



9 Essential Skills Kids Should Learn

Kids in today's school system are not being prepared well for tomorrow's world. How then to prepare our kids for a world that is unpredictable, unknown? By teaching them to adapt, to deal with change, to be prepared for anything by not preparing them for anything specific.

This requires an entirely different approach to child-rearing and education. It means leaving our old ideas at the door, and reinventing everything.

Following are a good set of essential skills that children should learn, that will best prepare them for any world of the future.

1. Asking questions. What we want most for our kids, as learners, is to be able to learn on their own. The first step in learning to teach yourself anything is learning to ask questions. Luckily, kids do this naturally - our hope is to simply encourage it. When you and your child encounter something new, ask questions, and explore the possible answers with your child. When he does ask questions, reward the child instead of punishing him.



2. Solving problems. If a child can solve problems, she can do any job. Teach your child to solve problems by modelling simple problem solving, then allowing her to do some very easy ones on her own. Let her fiddle with them and try various possible solutions, and reward such efforts. Eventually, your child will develop confidence in her problem-solving abilities.

3. Tackling projects. Work on projects with your kid, letting him see how it's done by working with you, then letting him do more and more by himself. As he gains confidence, let him tackle more on his own. Soon, his learning will just be a series of projects that he's excited about.

4. Finding passion. Help your kid find things she's passionate about - it's a matter of trying a bunch of things, finding ones that excite her the most, helping her really enjoy them. Don't discourage any interest - encourage them.

5. Independence. Kids should be taught to increasingly stand on their own. Slowly encourage them to do things on their own. Teach them how to do it, model it, help them do it, help less, then let them make their own mistakes. Give them confidence in themselves by letting them have a bunch of successes, and letting them solve the failures. Once they learn to be independent, they learn that they don't need a teacher, a parent, or a boss.

6. Being happy on their own. Too many of us parents coddle our kids making them rely on our presence for happiness. When the kid grows up, he doesn't know how to be happy. He must immediately attach to friends. Failing that, they find happiness in other external things — shopping, food, video games, the Internet. But if a child learns from an early age that he can be happy by himself, playing and reading and imagining, he has one of the most valuable skills there is.

7. Compassion. Be compassionate to your child at all times, and to others. Demonstrate at every opportunity how to ease the suffering of others when you're able, how to make others happier with small kindnesses, how that can make you happier in return.

8. Tolerance. Expose your kids to people of all kinds, from different races to different sexuality to different mental conditions. Show them that not only is it OK to be different, but that differences should be celebrated, and that variety is what makes life so beautiful.

9. Dealing with change. This is one of the most essential skills as our kids grow up, as the world is always changing and being able to accept the change, to deal with the change, to navigate the flow of change, will be a competitive advantage. Modelling this skill for your child at every opportunity is important, and showing them that changes are OK, that you can adapt, that you can embrace new opportunities that weren't there before, should be a priority.

We can't give our children a set of data to learn, a career to prepare for, when we don't know what the future will bring. But we can prepare them to adapt to anything, to learn anything, to solve anything, and in about 20 years, to thank us for it.



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References for further reading:

• <http://www.dailygood.org/view.php?sid=194>