

TEACHING CORE LIFE SKILLS TO CHILDREN- ROLE OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Shakera Parveen, Ph. D

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Education & Training MANUU, Hyderabad

E-mail: shakera4manuu@gmail.com, Mob No: 8919627187

Abstract

Life skills are abilities that helps individuals to face life problems with ease and confidence. life skills enable individuals to understand themselves, their strengths, their weaknesses, their character and personality, their values and principles. Awareness and knowledge of life skills enable the individuals to solve day to day life problems.

In today's busy world no serious efforts are being made to teach life skills to children. Even though we teach children number of cognitive skills, life skills are yet to find their way into our classroom teaching and also teaching at homes. WHO has recognised the importance of life skills and now some state governments have come forward to train teachers to infuse life skills with the curriculum that already exists. UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO listed 10 core life skills to be inculcated among students. Self-awareness, Empathy, communicating effectively, interpersonal relations, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, coping with emotions, coping with stress are the 10 core values which needs to be inculcated.

This paper highlights Relevance of life skills, Strategies to inculcate life skills, Role of parents and teachers in fostering life skills and their collaborative role to enable children in adjusting and adapting to present and future situations and to build their bright future.

KEY WORDS: Core Life Skills, Parents, Teachers, strategies of life skills.

INTRODUCTION: If the individuals want to accomplish in life and realize their full potential, they must have some life skills. That is why 164 Nations committed to include Life Skills as a basic learning need for young children. Around the world today, LIFE SKILLS BASED EDUCATION is being adopted as a means to empower young people in challenging situations.

This Paper highlights the relevance of life skills, strategies to inculcate life skills and collaborative role of parents and teachers in fostering life skills.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE: NANCY PAUL & JOBI BABU (2016) conducted a survey on “Role of Parents for the Life Skill Development of Children with Learning Disability”.

SHOBANA MAHANSARIA (2017) highlighted on “five ways to develop life skills preparedness among children today” in conceptual paper.

RAVINDRA PRAJAPATI et al (2017) threw light on “significance of life skills education” in conceptual paper.

RELEVANCE OF LIFE SKILLS IN TODAY’S WORLD: Life skills are immensely relevant in today's world due to many reasons. It could be because of rapidly changing social, economic, and technological landscapes and we, as individuals need to adjust easily in this changing world. The complexities and challenges of modern life require individuals to possess more than just academic knowledge; they need a diverse set of life skills to move from various situations and thrive in a rapidly evolving society. Here is a list, which covers relevance of life skills in today's world: Adapting to Change, Problem-Solving, Effective Communication, Critical Thinking, Emotional Intelligence, Collaboration and Teamwork, Leadership and Initiative, Time Management and Organization, Financial Literacy, Civic and Global Awareness, Health and Well-being. In today's world, possessing these life skills is not just advantageous; it is essential for personal development, success in various life domains, and the ability to contribute positively to society.

Life skills are important for several compelling reasons, as these skills play a crucial role in personal development, overall well-being, and success in various aspects of life. Life skills are important for Holistic Development, Effective Communication, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making, Emotional Intelligence, Adaptability and Resilience, Career Success, Healthy Relationships, Confidence and Self-Esteem, Personal Well-Being, Social Responsibility, Lifelong Learning, Empowerment etc. In essence, studying life skills is about preparing individuals to pass through the complexities of life with confidence, resilience, and effectiveness. These skills are transferable and applicable across various domains, making them an invaluable asset for personal, academic, and professional success.

WHAT ARE LIFE SKILLS?

Life skills refer to a set of essential abilities and competencies that enable individuals to effectively manage various aspects of their lives and interact positively with others. These skills encompass a wide range of personal, social, emotional, and cognitive capabilities that are

crucial for passing through the challenges and opportunities of daily life. Life skills go beyond academic knowledge and play a pivotal role in personal development, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and overall well-being.

IMPORTANT CATEGORIES OF LIFE SKILLS:

Personal Skills: These skills relate to an individual's self-awareness, self-management, and self-efficacy. They include goal-setting, time management, organization, problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability.

Social Skills: Social skills are essential for effective communication, collaboration, and building healthy relationships. They encompass active listening, empathy, assertiveness, conflict resolution, teamwork, and effective communication (both verbal and non-verbal).

