

Adolescent Life Skills

Growing confident & happy young people.



Key life skills for adolescents

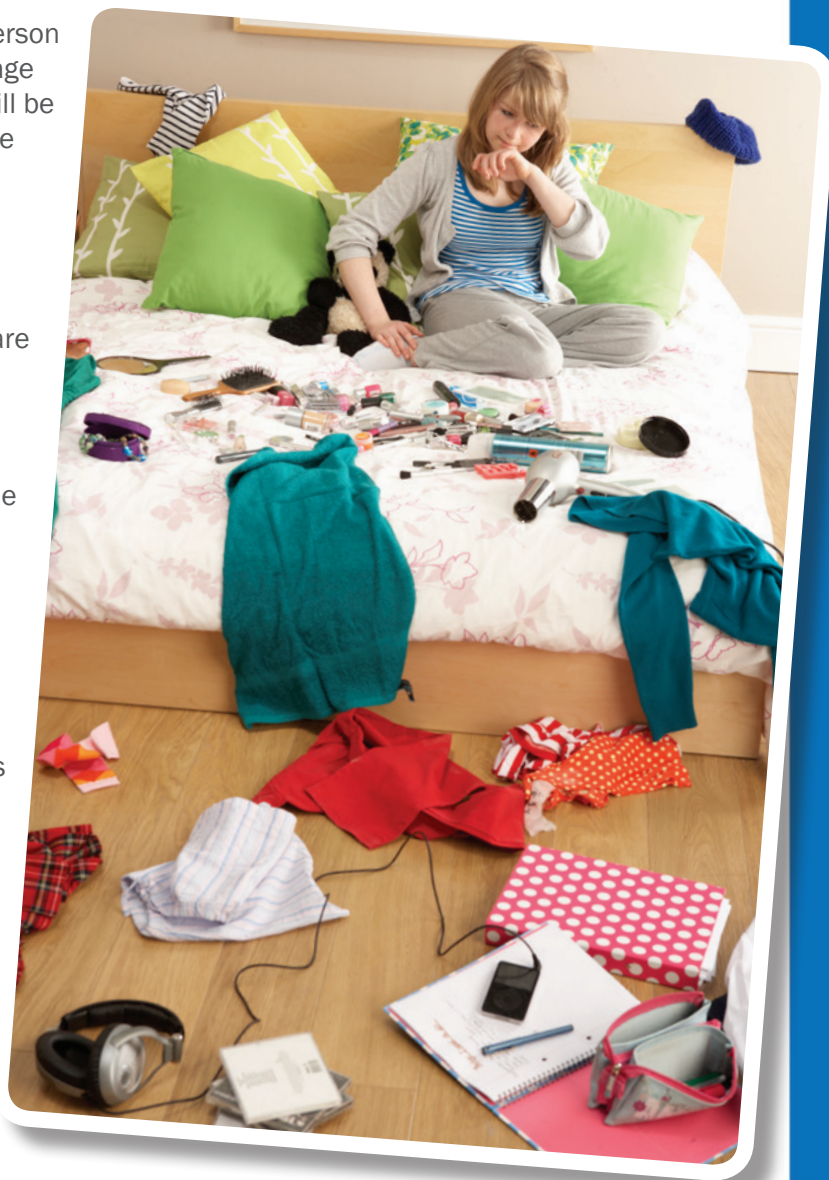
What skills do adolescents need in their kit bag for life when they venture into the big wide world at 18 or so? Remember that everyone needs life skills to manage life. Life is a journey of continually gaining knowledge, skills and competencies. Every person is unique and every life journey is different. This list is one that many people have contributed to – what would help you cope with and conquer life at the age of 18, if you were to leave the safety of the home nest? This list is not gender specific, because both girls and boys need these skills to feel capable.

Living with others—essential skills

- Change the toilet roll when it's empty.
- Replace the toothpaste lid after use.
- Know how to clean a bathroom—and how to get rid of mould!
- Avoid using other people's deodorant.
- Don't use other people's towels or use them as a bath mat.
- Wipe the bench down after preparing food or making toast—don't sweep the crumbs onto floor.
- Know how to wash and dry dishes hygienically.
- Never wipe your face or nose on a tea towel.
- Learn basic food preparation skills, especially around raw meat.
- Know how to sweep the floor.
- Know how to wash the floor.
- Cover food left in the refrigerator.
- Don't eat other people's food without asking.
- If you use the last of the milk, bread or butter then replace it.
- Know how to cook at least three main recipes that people enjoy.
- Always smell milk before using—if it has lumps, it's off.
- Eat fresh, wholesome meals 80% of the time.

