



Developing a Professional Portfolio

What is a professional portfolio?

- A professional portfolio is a collection of items that provides a visual expression of your skills, experiences, and professional growth. This is a great tool that you can use throughout your career to manage your professional development and it's as easy as 1-2-3!

Step 1: Collect

- Collect materials such as transcripts, documents you have written, photos, and award certificates that document your education, training, projects, honors, and awards. Recent items are most effective and remember that collecting items is an on-going process. Continue to add items to your professional portfolio as you continue in your career.

Step 2: Sort

- Typical items in a professional portfolio include a table of contents, resume, references, skills and experience, accomplishments, special projects, community service, and personal interests. Try to target your items to the position you are seeking. For example, if you are seeking a job as a center director, use items that show your ability to lead and manage effectively. If you are seeking a job as a classroom teacher, use examples of lesson plans, work samples, and learning props. You may want to use the job description as a guide to help you choose appropriate items. Don't throw away items deemed inappropriate in case you need them later. Remember that quality is more important than quantity when it comes to developing your portfolio!

Step 3: Assemble

- You want your portfolio to look very professional. Use materials like professional-looking 3-ring binders, clear sheet protectors, dividers, card stock, and two-sided tape or glue for neatly mounting photos. Lead with your strengths in each section. You will want to be able to quickly find what you are looking for when presenting your portfolio to a potential employer instead of fumbling through the pages.

Let your portfolio do the talking in an interview and show them proof of how great you are!

Adapted by the Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC) Advancing Careers Project from: Career Services at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (2007). Professional Portfolio Development. <http://www.uwrf.edu/ccs>.