Emotional Skills: Emotional skills involve recognizing, understanding, and managing one's own emotions as well as empathizing with the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence, self-regulation, stress management, and resilience fall under this category.

Cognitive Skills: These skills contribute to intellectual growth and cognitive development. They include skills like learning strategies, problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, and information literacy.

Practical Life Skills: These skills are practical in nature and are often related to daily living. They encompass financial literacy, nutrition and cooking, personal hygiene, home maintenance, and basic healthcare knowledge.

Life skills are not only essential for personal development but also have a significant impact on various life domains, including education, career, relationships, and overall well-being. They empower individuals to effectively carry out with the challenges, make informed decisions, communicate effectively, build positive connections, and lead fulfilling lives. Recognizing the importance of life skills, many educational institutions, parents, and organizations incorporate life skills education to equip individuals with the tools they need to succeed in an ever-changing world.

CORE LIFE SKILLS:

Core life skills refer to a fundamental set of essential abilities and competencies that are considered foundational for an individual's overall development and success in various aspects of life. These skills serve as the building blocks for personal growth, effective communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and healthy relationships. Core life skills are often viewed as universal and timeless, as they remain relevant across cultures, ages, and contexts.

These skills provide individuals with the capacity to adapt, learn, and thrive in a rapidly changing world. While there might be some variation in how these skills are defined or categorized, the following are typically considered as core life skills: Communication Skills, Problem-Solving Skills, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, Self-Management, Teamwork and Collaboration, Resilience, Decision-Making, Assertiveness, Conflict Resolution,

These core life skills are not only essential for personal development but also have a significant impact on academic success, career advancement, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being.

ROLE OF PARENTS IN TEACHING CORE LIFE SKILLS:

Parents play a crucial role in teaching core life skills to their children. They are the primary influencers in a child's early development and serve as role models for essential behaviors and attitudes. The role parents play in teaching core life skill are:

- ❖ Parents are their children's first and most significant role models. Children observe and learn from their parents' behaviors, attitudes, and communication styles. By demonstrating effective communication, problem-solving, empathy, and other life skills, parents set an example for their children to follow.
- ❖ Parents provide the foundation for learning by creating an environment where children feel safe, supported, and encouraged to explore and develop their skills. This environment fosters confidence and a willingness to learn and try new things.
- ❖ Parents who engage in open and respectful communication with their children create an atmosphere where children learn to express themselves, listen actively, and understand others' perspectives.
- ❖ Parents can intentionally provide opportunities for their children to practice life skills. For example, involving children in decision-making processes, problem-solving discussions, and collaborative activities encourages the development of critical thinking, decision-making, and teamwork skills.
- ❖ Assigning age-appropriate responsibilities at home teaches children skills like time management, organization, and accountability.
- ❖ Parents can help children understand and manage their emotions by acknowledging their feelings, discussing emotions openly, and teaching strategies for emotional regulation. This fosters emotional intelligence and empathy.

- ❖ Conflict is a natural part of life. Parents can teach children effective conflict resolution skills by guiding them through conflicts, discussing alternative solutions, and encouraging empathy and compromise.
- ❖ Parents can involve children in decision-making processes, allowing them to make choices within a controlled environment. This helps children develop decision-making skills and learn about consequences.
- ❖ As children grow, parents gradually encourage independence. Allowing children to take on age-appropriate responsibilities and make choices helps them develop confidence, autonomy, and self-reliance.
- ❖ Encouraging children to ask questions, explore their interests, and engage in learning experiences outside of school nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and a lifelong love for learning.
- ❖ Parents impart values, ethics, and social norms to their children through conversations and their own behaviors. Discussing right and wrong, honesty, and empathy helps children develop a strong moral compass.
- ❖ By modeling a growth mindset and demonstrating a willingness to learn new skills themselves, parents inspire their children to embrace lifelong learning and continuous self-improvement.
- ❖ Parents can guide children in responsible use of technology and encourage a healthy balance between screen time and face-to-face interactions.
- ❖ Acknowledging and celebrating children's efforts and achievements, no matter how small, boosts their self-esteem and motivation to learn and grow.
- ❖ Creating an emotionally supportive environment where children feel comfortable discussing their fears, challenges, and successes helps build resilience and emotional intelligence.

