currency, different economies, needs versus wants, raising money for a charity, budgeting, saving and making wise financial choices and decisions.

Children and parents can complete the activities together or children may undertake them independently. All activities include automated feedback.

The activities map to the Australian curriculum for Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5.

Besides these Parent Notes the front page of each activity provides links to:

- Teacher notes
- Curriculum mapping
- End user specifications
- Contact details
- Copyright information

Overview

MoneySmart Teaching is an initiative of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) to build the consumer and financial literacy knowledge, skills, values and behaviours of young Australians.

Teaching children about money from an early age is critical to setting up good foundations for the future.

As parents and carers, you are the first teachers of your children. These digital activities have been developed to provide you with practical and engaging tools to help your children develop the consumer and financial literacy skills they need to make confident and informed choices throughout their lives.

Getting started

The target audience for this set of six activities is Year 3 to year 5 primary school aged children. Each activity caters for the range of knowledge and understanding of this age group. Activity duration is approximately 20 - 30 minutes each although this may vary depending whether children are undertaking them with an adult, as a self guided activity, or with worksheets which have been provided to enhance the lower level activities. This set of activities can be used on computer or iPad.
What are the activities?

Money maps: These are maps of the world and Australia with timelines listing historical ‘money’ events from 9000BCE to the current day. They tell the story of money with information ranging from bartering to currency changes to the implementation of credit cards and ATMs.

Money and people: Children can ‘interview’ other children from around the world, reading about different currencies, lifestyles, needs and wants. They can make comparisons with life in Australia.

Party time: Children are given a budget allowing them to select what they will buy for their birthday party. They have to keep in mind the number of guests that are coming and ensure they cater for everyone without spending more than their budget allows.

Fun day out: Children plan a class trip and are provided with a budget for travel, food and activities for the day. Those staying inside their budget are rewarded with a souvenir from their day out.

Our big weekend adventure: This builds on the class trip above by providing a budget and asking children to plan a family weekend away. They are given a list of places to choose from and need to budget for travel, food, accommodation and activities for the number of family members they elect to take along.

Helping out: Children organise a fundraiser to help save the Gumbutang - a fictional animal facing extinction on the island of Bojo. The activity introduces cyber safety, advertising, budgeting, currency conversion, donating, and repaying a loan.

How you can support your child’s consumer and financial literacy learning at home

A strong education for your child must include consumer and financial literacy. Our children are growing up in a rapidly changing world which deliberately targets them as consumers from a young age through powerful, subliminal advertising and marketing. Young people need to learn from their parents from an early age how to develop discerning skills and behaviours across a range of consumer and financial real world contexts.

One of the simplest ways of encouraging financial wellbeing and an independent and secure future is to encourage children to learn to plan, save, spend, invest, donate and know the difference between what they really need, and what they want as they grow. Many schools across Australia are now incorporating consumer and financial literacy learning into their curriculum to help make the next generation more financially aware consumers.

There are many activities you can do at home with your children to help reinforce what and how your child is learning. Here are some initial suggestions:

► Give your child an allowance and discuss splitting it – some to spend and some to save or put away to achieve a small goal. A good starting point could be a spending allowance of 50% and 50% set aside in a bank account.

► Open a bank account in your child’s name and regularly add funds to it. Discuss this whole process with your child. Encourage your child to watch savings grow over time. An online account may be the simplest way to achieve this while demonstrating that money is no longer always visible. As the child gets older they can investigate which financial institutions and accounts pay the most interest and have the lowest fees. Talk about financial goals. What do they want? How much should be saved each week for this target? How long will it take to achieve with a range of savings plans?

► Talk about budgets – explain how your income needs to meet your needs and work on a ‘pretend’ household budget with your child. You could explain how much it costs each week to provide food for the family and as they get older the utility costs of electricity, gas and water. Over time you can use the utilities to actively engage children in environmental energy saving solutions for the house with the incentive of sharing the dollar savings.

► Discuss the value of money – what are things worth? Is quality worth paying for? How much does it cost to buy the groceries each week? How much does it cost to run a smart phone and Internet? How much can you buy with $20 in a supermarket?

► Set good examples – Demonstrate to your child that you’re willing to put aside personal wants in
order to meet the needs of the family and others. Talk to your child about needs versus wants when spending especially when they are asking for things. Do they really need it or is it something they can live without?

► What are the many ways that individuals and households receive income? It is good for children to understand that for adults and households there are many sources of income, however, income is a finite resource. Parents and carers may choose to give their children pocket money which can act as a regular income and learning tool. If you are able, consider offering your child the opportunity to earn more from additional jobs.

► How is money spent? Does spending from a plastic card mean that budgets can be stretched? Today’s children don’t often see adults spending cash. You buy your groceries using a debit or credit card and you get cash out with the receipt. So perhaps your child observes you handing over a card, and receiving cash back from the salesperson. At home you pay your bills and make purchases online. Money is much more accessible than it was and is almost invisible. You might want to discuss that you need to pay back borrowed money and how that costs more than saving for what you want.

► What is marketing and what do they need to be aware of? Talk to your child about how things look glossier and bigger and better on television or in catalogues because marketing people work hard to make them look appealing or tempting? Do we really need what we see? Discuss impulse buying and what happens to our budget if we constantly buy things that are outside our budget. Is it really as good as it looks, or is it the idea or the image rather than the value of the product that is being bought?

Further information

For Parents/Carers as teachers:
► Read the Teacher notes that you can find attached to these activities.
► Go through the activities with your child at teaching.moneysmart.gov.au/resource-centre.
► Visit teaching.moneysmart.gov.au and view expert videos or read more about ASIC’s MoneySmart Teaching initiative.
► Familiarise yourself with ‘Making Cents’ - an excellent section dedicated to parents at teaching.moneysmart.gov.au.

For Parents/Carers for your personal money management:
► ASIC’s MoneySmart website is a free consumer site that helps you to make the most of your money. It has calculators, tools and tips. For simple guidance you can trust, visit www.moneysmart.gov.au or call 1300 300 630.

ASIC’s MoneySmart Teaching initiative builds the consumer and financial literacy capabilities of Australian school students by developing students’ knowledge, skills, values and behaviours to enable them to make confident, informed consumer choices and responsible financial decisions that are essential to their future financial wellbeing. To view the MoneySmart Teaching Primary and Secondary packages and all the online and digital resources visit www.teaching.moneysmart.gov.au.