



Essential Skills for Learning and Life

Skills All Children Need

From birth, children are learning about the world around them. There are skills children learn that will help them be successful in learning and life.

Although these skills are called by different names, such as executive functioning skills, life skills or essential skills, they all have common themes that children need to master in order to build a strong foundation that will help them be successful as they grow and develop.

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What does it mean to be ready for school?

Experts agree it is not what a child knows that makes them ready for school but instead their ability to be socially and emotionally ready for school. Children can be ready for school when they can do things such as:

- » Get along with others
- » Follow instructions
- » Regulate emotions

Social Intelligence

The skills that people use as they interact with other people and the world around them. Social intelligence includes things like:

- » Assessing the feelings of others
- » Being able to relate to others
- » How to read and respond to social cues
- » How to negotiate and resolve conflicts

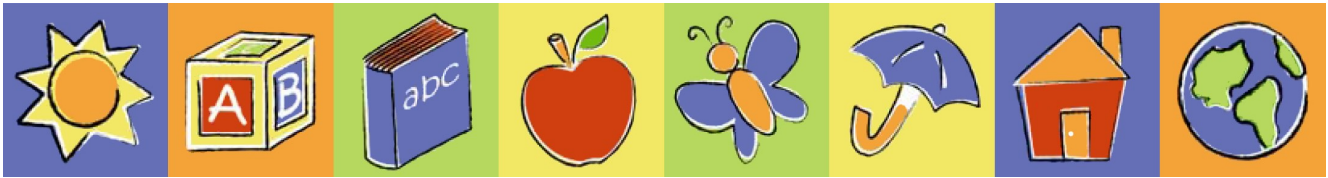
Emotional Intelligence

The skills that people use in expressing and managing emotions in themselves and as they interact with others.

Emotional intelligence includes things like:

- » Express emotions in healthy ways
- » Manage your own feelings
- » Postpone gratification
- » Understand & appreciate how others feel





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Pam Schiller defines seven skills that all children need in her book, *Seven Skills for School Success: Activities to Develop Social & Emotional Intelligence in Young Children*. These skills include:

- » Confidence: feeling or belief you can do something well or succeed at something
- » Curiosity: desire to learn or know something
- » Intentionality: thinking before acting or making choices
- » Self-Control: ability to control thoughts, actions and responses to emotions
- » Relating to Others: interacting with others
- » Communication: how information is exchanged between individuals
- » Cooperation: working with others

Supporting the Essential Skills

Confidence

- » Encourage persistence and tough tasks
- » Engage in problem solving

Curiosity

- » Explore and challenge
- » Provide a variety of materials

Intentionality

- » Give choices
- » Talk about choices
- » Introduce new information and connect it to old information

Self-Control

- » Help children calm down and take breaks
- » Identify and name feelings

Relating to Others

- » Use emotion photos and sing songs about emotions
- » Teach politeness
- » Provide opportunities to teach tolerance

Communication

- » Use language in fun ways
- » Practice conversations
- » Practice writing

Cooperation

- » Play cooperation games
- » Participate in service projects
- » Provide opportunities for group play

Find more information about early childhood development and academic success at

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