Parents' involvement and guidance in teaching core life skills lay a strong foundation for children's personal growth, academic success, and future well-being. Through intentional interactions and modelling, parents contribute significantly to their children's development of essential life skills.

ROLE OF TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS IN STUDENTS: Teachers play a pivotal role in developing life skills in students within an educational setting. As educators, they have the opportunity to create an environment that promotes the acquisition, practice, and application of essential life skills. the role teachers play in developing life skills among students are:

- ❖ Teachers can integrate life skills education into the curriculum by designing lessons and activities that explicitly teach and reinforce skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. Infusing these skills across subjects helps students see their relevance in various contexts.
- ❖ Teachers can design experiential learning activities that require students to apply life skills in real-world scenarios. Group projects, debates, simulations, and role-playing exercises encourage critical thinking, collaboration, and effective communication.
- ❖ Teachers encourage critical thinking by posing open-ended questions, guiding discussions, and challenging students to analyze information critically. This skill enables students to evaluate situations, make informed decisions, and develop logical arguments.
- ❖ Through classroom discussions, presentations, debates, and group activities, teachers provide students with platforms to practice effective communication, active listening, and respectful expression of ideas.
- ❖ Group projects, team activities, and collaborative learning foster teamwork, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills. Teachers guide students in working together, respecting diverse viewpoints, and finding common ground.
- ❖ Teachers can assign tasks with specific deadlines and encourage students to manage their time effectively. This helps students develop organizational skills, prioritize tasks, and meet commitments.
- ❖ Teachers can create a classroom environment that acknowledges emotions and promotes emotional well-being.
- ❖ Teachers encourage creativity by offering open-ended assignments, encouraging imaginative thinking, and validating diverse solutions to problems. This supports students in developing creative problem-solving skills.
- ❖ Teachers who set high expectations for their students' behavior and academic performance help foster a growth mindset. This mindset encourages students to embrace challenges, persevere through difficulties, and believe in their potential.
- ❖ Teachers provide timely and constructive feedback that highlights students' strengths and areas for improvement. This helps students develop self-awareness, self-evaluation skills, and a willingness to learn from mistakes.
- ❖ Teachers model empathy and respect in their interactions with students and create a classroom culture that values diverse perspectives. This encourages students to develop empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution skills.

- ❖ Teachers guide students in evaluating information sources, fact-checking, and distinguishing between reliable and unreliable information. This empowers students to make informed decisions and avoid misinformation.
- ❖ Teachers promote reflective learning by encouraging students to analyze their own learning processes, set goals, and track their progress. This supports self-awareness and self-improvement.
- ❖ Teachers who foster a love for learning inspire students to develop a growth mindset, adapt to new challenges, and continue developing their life skills beyond the classroom.
- ❖ By demonstrating positive life skills themselves, teachers serve as role models for students. Their behavior and attitudes influence students' understanding of and appreciation for these skills.

In essence, teachers create a nurturing and supportive environment where students not only gain academic knowledge but also acquire the critical life skills that are essential for success in their personal, academic, and future professional lives.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN ENHANCING LIFE SKILLS IN STUDENTS:

The joint effort of parents and teachers in enhancing life skills in students is crucial for comprehensive skill development and the holistic growth of individuals. When parents and teachers collaborate, students receive consistent reinforcement and opportunities to practice life skills both at home and in the classroom. Here's how parents and teachers can work together to enhance life skills in students:

- ❖ Regular communication between parents and teachers allows them to share insights about students' strengths, areas for improvement, and progress in developing life skills. This mutual understanding helps create a unified approach to skill development.
- ❖ Parents and teachers can establish shared goals for enhancing life skills in students. By aligning their efforts, they ensure that students receive consistent messages and expectations across different environments.
- ❖ Scheduled meetings between parents and teachers provide a platform to discuss students' progress, challenges, and growth opportunities related to life skills. This collaboration helps tailor strategies to individual students' needs.
- ❖ Teachers can assign homework or activities that involve practicing life skills and parents can support this practice at home. For instance, students could be tasked with solving real-world problems or engaging in discussions with family members.

