

WHAT ARE IMPORTANT LIFE SKILLS FOR CHILDREN?

It is critical that children develop four psychological components as they define themselves in the world:

A sense of **capability** or **mastery**: that they have the skills and talents to be successful in the world. They need to know what they can do well and that with effort they learn and can do many things.

A sense of **significance**: that they matter to other people. Hopefully, children get this affirmation from family and friends daily. Children need to learn to affirm themselves.

A sense of **power** or **control**: that they have some measure of control over their lives, that they have choices and can make decisions.

A sense of **worthiness**: that they are worthy human beings, that their lives have value.

In order to develop these “senses,” children need to acquire specific life skills that they can utilize as they grow in their capacity to feel capable, significant, powerful, and worthy. Among these life skills are:

- organization
- problem solving
- decision making
- knowing how to listen
- asking for help
- handling stress
- managing time
- handling frustration
- being assertive when necessary
- accepting others' ideas and opinions
- understanding others' perspectives
- handling peer pressure
- expressing emotions
- being able to work in groups
- accepting responsibility
- learning to trust and being trustworthy
- thinking creatively, “outside the box”
- being flexible and adaptable
- being resilient

As a valuable exercise, rate your child(ren) on each of these. If they're able to, have them rate themselves. Acknowledge those that are developing well. Identify those that need further developing and you and your child focus on one or two of those for several months. What objective behaviors would indicate development of these skills? See if placing attention on them makes a positive difference.