

210 Life Skills Every Teen Should Know
A Practical Checklist for Real-Life Readiness

Cooking & Kitchen Skills

Read and follow a basic recipe
Measure dry and liquid ingredients accurately
Boil water and cook pasta
Scramble eggs
Use an oven safely
Use a stovetop safely
Microwave food safely
Plan a meal from scratch
Make a grocery list
Follow a recipe with substitutions
Cook 3 meals in one day
Clean as you cook
Store leftovers safely
Know expiration dates
Properly thaw frozen meat
Wash dishes by hand
Load and unload a dishwasher
Use a toaster, blender, and slow cooker
Plan a simple menu for a week
Clean the refrigerator

Nutrition & Health

Read a food label
Understand food groups
Recognize signs of dehydration
Track water intake for a day
Understand portion sizes
Identify whole foods vs. processed
Pack a balanced lunch
Plan a week of meals with variety
Know when to take vitamins
Understand basic allergens (nuts, dairy, gluten)

Laundry & Clothing

Sort clothes by color and fabric
Use washer and dryer properly
Read care labels
Treat a stain
Air-dry delicate clothes
Fold shirts and pants neatly
Iron a shirt
Steam wrinkled clothing
Sew on a button
Hem pants or sleeves
Use a needle and thread

- Replace a zipper or hook
- Pack a suitcase using a checklist
- Organize a closet
- Create a laundry schedule

Cleaning & Household Management

- Clean a toilet properly
- Scrub a sink and tub
- Wipe down countertops
- Mop a floor
- Sweep a floor
- Vacuum carpets and rugs
- Dust surfaces
- Sanitize light switches and doorknobs
- Clean out a junk drawer
- Organize a bedroom
- Disinfect kitchen sponges
- Take out the trash and recycling
- Replace a trash bag
- Clean the microwave inside and out
- Wash windows

Home Maintenance & Fixes

- Use a hammer and screwdriver
- Hang a picture
- Replace a light bulb
- Reset a circuit breaker
- Check and replace air filters
- Unclog a sink
- Use a plunger
- Fix a loose cabinet knob
- Patch a small wall hole
- Clean air vents
- Use a tape measure
- Assemble furniture with instructions
- Clean out dryer lint trap
- Replace batteries in remotes and alarms
- Know where the water shut-off is

Car Care & Transportation

- Pump gas
- Check oil levels
- Check tire pressure
- Understand dashboard warning lights
- Refill windshield washer fluid
- Schedule an oil change
- Know when to get brakes checked
- Keep registration and insurance in glovebox
- Know how to jump a battery

- Handle a flat tire
- Call roadside assistance
- Know what to do in a car accident
- Drive courteously and defensively
- Understand parking rules
- Create a car emergency kit

Appointments & Scheduling

- Use a planner or calendar
- Make a doctor's appointment by phone
- Reschedule an appointment if needed
- Keep track of important dates
- Create a weekly routine
- Budget time realistically
- Prioritize tasks
- Set and meet a deadline
- Avoid overbooking
- Add buffer time to plans

Health & Medical

- Know your own medical history
- List allergies and medications
- Take OTC medications correctly
- Read dosage labels
- Call to refill a prescription
- Recognize signs of illness
- Know when to rest vs. seek care
- Describe symptoms clearly
- Fill out a medical form
- Understand what a co-pay is
- Carry insurance info
- Know what "in-network" means
- Choose appropriate medical care (urgent vs. emergency)
- Keep a personal first aid kit
- Know emergency contacts

Emergency Preparedness & Safety

- Call 911 and state the emergency clearly
- Use a fire extinguisher
- Evacuate a building calmly
- Handle burns, cuts, and sprains
- Treat allergic reactions
- Perform basic CPR (or know when to call for help)
- Pack an emergency "go bag"
- Create a fire escape plan
- Identify smoke/CO detector alerts
- Know emergency exits in public places
- Stay calm during weather alerts
- Recognize signs of heat exhaustion

Identify choking and respond
Handle a power outage
Use a flashlight safely

Communication & Social Skills

Make eye contact when speaking
Shake hands confidently
Leave a voicemail message
Write a thank-you note
Send a professional email
Greet someone politely
Speak to customer service respectfully
Ask for help clearly
Handle a disagreement with maturity
Say no kindly and firmly
Apologize and make things right
Ask thoughtful questions
Participate in a group conversation
Use good table manners
Introduce yourself in new settings

Money & Personal Finance

Create a simple budget
Track income and expenses
Understand the value of saving
Open a savings account
Use a debit card responsibly
Avoid impulse spending
Compare prices and unit costs
Recognize scams and phishing
Calculate sales tax and tips
Plan a grocery trip under a budget
Use a budgeting app or spreadsheet
Understand credit and debt basics
Balance giving, saving, and spending
Plan for a large purchase
Distinguish needs vs. wants

Random But Useful Everyday Skills

Wash a car
Vacuum a car interior
Wrap a present
Remove sticker residue
Clean baseboards
Organize a bookshelf
Use a public transit map
Load moving boxes efficiently
Carry a full laundry basket
Unclog a vacuum

- Steam wrinkles from clothing
- Replace a shower curtain
- Wipe down cabinet doors
- Use vinegar and baking soda for cleaning
- Entertain young kids for 15 minutes
- Plan a simple party or gathering
- Write a packing list for a trip
- Give simple directions
- Reheat leftovers safely
- Use Google Maps or GPS

Technology & Digital Life

- Create a secure password
- Update a phone or device
- Use email and attachments
- Manage a to-do list app
- Download a document and save it
- Navigate online forms
- Use Wi-Fi safely in public
- Recognize unsafe websites
- Use Zoom or video conferencing
- Backup files and photos
- Manage screen time
- Protect privacy on social media
- Update computer software
- Set parental controls (if needed)
- Use Google search effectively

Personal Growth & Adulting Confidence

- Set realistic goals
- Create a vision board
- Reflect in a journal
- Recognize when to ask for help
- Try something new
- Accept constructive feedback
- Say “I don’t know” without shame
- Research a problem and find a solution
- Plan a week of meals
- Wake up to an alarm consistently
- Handle a bad day with grace
- Clean up after yourself
- Speak kindly to yourself
- Do a task you don’t feel like doing
- Celebrate progress over perfection

You're doing more than preparing your teen for adulthood. You're helping them live well, love others, and navigate life with confidence. One skill at a time—you've got this.