

OPEN EDUCATION TOOLKIT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPEN EDUCATION QUICK START GUIDE	2
THE STICKY NOTES EXERCISE: STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE	3
DISCOVER YOUR INTERESTS TOOL	5
NEEDS MAPPING GUIDE	6
IDENTIFYING YOUR NEEDS TOOL	6
ANALYZING YOUR RESOURCES TOOL	8
LEARNER-DRIVEN SPRINTS SCHEDULE TOOL	10
YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR AWARD (YEA!) INFORMATION	12



QUICK START GUIDE

Welcome to Your Open Education Journey!

Whether you've read the entire "Open Education" book or are just beginning to explore these concepts, this Quick Start Guide will help you implement the key ideas right away. This toolkit contains practical resources designed to help you become an education designer for your child's unique learning journey.

The Five Building Blocks of Open Education

These tools are organized around the five building blocks of an open education mindset:

- 1 **Embrace Your Child's Uniqueness** - Recognize and celebrate what makes your child different
- 2 **Put Your Kids Before Your Reputation** - Focus on what works for them, not what others think
- 3 **Map the Learning Landscape** - Understand interests, needs, and available resources
- 4 **Give Your Child a Voice** - Allow them meaningful input in their education
- 5 **Celebrate Learner-driven Sprints** - Create focused learning periods with clear beginnings and ends

How to Use This Toolkit

Start Here: The Discovery Process

Week 1: Discover Interests

- Set up the Sticky Notes Exercise in your home
- Create a wall, board, or digital space where family members can post their thoughts
- Take time to observe patterns without judgment

Week 2: Identify Needs

- Complete the "Identifying Your Needs Tool" as a family
- Look for connections between interests and needs

Week 3: Analyze Resources

- Fill out the "Analyzing Your Resources Tool"
- Start with what you already have before looking for what you need
- Identify 2-3 small action items to begin with

Then: Plan Your First Learning Sprint (2 weeks)

Days 1-2: Plan

- Use the "Learner-driven Sprints Schedule Tool" to design your two-week adventure
- Start with just one area of interest that connects to a real need
- Keep it simple for your first sprint

Days 3-14: Implement

- Follow your sprint plan, with the mid-sprint check-in
- Document the journey with photos, notes, or videos
- Adjust as needed - flexibility is key!

Day 14: Celebrate

- Hold your first Sprint Celebration Night
- Share what was learned, not just what was accomplished
- Plan your next sprint based on what you discovered

REMEMBER

- **Start small** - You don't need to revolutionize everything at once
- **Follow the energy** - Pay attention to what genuinely engages your child
- **Embrace iteration** - Your approach will evolve as you learn what works
- **Trust the process** - The open education mindset develops over time
- **Celebrate progress** - Acknowledge every step forward, no matter how small

THE STICKY NOTES EXERCISE



Step-by-Step Implementation Guide

Based on Chapter 7: Building Block #3: Map the Learning Landscape

OVERVIEW

The Sticky Notes Exercise helps discover and visualize your family's interests, strengths, and preferences. Like Maya's family in the book, you'll create a visual map of possibilities that can serve as the foundation for your open education plan.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sticky notes in different colors (assign one color per family member)
- Wall space, bulletin board, or large poster board
- Pens or markers

STEP 1: PREPARE YOUR SPACE

- Designate a "Discovery Zone" in a high-traffic area of your home
- Label the space with these five questions:
 - a. What do I like to learn about?
 - b. What do I like to do or think about in my free time?
 - c. What do I believe I'm good at doing?
 - d. What am I not yet good at, but would like to improve?
 - e. What activities do I genuinely dislike and have no interest in developing?
- Place stacks of different colored sticky notes nearby in easy reach

STEP 2: EXPLAIN THE EXERCISE

- Gather your family and explain the purpose: to discover what everyone really cares about
- Set a timeframe (usually 5-7 days) for adding notes to the wall
- Emphasize that this is a judgment-free zone - all interests are valid

STEP 3: ADD NOTES THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

- Everyone adds notes whenever inspiration strikes
- Parents should model the behavior by adding their own notes first
- Aim for at least 3-5 notes per question per person by the end of the week