Living in rental properties

- Rental inspections are very serious—do your share of the cleaning.
- Rental inspectors check inside the oven and grill—clean them!
- Know how to mow lawns.
- Know how to weed and make gardens look tidy.
- Never lose your key.
- Any damage after a party will have to be paid for by those who live there—especially the person who signed the lease.
- Know the difference between the recycle bin, normal bin and the green waste bin.
- Rent must be paid when due—no matter what.
- Keep doors/windows locked when no one is there.
- Old places will need cockroach baits and mouse traps, and lots of them.
- If you have valuable things, you should have contents insurance.
- Pay gas, power and water bills before they are overdue or they will cut you off and it costs more to reconnect.
- Whoever's name is on the lease is the person held responsible for rental arrears, damage or any other problem. This information will be passed on to other rental agencies for the rest of your life.
- Remember your housemates' birthdays.
- Offer to make your housemates a cuppa occasionally.
- Don't play music loudly after the others are in bed.
- Cook when it's your turn and do it with a smile on your face.
- Have five meals that are tasty and reliable in your kit bag ready to go.
- Keep your clothes, shoes, undies, skateboard, surfboard and wet towels in your room, not all over the house.
- Never throw broken glass into rubbish bins without first wrapping it up.
- Dirty plates will attract ants, cockroaches and rats—wash them after you've used them.



Life skills with cars

- Cars need fuel, oil and water—know where each one goes, and how to check them.
- Never put diesel into a petrol car, or vice versa.
- Know how to change a flat tyre—you need to have a spare tyre to do this.
- Dirty, rusty cars that look poorly maintained are obvious targets for the police.
- Cars with rude stickers are also obvious targets for the police.
- Never, ever drive after you have been drinking or using drugs.
- Never, ever get into a car with someone who has been drinking or doing drugs.
- If you park in a paid parking zone and don't pay, you will get a fine.
- Avoid parking in loading zones or disabled parking spaces—you will get a fine.
- Avoid driving at night with friends—this is proven to be a time of greater risk for adolescents.
- If you do burnouts in public places you will lose your car.
- If you do burnouts, remember how much new tyres cost.
- Cars are expensive to run and maintain—think carefully before buying one.
- A licence is a privilege you can easily lose.
- Drive slowly around schools, even on holidays because children are unpredictable.
- If you can, complete an advanced driving course.
- Brakes and tyres need to be kept in optimal shape.
- Treat trucks with great respect.
- Never, ever overtake on double white lines or on hills.
- Don't lock your keys in your car, especially not in the boot.
- Always keep two litres of water in your car in case of radiator problems.
- Uneaten food left in cars can smell really bad in a short time, and also attracts ants, mice and rats.
- Things like keys, wallets, mp3 players and CDs can slip behind seats and appear lost.
- Never, ever text while driving—pull over and stay alive.
- Get a hands-free kit for your mobile, or pull over and stay alive.
- Avoid any impulses that appear to be a good idea at the time while driving your car.
- Be careful if driving into a setting sun.
- Don't cheat on your driving log—experience is the best teacher for new drivers.
- Learn how to respond if you come across a car or motorbike accident.



