

The Seven Essential Life Skills

SKILL 1: FOCUS AND CONTROL

Children need this skill in order to achieve their goals, especially in a world that is filled with distractions and information overload. It involves paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly, and exercising self-control.



SKILL 2: PERSPECTIVE TAKING

Perspective goes far beyond empathy; it includes understanding what others think and feel, and forms the basis of children's understanding of their parents', teachers', and friends' intentions. Children who can understand others' perspectives are less likely to get involved in conflicts.

SKILL 3: COMMUNICATING

Communicating is much more than understanding language, speaking, reading, and writing - it is the skill of determining what one wants to communicate and realizing how our communications will be understood by others. It's the skill that teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.

SKILL 4: MAKING CONNECTIONS

Making connections is at the heart of learning - figuring out what's the same and what's different, and sorting things into categories. Making unusual connections is at the core of creativity. In a world where people can simply "google it", it's the people who see connections who are able to go beyond knowing information to understanding and using that information appropriately.

SKILL 5: CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is the ongoing search for valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions, and actions.



SKILL 6: TAKING ON CHALLENGES

Life is full of stresses and challenges. Children who are willing to take on challenges (instead of avoiding them or simply coping with them) do better in school and in life.

SKILL 7: SELF-DIRECTED, ENGAGED LEARNING

It is through learning that we realize our potential. As the world changes, so can we, for as long as we live (as long as we continue learning).

"Mind in the Making – The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs" by Ellen Galinsky, first edition, HarperCollins Publishers, 2010.