

[Home](#) / [Store](#) / [Kids Money Curriculum: Age-by-Age Financial Literacy Lessons](#) / Complete Guide

[Complete Guide](#)

Kids Money Curriculum: Age-by-Age Financial Literacy Lessons

A practical family curriculum for teaching money in stages: how to name coins at age four, how to budget allowance at age nine, how to understand credit at age fifteen, and how to open a Roth IRA for a working teen. The aim is not to make children obsess over money. The aim is to make money feel normal, discussable, and connected to real choices.

1. Foundation

Money lessons work when they grow with the child. A preschooler needs to recognize coins and learn that money is used for choices. A grade-school child needs to practice saving, spending, and waiting. A middle-schooler needs to understand budgeting, online safety, and how a bank account works. A teen needs to learn paychecks, credit-card basics, investing, and the mechanics of a Roth IRA if they have earned income.

The five age bands in this guide are 3 to 5, 6 to 10, 11 to 13, 14 to 17, and 18+. Each stage should have one or two clear lessons, one hands-on activity, and one repeatable family rule. That keeps the curriculum manageable. The goal is not to make every week a classroom lesson; it is to make money feel normal enough that children can ask questions and practice without shame.

For ages 3 to 5, use coins, jars, and short phrases like “save now, spend later.” For ages 6 to 10, introduce allowance, earning, price comparison, and simple goals. For ages 11 to 13, bring in checking accounts, debit cards, scams, and monthly planning. For ages 14 to 17, teach taxes, paycheck math, interest, credit scores, and the value of starting a Roth IRA early. For ages 18+, shift to rent, benefits, debt, investing, and independent decision-making.

The family system should be visible. A weekly money date, a monthly allowance review, and a yearly reset are better than one giant lecture. Kids remember what they practice,

not what they hear once. If money is handled calmly in the home, they are more likely to copy that tone when they face their own bills.

Build the home system around a few repeatable rules: where allowance is stored, when it gets counted, what counts as a purchase, and how parents will respond when a child wants to undo a bad decision. If you use a family bank, keep the rules simple enough that a child can explain them back. For teens, make the transition to bank accounts, debit cards, and a real budget deliberate instead of accidental. The child should always know what the next lesson is and what skill they are practicing now.

2. Step-by-Step System

1

Map Each Child To An Age Track

Write each child's age and the skills they already have. Maybe one child can count change but does not understand that a card purchase still removes money from an account. Maybe another can save for a game but has never seen a budget. That map tells you where to start and keeps the lesson matched to the child instead of to your own anxiety.

Choose one next skill for each child. It might be waiting before spending, comparing prices, understanding a pay stub, or tracking a goal. Then pick a routine that repeats the lesson. Repetition matters more than novelty. The child should hear the same language often enough to use it back to you.

2

Teach Ages 3 To 5 With Objects

Preschoolers learn by touching and counting. Sort coins, use play money, and let the child pay for a small item with help. Teach the words spend, save, and wait. If they want two things and can only get one, that is the first lesson in tradeoffs. Keep explanations short and concrete.

Use grocery checkout, birthday gifts, and chore rewards as teaching moments. Ask “Do we have enough?” or “What happens if we spend it now?” A child this age does not need a lecture on inflation. They need to learn that money is limited and choices have consequences.

3

Build Ages 6 To 10 Around Buckets

At this stage, set up a simple allowance system or a way to earn small amounts at home. Split money into spend, save, and give buckets. If you want a more advanced habit, add a goal bucket. Use envelopes or a kid-friendly app, but keep the rules visible so the child can track progress on their own.

Teach price comparison and waiting. Let them compare two snacks, two toys, or two app purchases and explain which is better value. If the child earns money from chores, define which chores are family responsibilities and which are paid extras. That distinction helps prevent confusion later.

4

Use Ages 11 To 13 For Banking And Safety

Preteens can understand accounts and transactions. Show them how to read a balance, identify a pending charge, and check where money went. A youth checking or savings account can be useful if it is simple and low-cost. The main skill here is seeing that digital money still behaves like real money.

This is also the right age to talk about scams, password hygiene, and online shopping traps. Explain that “free” offers often cost attention or data. If they buy games, clothes, or food with their own money, ask them to estimate how long it takes to rebuild the balance. Delay is a powerful teacher.

5

Prepare Ages 14 To 17 For Paychecks And Credit

Teens need to see how earned income becomes take-home pay. Walk through a pay stub and explain gross pay, withholding, and net pay. This is also the age for credit-card basics: statement balance, due date, minimum payment, interest, and utilization. They should know that paying in full on time is the habit that matters most.

If a teen has earned income, explain the custodial Roth IRA. A minor can usually contribute through a custodial account with a parent or guardian’s help, subject to earned-income and annual contribution rules. Show how contributions can grow tax-free over decades. A teen who understands this early may treat the first summer job as the start of a long investing habit.

6

Launch 18+ Into Full Ownership

Once the child becomes an adult, the curriculum shifts from guided practice to independent systems. They need to budget for rent, utilities, transportation, debt payments, insurance, and savings. They also need to understand employer benefits, emergency savings, and how to compare salary offers after taxes and deductions.

The adult lesson is ownership. They should be able to explain their cash flow, open statements, set reminders, and ask questions before a bill becomes late. If they have earned income and enough room in the budget, a Roth IRA can still be part of the plan. If they have debt, the debt plan has to coexist with investing rather than replace it entirely.

3. Key Worksheets & Checklists

1. Age Roadmap

| Age band | Lesson | Practice |
|----------|---|--|
| 3-5 | Money has names and limits. | Sort coins, count bills, and choose between two small wants. |
| 6-10 | Earn, save, give, spend. | Use buckets and set a goal. |
| 11-13 | Banking and safety. | Track a balance and spot a scam. |
| 14-17 | Paychecks, credit, and Roth IRA basics. | Read a stub and open a mock budget. |
| 18+ | Independent money management. | Build a rent and savings plan. |

2. Weekly Family Money Date

- Look at one account or envelope together.
- Review one recent purchase and one upcoming goal.
- Ask what the child would do differently next time.
- Keep the tone calm and short.
- End with one concrete action for the week.

3. Teen Investing And Credit Checklist

| Topic | What to teach | Why it matters |
|---------------|--|---|
| Roth IRA | Earned income, custodial setup, contribution limits, and long-term growth. | Shows how small early contributions can compound. |
| Credit cards | Statement balance, due date, interest, and utilization. | Prevents expensive first mistakes. |
| Paycheck math | Gross pay, taxes, and net pay. | Creates realistic expectations. |

4. Common Mistakes

Teaching only when there is a problem

Money skills stick better when they are part of normal family routines. A calm weekly check-in is more useful than a lecture after a bad purchase.

Giving chores and allowance without clear rules

Kids handle money better when they know what is paid work and what is just part of being in a household.

Skipping the teen years

If credit, taxes, and investing wait until adulthood, the first mistake will be more expensive.

Making money feel like a test of character

Children learn faster when they can practice, make small mistakes, and try again without shame.

5. Next Steps

Turn the final decisions into a shared family routine: one weekly check-in, one monthly review, and one yearly reset. If a change affects household spending, verify it with the [Budget Calculator](#) and keep [the free tools hub](#) handy for future planning.

[Back to store](#)

Need help? support@wingmanprotocol.com