

Life Skills

Life passes by quickly. Before you know it, you will grow up into adults with a life of your own. And when you do, you would want to be ready for life. Education gives you the knowledge you need about different subjects, but it does not necessarily equip them with essential life skills.

CGA takes you through the list of a few basic life skills you should know before you leave the nest and how parents can help children acquire these skills.

Essential Life Skills for Teens

Life is full of surprises, both pleasant and unpleasant. To make you are ready to face anything in life, you should acquire these basic life skills as a youth.

1. Money or Budgeting Skills

Money may not be the most important thing in life, but it certainly is vital for a comfortable life. That is why financial discipline is an important skill to learn as a teenager.

Budgeting skills help teenagers learn the value of money, conscious spending, as well as planning for the future.

The important financial concepts that you need to learn to include:

- Make a budget and stick to it. You should know when to spend and when to save.
- Every teen must know how to open a bank account, use the ATM, transfer money online, and write a check.
- Save money to buy or invest in something for emergencies.
- Give money to charity without going overboard.
- Maintain financial records.
- Assess the basic market value of goods.

2. Cooking or Food Skills

Knowing how to procure food or cook food is one of the primary life skills. Learn the below basic food skills so that you can survive in any part of the world.

- Buying groceries is essential to cook. One of the important skills here is to be able to identify different ingredients and know where they are available.

- Using kitchen appliances like microwave, coffee maker, dishwasher, and toaster, among others.
- Knowledge about utensils, cutlery, and how to use them.
- Being able to prepare a healthy meal with the ingredients available. Learn the basics of cooking a decent meal using simple ingredients.
- Storing food in the right way. You want to know where and how to store different food products like fresh produce, packaged food, and liquids.
- Besides knowing about the importance of having nutrient-rich food every day, you should also be able to read food labels for nutrition and ingredient information.
- You should be aware of the health hazards of eating too much junk food.

3. Dress Sense or Clothing Skills

You might change your style completely owing to external influences, but the chances are you may get influenced by the wrong people. So, here is how you get one of the everyday skills right.

- Picking the right-sized clothes, a decent outfit.
- Choosing the right kind of clothes for the right occasion.
- Sewing is a skill both men and women can benefit from.
- Ironing. What is more important is to distinguish between clothes that need ironing and those that don't (you don't iron your jeans now, do you?).
- Do the laundry. Learn to wash clothes by hand or using a washing machine and to deal with simple stains.
- Fold clothes and put them neatly in their cupboard. You do not want a messy closet when at home or away.
- Pack a suitcase.
- Read and understand fabric labels.
- Learn what your clothes say about yourself and the level of respect you would get in certain situations such as interviews or among the opposite sex.

4. Personal Grooming

Grooming is a skill that children need to learn early on. Personal grooming is important to stay healthy and also have a good social or romantic life.

- Learn healthy habits like brushing and bathing daily.
- Learn the importance of keeping your body clean. You must know how to care for your skin and hair.
- You should know how to shave or maintain facial hair in a hygienic way.

5. Cleanliness and Hygiene

Cleanliness is one of the tenets of hygiene. Learn to keep yourself as well as your surroundings clean and tidy. This is part of their grooming and home management skills. Some of the basic things that you could do include:

- Dusting and vacuuming.
- Mopping floors and getting rid of cobwebs.
- Keeping bathrooms and toilets clean.
- Keeping the kitchen clean.
- Clearing garbage regularly.
- Eliminating clutter from time to time.
- Knowing how to clean dishes by hand, not all homes come with a dishwasher.

6. Personal Healthcare and Basic First Aid

Among the critical things that you should learn, as part of taking care of yourself, is to take care of your health. Important points to remember here are:

- Knowledge of personal health and over-the-counter medications that can come in handy.
- Knowing when to go to the doctor.
- Taking proper care of self, through proper diet and environment, in the case of illnesses like common colds, fever, or the COVID-19.
- Health insurance and how it can help you. Learn to keep track of health insurance payments to ensure you get aid when needed.
- Handle medical emergencies, like calling 999 or the emergency number in your county.
- Get to learn basic first aid skills like how to clean a wound, use bandages, and other first aid in case of medical emergencies, which may enable you to save a life, should such a situation arise in the future.

The best way to learn about these everyday living skills is to take care of yourself when you are at home. Avoid having someone doing everything for you.

7. Social Skills and Manners

Learning skills and manners that you would display in a social setting is essential for you to have a smooth social life.

A few social skills that might help you include:

- Exploring and pursuing hobbies, recreational interests and activities to meet like-minded people.
- Learning how to develop and maintain friendships.
- Valuing relationships and people in your lives.
- Learn how to maintain healthy family relationships.

- Learning party etiquette, including how to be host and guest.
- Respecting people and their views, regardless of what they think about others.

