

# 6 Skills Your Child Needs for the Future and What You Can Do to Help

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The key to raising future-ready children is to encourage them to be well-rounded and emotionally healthy. Expose them to social, musical, physical, visual perception, and language skills.

In this increasingly competitive world, parents have to go the extra mile to raise future-ready kids. Here's what parents can do to raise tomorrow's greats.

To raise future-ready children, parents shouldn't focus on just academic skills. Instead, you should encourage your child to be well-rounded and emotionally healthy. By doing so, you can make a huge difference in your child's success. Here are some must-have skills your child needs to be ready for the future.

## 1. Math skills

We use math in every aspect of our lives, from cooking and shopping to navigating and telling the time. And when it comes to the workforce, the highest-paying jobs often require advanced math skills—take doctors and engineers, for example.

Building your child's interest in math, however, is sometimes easier said than done. That's why it's important that parents don't leave the teaching to schools, but also do what they can to build math skills at home. While your kids are still young, encourage them to love math by keeping your eyes peeled for opportunities to include numbers in your conversations.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association recommends counting everything (toy blocks, popsicle sticks, fruit, etc.), and doing so in a variety of ways—first in 1's, then by 2's, 5's, 10's, etc. You can also familiarize your kids with the practical purpose of math by pointing out the numbers around you, letting them measure

ingredients when you bake, asking them to tell the time, and so forth.

## 2. Language skills

Do you remember your child's very first word? Do you remember how happy you were when your child finally spoke his/her very first word? We all understand how crucial language skills are when it comes to child development, but why stop at just one language?

Learning a second (or even third) language not only opens up your child's cultural horizon, it also helps boost their performance in core subjects like math and social studies. According to researchers from Cornell University<sup>13</sup>, learning a second language can also help develop your child's attention span.

The earlier your child starts learning a new language, the better. If you can find a language program that caters to young kids, sign your child up! You can also start exposing your child to another language through books and videos. Just giving your child the opportunity to learn can make a huge difference.

## 3. Social skills

According to experts, social skills play a huge part in your child's future success. One study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research<sup>12</sup> found that the demand for good social skills is growing in the job market. After all, computers can do math problems, but they still can't replicate human interaction. The study also points out that social skills are often picked up in early childhood, which is why it's important that parents play an active part in encouraging them.

How? Research from the University of Texas Health Science Center<sup>11</sup> recommends a parenting style known as "responsive parenting," also known as "sensitive parenting." According to the National Physicians Center<sup>10</sup>, this simply means being in tune with your children's emotional and physical needs and responding quickly and appropriately. This makes kids feel more supported and secure, giving them the confidence to interact with others, and to explore and learn.

## 4. Musical skills

Still considering whether or not you should sign your kid up for piano lessons? According to research, you definitely should! Music skills have been linked to improved fine motor skills, vocabulary, nonverbal reasoning<sup>9</sup>, and IQ<sup>8</sup>. A recent study

also found that children's brains develop faster with music training. Plus, playing a musical instrument is also a great way to learn discipline and patience.

Parents whose kids are already taking up music classes can encourage their child by exposing them to different kinds of music that feature the instrument they're learning. Is your child learning how to play the violin? Take him to watch a performance by a string ensemble! What about the saxophone? Show them some great jazz videos on YouTube. Develop your child's interest and soon you'll find that you won't even have to remind your child to practice.

## 5. Physical skills

We all know that exercise is good for the health, but do we understand how big of an impact it has on our kids' well-being? Physical activity<sup>5</sup> reduces the risk for heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and many other conditions. It has also been found to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Early motor skills have also been linked to language development<sup>6</sup>, so it just makes sense that physical activity has been linked to improved academic performance<sup>4</sup>, most specifically when it comes to mathematics and reading.

Kids are naturally active, but with the increase in screen time, parents need to exert a little more effort to keep them active. Try fun activities that you can do together as a family. Not only does this give you another opportunity to exercise, it's also a great way to bond and simply enjoy each other's company.

## 6. Visual perception skills

Visual perception, as defined by the NHS, is "the way we know and understand the world around us through what we see." Visual perception skills are the building blocks of other skills—from academic skills like reading<sup>3</sup>, writing, and math<sup>2</sup>, to everyday life skills like reading maps, dressing up, and finding objects.

Parents can help build visual perception skills with visually oriented activities like connect-the-dots puzzles and coloring books. Doing arts and crafts together is also a great way to build visual skills, and this has the added bonus of giving you some quality bonding time, while building your child's fine motor skills at the same time.

In this increasingly competitive world, parents have to go the extra mile to raise future-ready kids. Aside from helping develop essential skills, one of the first steps to raising tomorrow's greats is simply giving them the right nutrition.

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