STEP 4: HOLD A FAMILY DISCUSSION

- At the end of the week, gather everyone for a conversation
- Ask open-ended questions like:
 - "What surprised you about what you wrote?"
 - "Do you see any patterns in your notes?"
 - "Are there any connections between interests?"
- Avoid judgment or immediate planning - just listen and observe

STEP 5: ORGANIZE THE INSIGHTS

- Help each family member transfer their key insights to the "Discover Your Interests" worksheet
- Look for common themes across the sticky notes
- Keep the original notes visible as a reminder

STEP 6: CONNECT TO NEXT STEPS

- Use these insights to identify needs and resources
- Begin exploring activities that align with the strongest interests

REMEMBER

This exercise is about discovery, not judgment. There are no wrong answers. The goal is to understand each family member's natural interests as a foundation for meaningful learning.

COLORFUL NOTES FROM THE FAMILY WALL

AVA

ISABELLA

KAI

What do you like to learn about?

- How real estate deals actually work
- Uncle Ethan's investment strategies

- Why things react together
- Stories about women scientists

- How to teach Minecraft to others better
- Good ways to explain hard stuff

What do you think about in your free time?

- Ways to find undervalued houses
- Starting a student investment club

- New experiments to try
- What happens if you mix stuff together

- Making tutorial videos
- Helping other kids learn

What are you good at?

- Making spreadsheets make sense
- Explaining business stuff to others

- Measuring ingredients / taking steps precisely
- Following scientific method

- Helping frustrated kids
- Breaking down complex things

What do you want to improve?

- Understanding mortgages
- Public speaking for presentations

- Real lab techniques
- Using proper equipment effectively

- Making clearer videos
- Skills for teaching bigger groups

What do you not enjoy/don't want to develop?

- Memorizing biology terms
- Lab reports and clinical studies

- Writing detailed lab reports
- Regular cooking (it's too simple!)

- Sitting still in class
- Working by myself



DISCOVER YOUR INTEREST WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to organize the insights from your Sticky Notes Exercise.
Fill in each section with your key discoveries and look for patterns that might guide your learning journey.

What I Like to Learn About:

What I Do in My Free Time:

What I'm Good At:

What I Want to Improve:

What I Don't Enjoy:

Common Themes I Notice:

This worksheet helps capture your unique interests and strengths. Keep it handy when planning learning activities and sprints that align with what naturally motivates you.

IDENTIFYING YOUR NEEDS

Use this tool to identify needs at different levels, from your immediate family to broader community issues. Examples are provided in parentheses to help guide your thinking.

Family Needs

Daily Routines:

(e.g., after-school supervision, coordinated meals, morning schedules, homework time)

Workspace:

(e.g., homework areas, project spaces, quiet study zones, storage solutions)

Family Activities:

(e.g., shared meals, game nights, outdoor time, cultural experiences)

Project Management:

(e.g., supply tracking, schedule coordination, documentation, budget management)

Community Challenges

Local Support Needs:

(e.g., senior assistance, tutoring programs, neighborhood initiatives, resource sharing)

Educational Gaps:

(e.g., STEM programs, arts education, special needs support, mentorship opportunities)

Environmental Issues:

(e.g., park maintenance, recycling programs, community gardens, conservation efforts)

Youth Programs:

(e.g., after-school clubs, sports teams, mentorship opportunities, leadership development)

Broader Issues

Environmental:

(e.g., conservation projects, sustainability initiatives, local cleanup, habitat restoration)

Education:

(e.g., access to resources, specialized programs, technology gaps, lifelong learning)

Community Development:

(e.g., public spaces, shared resources, local improvement projects, infrastructure needs)

Digital Access:

(e.g., technology training, internet access, device availability, media literacy)

Opportunities for Impact

Connecting interests and skills with an identified need can create meaningful impact. Create your own formulas following this pattern:

Skill/Interest + Need = Impact:

Skill/Interest + Need = Impact:

Skill/Interest + Need = Impact:

Skill/Interest + Need = Impact:

Next Steps: Review your entries and identify 2-3 immediate opportunities where your family's interests align with specific needs. Circle these to focus on first.