8. Organization skills

Lack of organization is one of the factors that lead to poor time management. A poorly organized person is almost always searching for something. Sounds familiar?

Here is how you might stay better organized.

- Learn the simple rule of Kaizen – a place for everything and everything in its place. Learn this rule, and you will not have to ‘search’ for something the next time.
- Learn to use an organization tool or system to arrange your books, clothes, and other things.
- Organization also helps declutter a room and makes it easier to find something in less time.
- Learning will help you to avoid making blunders when you are more organized.

9. Domestic Skills – Managing A Home

Imagine you finally finish college and starts a life of your own. But you hate every moment of it if you do not know the basic home management skills. It is better if you learn these life skills early on.

- Learn how to find the right accommodation or housing options.
- Manage utilities, pay bills.
- Basic maintenance of the house. Learn to vacuum, dust, and clean the house.
- Simple things like fixing a broken circuit, locating a water furnace and turning it off or on, and addressing the basic plumbing issues might help you to manage you house better.

10. Driving and Auto Maintenance Skills

Driving is one of the most important life skills to be self-dependent. But knowing how to drive a car is not enough. You should also know about road safety, auto care, and what to do when there is vehicle trouble. Learn to:

- Buy a car and insurance.
- Registration of the vehicle.
- Have important vehicle records and documents like driver’s license, registration papers, etc. while driving.
- Pump gas and change oil for maintenance.
- Change a tire using different tools.
- Know and follow traffic rules for the safety of self and others.

- Learn the importance of wearing a helmet and a seat belt.
- Also, make sure you are aware of the dangers of speeding and rash driving.

11. Navigational Skills

Basic navigational skills are more important so that even if you do not have a car, you will be able to travel from one place to another. Some things you could learn include:

- Being able to read bus, train or flight schedules, and timetables.
- Read maps to go from point A to point B.
- Understand directions – north, south, east, and west; left, right.
- Know traffic and road terms like curves, exits, freeways, highways, etc.
- Be aware of information about the different transport options to reach different places.

12. Communication Skills

Communication may seem more like a business skill. But think about it, won't you need to communicate in your personal life? Learn how to get your message across without offending another person is important. Communication is a critical skill that you will need to master for interpersonal relationships in personal and professional lives.

Learn about these important skills:-

- People are different, and all don't speak the same language.
- There is a need to understand the individual's temperament before determining how to communicate with them.
- Nobody likes being told what to do. Even you, do not appreciate that.
- Learn the importance of listening skills in communication.
- Empathy and the importance of understanding another person's perspective are necessary.
- Negotiation skills to create win-win situations.
- Different forms of communication, like writing, talking, and non-verbal behavior.
- Using different modes of communication like a telephone, letters or email, etc.

13. Behavioral Skills

The character of an individual shows in the way they behave. Learn to build a strong personality by learning to develop healthy behavior. Here are a few basic things you could consider learning

- Accepting a mistake, admitting a mistake, and taking responsibility for your actions are perhaps the first things you can learn.
- Most teenagers have a problem apologizing. Learn to say 'sorry' and not feel embarrassed about it.

- Learn to be polite and say 'please' and 'thank you' when needed.
- Morality is a concept that you should learn early on. That teaches you to stand up for what you believe is right, conscientiousness, and a sense of responsibility for the less fortunate.
- Learn to stay true to yourself and others. This can be done by exploring the values that are most important to you. Honesty is a trait that should develop.
- Learn to ask for help when needed. It is important to be self-reliant, but there are times when we all need help. It is 'okay' to ask for help.

The only way to learn about moral behavior, honesty, and character is through practice. Ask parents/teachers and your peers to guide you through your growing years to inculcate healthy behavioral traits.

14. Skills to Stay Safe:

When you are out in the world all by yourself, it is important to know how to stay safe. In fact, staying safe is one of the most important life skills for teenagers. Here are a few pointers that might help you to stay safe on the physical plane as well as the virtual plane (online).

- Stay safe on the road when alone. Use their common sense and avoid secluded parking lots, deserted roads, and empty plots away from civilization.
- Learn what to do if you get a flat tire in the middle of the highway or the car breaks down at night on a deserted road. You are encouraged to call for help and avoid venturing on you own at night.
- Avoid traveling with strangers or picking up hitchhikers when traveling alone.
- Travel with someone at night or have someone meet you on the way.
- Keeping someone posted about you whereabouts is a good idea.
- Carry extra cash just in case you need to take a taxi or extra something.

15. Coping with Emotions

Learning to cope with emotions will allow you to see both sides of a situation. Coping and self-management skills that you could learn

are mentioned next.

- Self-management or control, this allows you to set the pace to how you react to different situations, people, and things in life.
- You will have to cope with loneliness and being away from your loved ones when you go to college. It can be a difficult time for you if they do not learn how to deal with the change.
- Avoiding impulsive decisions that can have severe consequences, mostly negative.

