

15 VALUABLE LIFE SKILLS to Teach Your Teen

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As a parent, your job is to take care of your children until the day when they can strike out on their own. While they graduate from high school knowing how to read and write, there are other skills that are just as important that may not get covered in the classroom.

Before your teen leaves home, ensure they're ready to fend for themselves and have a positive impact on the world.

Take a moment to run down this checklist of life skills your teen will need.

Practical Life Skills:

- 1. Manage time.** Be a positive role model for establishing priorities and dealing with distractions. Show your teen how to use a calendar and work backwards from a deadline.
- 2. Study efficiently.** While your teen won't be taking geometry classes much longer, they will continue to benefit from knowing how to learn. Encourage them to love reading. Demonstrate how to recognize key concepts and design their own self-tests on any material.
- 3. Stick to a budget.** The choices your teen makes today will help to determine how much debt they accumulate during college and what their options will be when they graduate. Give them a head start on developing financial responsibility by assigning them tasks like managing their allowance.

4. **Eat well.** Healthy eating habits start early too. Bring your teen along for grocery shopping and invite them to join you in preparing dinner. Stress the importance of eating a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and other whole foods.

5. **Clean up.** Kids who grow up doing chores will be more likely to take care of their first apartment and personal possessions. Teach them how to vacuum, dust, and do their laundry.

6. **Stay safe.** Talk with your teen about protecting themselves online and off. Provide common-sense warnings and share your own experiences.

7. **Handle emergencies.** Does your teen know what to do if they have a fender bender or there's a severe storm in the forecast? Rehearse how to respond to common emergencies.

Social and Psychological Life Skills:

1. **Clarify core values.** The values your teen chooses will guide their behavior. Point them in a promising direction by ensuring they can articulate their beliefs and put them into action.

2. **Give generously. Your teen is more likely to succeed if they help others to do the same.** Encourage them to share their resources and volunteer their services.

3. **Act mindfully.** Mobile devices seem to be shortening the average attention span. If you want your teen to understand the power of mindfulness, you'll need to teach by example. **Give them your full attention when they're talking,** and turn the TV off unless you're watching a specific program.

4. **Deal with stress.** Developing mindfulness will help protect your teen from depression and anxiety. They can also learn to relax by engaging in physical exercise and working on a hobby.

5. **Master phone etiquette.** Even if your teen spends much of their waking life on the phone, they may not communicate effectively. Train them to identify themselves and speak clearly. Rehearse scheduling appointments or calling a professor.

6. **Talk face-to-face.** Your teen may be more comfortable on social media than having a conversation in person. Hold regular family dinners where they can practice.

7. **Cultivate relationships.** Supportive relationships are vital to health and wellbeing. Coach your teen on how to make friends and network.

8. **Be assertive.** Help your child to develop healthy self-esteem and advocate for themselves. **Knowing how to share their wants and needs will bring them closer to fulfilling their goals.**

You can ease your teen's transition into adulthood. Protect your children when they're young, and then gradually give them more responsibility so they can acquire the skills they need to live independently.