



Four essential life skills to help your child succeed at school and in life

Life skills to help your child succeed



Young people today are faced with a complicated world and unique challenges that could not have been imagined even decades ago. But there are four essential skills you can help your child develop to help them succeed at school and in life.

1. Grit

Research has found that a key characteristic of success is not IQ or talent or how you look. It's grit. Grit is having passion and perseverance to achieve goals no matter how long it takes. Grit is when you stick at something even when it's hard. People who succeed are those who stick at things no matter how boring or frustrating they are. For children who struggle at school, the knowledge that it's not their IQ that will determine their success – but their own grit – can be a powerful motivator. Support your child to nurture their spark as this can give them a goal to strive for and help them develop their grit as they pursue something they truly enjoy. And remind your child that success takes time so remember to celebrate the wins along the way.

2. Self-control

Self-control is the ability to make yourself do things you know you should do, even when you don't want to. Self-control has been shown to be a greater indicator of academic success than a student's IQ and students who practice self-control do better at school and are happier. School and homework are good opportunities for your child to learn self-discipline. Praise them for showing great self-control when they do something they don't want to do. For example, if your child stays home and does their homework, recognise their effort. You could say, 'I know you wanted to be out having fun today but you showed great self-control by studying and I hope your hard work pays off.' And remember: in the teenage years, the part of the brain that controls emotions develops faster than the section that controls impulses. So while self-control may not come naturally to your teenager, it's worth putting in the effort to develop this skill as it will help them succeed in life long after the teenage years are behind you.

3. Critical thinking

The ability to think critically is more important than ever given the enormous amount of information young people must make sense of in our complicated world. Generally, critical thinking is regarded as the ability to think independently, clearly and rationally and to be able to reflect on an idea or problem, apply reason and make logical connections between ideas. Research has found that critical thinking skills are among the most highly valued attributes that employers seek in job candidates. You can help develop your child's critical-thinking skills at home by asking them questions that push them to think more deeply about their positions on things. For example, a simple question like, 'How do you know this?' can encourage your child to reflect on their statements, assess where they got their information, and provide evidence to support their point of view. Critical thinking is also a skill children are encouraged to develop at school so by reinforcing it at home, you can help them learn better at school. These advanced thinking skills can take time and practice to develop and with the rapid growth in teenagers' brains, it can help to have routines that promote structure and predictability at home.

4. Resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back and adapt to difficult circumstances, and even thrive, despite challenges life might throw at you. As a parent, there are things you can do to help your child develop their resilience. Your child can gain strength from you and other supportive and trusted adults in their lives. Research has found that young people who have mentor-like relationships with trusted adults are more likely to complete the tasks they start, remain calm in the face of challenges, show interest in learning new things, and engage in activities at school. Positive thinking can also help your child build their resilience as they learn to keep things in perspective by focusing more on facts and less on negative emotions. And achieving healthy

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and positive habits can help build resilience, especially in teenagers who need structure and predictability to help them thrive.

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