ANALYZING YOUR RESOURCES

Important "jobs to be done"

Which of these "jobs to be done" by a school or program are the most important to you? Rank the five items on this list in order of importance from 1-5:

- Academic Development ____
- Social Interaction ____
- Skill Building ____
- Character Development ____
- College/Career Preparation ____

Resource Landscape

Here is a landscape of potential resources to consider at different cost levels:

Free/Low Cost	Moderate Cost	Higher Cost
Public library (books, audiobooks, workshops)	Museum memberships	Professional certifications
Khan Academy and Code.org	Community education classes	Early college programs
Community centers and parks	Sports leagues and clubs	Apprenticeships
Family expertise and connections	Online courses (Outschool, Coursera)	Specialized camps
Educational YouTube channels	Local tutoring exchanges	Private instruction
Public school à la carte options	Homeschool co-ops	Microschools

Available resources we already have:

(i.e. access to physical spaces/classrooms, libraries, labs, gyms, community centers, teachers, mentors, classes, curriculum, materials, services, tools, software, hardware, etc.)

Resources we need to get:

(i.e. access to physical spaces/classrooms, libraries, labs, gyms, community centers, teachers, mentors, classes, curriculum, materials, services, tools, software, hardware, etc.)

Action items this week:

- Research _____
 - Who will do it? _____ By when? _____
- Call _____
 - Who will do it? _____ By when? _____
- Purchase _____
 - Who will do it? _____ By when? _____
- Connect with _____
 - Who will do it? _____ By when? _____

LEARNER-DRIVEN SPRINTS

Sprint Structure

A two-week learning adventure focused on your child's interests

Launch Chat (10 minutes)

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

- ☐ Review chosen focus areas
- ☐ Identify needed resources
- ☐ Set clear goals for two weeks ahead

Focus Areas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Resources Needed:

Goals for this Sprint:

Mid-Sprint Check-in (5 minutes to 1 hour)

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

- ☐ Review progress
- ☐ Address any obstacles
- ☐ Adjust course if needed

Progress Notes:

Obstacles Encountered:

Adjustments Needed:

Sprint Celebration Night (30 minutes)

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

- ☐ Share what was learned
- ☐ Receive family feedback
- ☐ Reflect on next steps

Presentation Format:

(Examples: demonstration, display, performance, slideshow, story, video)

Key Learnings to Share:

What Worked Well:

What I Would Change Next Time:

Ideas for Next Sprint:

REMEMBER

Learning sprints aren't about speed—they're about creating a container for natural learning to flourish. The goal is meaningful engagement, not rushing through material.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR AWARD (YEA!)

A Celebration of Learning Through Entrepreneurship

YEA! is a worldwide opportunity for youth (ages 18 and under) to showcase their creations and demonstrate the learning that comes through entrepreneurship. Youth entrepreneurs and creatives of all types -- nonprofit, for-profit, and social -- are invited to apply. Their learning journeys will be judged by a panel of entrepreneurial and learning experts.

ELIGIBILITY

- Open to young entrepreneurs ages 18 and under
- Must have an existing business or creative project
- Projects can be nonprofit, for-profit, or social enterprises

TIMELINE

The annual YEA! competition follows this schedule:

- **January 15:** Application opens
- **March 15:** Application closes; selection of Top 10 finalists begins
- **April 15:** Top 10 finalists are interviewed during the week
- **May 15:** Top 3 winners announced and awarded up to \$5,000!

PRIZES

- **1st Place:** \$3,500
- **2nd Place:** \$1,500
- **3rd Place:** \$500 *All prizes in USD

HOW TO APPLY

STEP 1

Complete the initial application at yea.education

STEP 2

Based on the initial video application, **10 finalists** will be invited to be interviewed live via Zoom.

STEP 3

Winners announced! **Top 3 finalists** receive cash prizes to further develop their projects.

LEARN FROM PAST WINNERS

Watch interviews with previous participants:

- Top 10 Finalists
- Top 3 Winners

Visit yea.education for more information and to apply!