- ❖ Schools can organize workshops, seminars, or webinars for parents to educate them about the importance of life skills and strategies for fostering their development at home.
- ❖ Parents and teachers can consistently emphasize the value of specific life skills, such as empathy, communication, and critical thinking, in both academic and everyday contexts.
- ❖ Parents and teachers serve as role models for students. Demonstrating effective communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence encourages students to emulate these behaviors.
- ❖ Teachers can design projects that require students to collaborate with family members. This not only reinforces life skills but also strengthens family bonds.
- ❖ Parents and teachers can establish a feedback loop to exchange information about students' progress in developing life skills. This helps identify areas that need additional attention and celebrate successes.
- ❖ Schools can involve parents in classroom activities, presentations, or events that showcase students' life skill development. This promotes a sense of community involvement and reinforces the importance of these skills.
- ❖ Parents and teachers can encourage students to reflect on their skill development journey and assess their progress. This reflection promotes self-awareness and empowers students to take ownership of their growth.
- ❖ Recognizing and celebrating students' achievements in developing life skills fosters motivation and self-esteem. Both parents and teachers can acknowledge and applaud students' efforts.
- ❖ Acknowledging and respecting cultural differences between home and school environments is important. Parents and teachers can collaborate to ensure that the approach to teaching life skills is culturally sensitive.
- ❖ Parents and teachers can share resources, such as books, articles, videos, and activities, which promote life skills development. This collaboration extends the available tools for supporting students.
- ❖ Both parents and teachers can engage in their own continuous learning about life skills and strategies for enhancing them. This ongoing education strengthens their ability to guide and support students effectively.

By working together, parents and teachers create a cohesive and supportive network that nurtures students' life skills, empowering them to succeed in diverse life situations and become well-rounded individuals.

ACTIVITIES NEEDED TO BE TAKEN UP TO ENHANCE LIFE SKILLS IN CHILDREN:

Role-Playing Scenarios: Create scenarios that require children to practice communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. They can take on different roles and work through scenarios individually or in groups.

Debates and Discussions: Organize debates or discussions on current events, ethical dilemmas, or thought-provoking topics. This promotes critical thinking, active listening, and the ability to express ideas coherently.

Team Projects: Assign group projects that encourage collaboration, teamwork, and division of tasks. Students learn to work together, delegate responsibilities, and communicate effectively.

Journaling: Encourage children to keep journals where they can express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. This cultivates self-reflection, emotional intelligence, and writing skills.

Problem-Solving Challenges: Present children with challenges that require creative problem-solving. These challenges can be related to science, mathematics, puzzles, or real-life scenarios.

Community Service: Engage children in volunteering or community service activities. This fosters empathy, social responsibility, and a sense of giving back to the community.

Mindfulness and Relaxation: Introduce mindfulness and relaxation exercises to help children manage stress, regulate emotions, and improve focus.

Storytelling: Encourage children to create and tell stories. Storytelling nurtures creativity, imagination, and effective communication.

Financial Literacy Activities: Teach children about money management through activities like budgeting for a pretend family or calculating costs for a classroom project.

Decision-Making Games: Provide scenarios where children must make decisions and evaluate outcomes. This enhances their decision-making skills and understanding of consequences.

Conflict Resolution Simulations: Have children participate in conflict resolution simulations, where they practice resolving disagreements through effective communication and compromise.

Time Management Challenges: Assign tasks with specific time constraints, helping children learn to manage their time efficiently and prioritize tasks.

Public Speaking Exercises: Arrange opportunities for children to speak in front of their peers, whether it's sharing a personal story or presenting a topic. This builds confidence in public speaking.

Art and Creativity Workshops: Activities like drawing, painting, music, or crafts encourage creativity and self-expression.

Cultural Awareness Activities: Teach children about different cultures, traditions, and perspectives through activities like cooking international recipes, celebrating cultural holidays, or sharing cultural stories.

Problem-Solving Board Games: Engage children in strategic board games that require critical thinking, planning, and adapting to changing game dynamics.

Peer Feedback Sessions: Organize sessions where children provide constructive feedback to their peers on presentations, projects, or activities. This nurtures empathy and communication skills.

Mock Interviews: Conduct mock job or college admission interviews to help children develop confidence, communication skills, and the ability to present themselves effectively.

Environmental Awareness Activities: Activities like gardening, recycling projects, or nature walks promote awareness of the environment and the importance of sustainability.