- Managing feelings in a healthy way. Learn to think and act rather than react. Reactions can result in negative consequences, but thoughtful action seldom does.
- As an adult, you will have to deal with stress at work, home, in personal relationships, and so on. Coping with stress is an important skill you should acquire.
- A critical skill that you should learn is accepting your emotions. No emotion is bad or good, and it is okay to feel happy, sad, afraid, angry, aroused, silly, jealous, and even guilty. The trick is not to dwell on a particular emotion.
- Learn different ways to deal with emotions, such as physical activity, meditation, listening to music, or just by talking about it.
- Spirituality can also help in coping with major changes in life.
- Remember, your brains are going through a major change so know that you are still learning to manage emotions and stay calm.

16. Problem-solving Skills

Among the main life skills for youth is problem-solving. You cannot seek help every time you have a problem. You should learn to deal with problems like mature adults.

- Learn to face problems rather than run away from them.
- The first step to problem-solving is identifying the problem. The key is to find out exactly what is bothering you and why it is a problem. Learn to narrow down your problem by asking a simple question: "Is my current situation different from how I would want it to be?"
- Once you pinpoint the problem, learn to come up with a list of possible solutions to it.
- Analyze each solution to know which option gives you the desired result, or something close to it.
- Once you shortlist the options, you will pick an option you think is best for you.
- Then you can apply the chosen solution and check if they are right.

17. Basic Educational Skills

Education is essential for living a comfortable and healthy life. There is no dispute about it. You might have learned to read, write, and speak at home. But you might also need to know how to use a computer, a phone, and other gadgets.

Usually, young people tend to understand digital technology faster than adults. But they may not understand all things analog. Also, the use of smartphones and instant messaging has also changed the way they use their language skills. You will need to:

- Write in complete sentences. You cannot use shortcuts and slang when you write your papers in college or send business emails.
- Read to understand, not just skim through the text.

- Write letters, maintain a journal, or just make notes to improve their language and communication skills.

To stay safe online, remember these tips:

- Use passwords that aren't easy to guess.
- When browsing online, it is safe to use a VPN to protect personal information.
- Avoid accessing banking accounts using public networks.
- Avoid talking to strangers or sharing personal information and photos with them.
- Alert you if someone makes sexual overtures online.

18. Goal Setting – Knowing how to prioritize

Learn to identify your skills and set goals that can give your personal gratification as well as professional success. Learn to:

- Figure out what you want to do and where you want to be in a few years' time. Learn to gain clarity.
- Set realistic goals, or else you will end up disappointed sooner than later.
- Focus on your goals and chalk out a plan to achieve them in a realistic manner.
- Identify resources that can help you achieve your goals.
- Change goals or modify them if needed. Goals can be changed or adjusted to suit the changing needs of a person. You may also change, as an individual, which can lead to changes in your personal or professional goals.
- Eventually, you can get to a position where you can set bigger goals, paving the way for a more meaningful and purposeful life.

19. Time Management

How often have you heard your friends complain about not having enough time to do all that they want to? We all have 24 hours in a day. How we manage it makes a world of difference in what we achieve. Essential skills that you might need for better time management include:

- Start by modeling good time management habits. If you are always wishing for 'more time' and doing things in a hurry, chances are you will learn to do that too.
- Learn to organize their time using a simple timetable or a planner.
- Create a schedule and stick to it. Even the slightest deviation from the plan can leave you crunched for time.
- Learn to prioritize your tasks to use your time responsibly. Identify important tasks and differentiate between what is important and what is urgent.
- Developing a routine makes it easier to manage time.

20. Decision-making Skills

You will have to make decisions, make a choice at every step of adult life. From something as simple as what to eat for dinner to making a significant career move or marrying a person you love, everything is a decision.

- Every choice you make comes with a consequence. So you must learn to take responsibility for your decisions.
- Learn to make the right choices by weighing the pros and cons and determining what the outcome of your decision would be.
- Learn to make a list of options first and then evaluate each to make the right decisions.

21. Employability Skills

To be employable or be noticed by potential employers, a person needs to have more than just credentials on the wall. Here are a few skills you may need to develop for better career opportunities.

- Communication skills.
- Thinking and analytical skills.
- Work ethics and integrity.
- Ability to value and use the available resources.
- Knowledge and application of technology.
- Adaptability to adjust to new work environments and coworkers from diverse backgrounds.
- Willingness and ability to learn new skills. Learn to be open-minded.
- Ability to evaluate you own skills and identify weaknesses.
- Willingness to rectify faults to deliver better.

These are only a few among the list of life skills for young people need to learn before beginning the journey as an adult. The key to a happy life is to sustain two key skills – the willingness and ability to learn new things, unlearn skills that are not useful and relearn them with a new perspective.

What life skills do you think you should learn? Share your views about it in our comments section.