Useful communication and etiquette skills

- Avoid grunting or using monosyllabic answers.
- Say hello to people when you first see them.
- Use manners all the time—people make first judgements about you that last.
- Wait until people on the train get off before you get on.
- Wait until people leave an elevator before you get in.
- Learn how to say 'no' politely.
- Learn to be assertive to ask for what you want, without being aggressive.
- Know how to eat properly while dining in a restaurant.
- Avoid speaking while your mouth is full—or even half full—of food.
- Don't shovel food into your mouth.
- Avoid using your fingers to put food in your mouth, unless it's fruit, on a platter or is an expected cultural custom.
- Make eye contact with people you are speaking to and use their names.
- Avoid burping in public places or during meetings.
- Avoid farting in public places or during meetings.
- Say 'Pardon me,' or 'Excuse me' if you do either of the above.
- Wash your hands after visiting the toilet.
- Wipe skid marks off toilet bowl if you leave any.
- Listen to anyone who is speaking to you.
- Be respectful of older people—they might be your future employer.
- Dress to impress—in situation-appropriate ways.
- Be punctual—on time or up to 10 minutes early.
- Be mindful of people's personal space—this differs from person to person so be aware.
- Avoid telling inappropriate jokes in your workplace, home or any public place.
- Avoid gossip—especially spreading it or, worse still, starting it.
- Learn about appropriate email etiquette.
- Say sorry and apologise when you make a mistake.
- Remember what you put out into the world, comes back to you tenfold.
- Say thank you.
- Be kind rather than right—it's a much easier way to make friends.
- Look after your best friends or you will lose that connection.
- Be there for your friends—the good, the bad and the ugly.
- Be generous—with yourself, your family and your friends.



Life skills with technology

- Having a phone or handheld device is a privilege not a right.
- You are responsible for paying for excess data that you use.
- Pause and think carefully before posting, tagging, sending or SMSing any message that could be hurtful, cruel, nasty or insensitive.
- Avoid using phones and devices when at dining table or at special family events.
- Do not assume an image meant for private won't become public.
- You are so much more than the likes you seek online.
- Your life will not be over if you make a mistake and share an inappropriate image online.
- Block and delete anyone who sends nasty messages.
- Do not read nasty messages—if they happen again—show a safe adult ASAP.
- Never believe everything you read online.
- Help your younger friends and siblings learn about privacy settings.
- Help others to learn about unsafe sites.
- Pornography is not how sexual intimacy happens.
- Have a real life as well as staying connected in the virtual world.



Life skills around money

- Learn how to save money—keep some for a rainy day.
- Never steal other people's money—you may borrow, but they need to give it to you first.
- If you spend your money on junk food or alcohol, you will eat Vegemite sandwiches for dinner until next payday.
- Accept responsibility for your own bills and debts—pay your own way.
- Never be late with mobile phone payments because this can adversely affect your credit rating for years.
- Credit cards are big traps—check out all the charges and only use it for emergencies.
- Being a broke student or apprentice builds appreciation for having financial freedom later in life.
- Never be afraid to ask banks or financial institutions questions about fees and charges—ask for the best deal they can offer you.
- Cooking food rather than buying fast food is actually cheaper and healthier for you.
- Debit cards are better for young adults than credit cards.
- Shop within your budget.
- Keep an eye on all payslips to make sure you are being paid for the hours you have worked and at the correct rate.
- If you borrow from your parents, pay them back.
- Learn about taxation and how to maximise your return.
- Set clear goals around your financial future.
- Never be afraid to ask successful adults how they became successful.
- Money does not bring you happiness, however it can make living easier and gives you more choices.



Other helpful life skills

- Learn the power of intention through goal setting.
- Complete as much education as you can—if not now, then later.
- Dream your own dreams and don't let anyone steal them.
- Know how to address a letter and where to put the stamp.
- Learn basic First Aid AND how to give someone CPR.
- Learn how to identify and manage if someone falls into an alcoholic coma.
- Learn how to laugh at yourself when you muck up.
- Learn to trust your intuition and your instincts.
- Know that everyone makes mistakes—get over it.
- Know how to use a washing machine.
- Know how to remove stains out of clothes.
- Know how to wash delicates and woollens without ruining them.
- Learn organisation skills in your bedroom—especially the difference between dirty and clean. A tidy room can still be dirty!
- Learn simple home remedies to help when someone has a cold or the flu.
- Know how to treat a sprain, splinter and a snake bite.
- Learn how to cheer yourself up.
- Learn basic organisation skills, making reminder lists for important things such as exams, holidays and end-of-year activities.
- Always leave with plenty of time to spare when going somewhere new in case you get lost.
- Keep your mobile charged and have enough credit when travelling long distances.
- Don't drop your laptop.
- Don't drop your mp3 player in water.
- Know that soon you will be old enough to be a 'lighthouse' for someone younger.
- Be good to your mother—always.

I know some parents who keep this list on the fridge and have their adolescents update the skills they have mastered, knowing they need at least 75 per cent before they are allowed out the door to live with their friends.

Being capable helps make young people feel confident and happy.