Health and Wellness Challenges: Encourage healthy habits through activities like cooking nutritious meals, practicing yoga, or discussing the benefits of exercise and proper sleep.

these activities should be taken up according to the age and developmental level of the children. The key is to make learning life skills enjoyable, interactive, and relevant to everyday life experiences.

STRATEGIES THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO ENHANCE LIFE SKILLS IN STUDENTS:

Enhancing life skills in students requires thoughtful planning and strategic implementation. Some of the essential strategies that can effectively enhance life skills in students are:

- ❖ Embed life skills education into the curriculum across subjects, ensuring that students see the relevance of these skills in various contexts.
- ❖ Explicitly teach the specific life skills you want to enhance. Model behaviors and attitudes that reflect these skills in your interactions with students.
- ❖ Design activities that mirror real-world situations where students can apply life skills. This helps bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- ❖ Encourage students to question, analyze, and evaluate information. Use open-ended questions and challenges that require creative problem-solving.
- ❖ Engage students in hands-on, participatory activities that require them to think, communicate, and collaborate actively.

- ❖ Encourage group projects and discussions that promote teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution skills.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning and assess their progress in developing life skills.
- ❖ Recognize that students have diverse learning styles and paces. Tailor instruction and activities to cater to individual needs.
- ❖ Integrate technology tools that support skill development, such as online simulations, interactive platforms, and educational apps.
- ❖ Provide constructive feedback on students' efforts to enhance life skills. Highlight strengths and suggest areas for improvement.
- ❖ Allow students to make choices, set goals, and take ownership of their skill development journey.
- ❖ Create an emotionally safe environment where students feel comfortable discussing emotions and learning to manage them.
- ❖ Demonstrate how life skills transcend subject boundaries. Connect life skills to subjects like language arts, math, science, and social studies.
- ❖ Invite guest speakers or role models who exemplify strong life skills to share their experiences with students.
- ❖ Incorporate real-life stories and examples that illustrate the importance of life skills in personal and professional success.
- ❖ Allow students to learn from each other's experiences and insights through group discussions, peer feedback, and collaborative projects.
- ❖ Gradually increase the complexity of activities to ensure that students are continuously challenged and can progressively develop their skills.
- ❖ Foster an environment where students feel safe to take risks, share their ideas, and learn from their mistakes.
- ❖ Present students with open-ended problems or scenarios that require them to explore multiple solutions and analyze outcomes.
- ❖ Allocate time for students to reflect on their learning, both in terms of subject matter and the life skills they're developing.
- ❖ Recognize and celebrate students' progress in developing life skills. This reinforces their efforts and motivates further development.
- ❖ Involve parents in supporting the enhancement of life skills through workshops, resources, and collaborative efforts.

- ❖ Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching life skills effectively.
- ❖ Continuously assess students' growth in life skills through a combination of formative and summative assessments.

By employing these strategies, educators can create a well-rounded learning experience that not only imparts academic knowledge but also equips students with the essential life skills needed for success in various aspects of life.

CHALLENGES TO BE FACED DURING ENHANCING LIFE SKILLS BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS:

Enhancing life skills in children through the joint efforts of parents and teachers can be a rewarding endeavor, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is essential for effective skill development. Here are some common challenges that parents and teachers might face when enhancing life skills:

Time Constraints, Differing Approaches, Varied Environments, Limited Resources, Age and Developmental Differences, Balancing Academics and Life Skills, Resistance or Disinterest, Cultural Differences, Lack of Training, Assessment and Measurement, Overcoming Traditional Teaching Methods, Limited Parent Involvement, Overcoming Parent-Teacher Communication Gaps, Lack of Motivation, Sustaining Efforts.

To overcome these challenges, parents and teachers can collaborate, communicate openly, seek professional development, share resources, and adapt strategies to meet the unique needs and circumstances of their children. By working together and addressing challenges proactively, they can create a more effective and supportive environment for enhancing life skills in children.

CONCLUSION:

This paper discusses about core life skills essential for children, its relevance in day-to-day life, role of parents and teachers in fostering life skills and strategies of life skill and reiterate the importance of collaboration between parents and teachers in teaching core life skills. Lastly, I conclude by saying that LIFE SKILLS can be learned throughout life to deal with the challenges of everyday life.

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