

## Appropriate Life Skills by Age

The following guide indicates which life skills our sons should master at each age. Of course, some variations are normal, depending on maturity level, development, and other factors.

### Ages 2-3

Beginning to learn basic life skills:

- Help Mommy sort things (laundry, toys, etc.).
- Put toys away.
- Clear plate after meal.
- Dress himself, with some assistance if needed.
- Help put silverware away.
- Put dirty clothes in hamper.

### Ages 4-5

Focus on safety and independence:

- Know his full name.
- Know his parents' phone number (or home number).
- Know how to call 911.
- Learn to swim.
- Put clean clothes away.
- Learn basic cleaning chores: wiping counters, tidying up.
- Choose clothes to wear and dress himself.
- Help feed and care for pets.
- Brush teeth, comb hair, take a shower.
- Get allowance and keep in safe place.
- Practice proper manners.

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## **Ages 6–7**

Increased independence and personal responsibility:

- Follow a basic schedule or routine for mornings, after school, and bedtime with few reminders.
- Mix, stir, and cut with a dull knife.
- Wash dishes by hand. Place dishes in dishwasher properly.
- Help carry in and put away groceries.
- Make own snacks: put peanut butter and jelly on bread for sandwich; find healthy snacks like nuts, cheese, and fresh fruit; pour water or juice carefully.
- Clean low windows.
- Make bed.
- Practice manners, such as greeting guests and holding doors for others.
- Separate money into savings, spending, and giving.
- Make cards for others' birthdays or thank-you cards.

## **Ages 8–9**

- Follow a daily routine of hygiene—brush teeth, wash face, etc.—without being told.
- Keep track of time and be responsible with schedule. For example, time thirty minutes of a game and be responsible to stop on time.
- Do basic laundry, fold clothes.
- Take care of his own toys and play equipment, including bikes, skateboards, any outdoor or indoor toys.
- Keep bedroom tidy and take care of belongings.
- Increase cleaning duties: sweep and mop, wash dishes, basic laundry, and more.

- Make lists of things to do or grocery list.
- Follow simple recipe and make snacks or basic meals.
- Help with outdoor (lawn) duties after being taught skills.
- Take out trash and replace trash bag.
- Know how to count change and take care of money.
- Talk to adults with eye contact and a handshake.

### **Ages 10-13**

- Stay home alone for short periods of time.
- Make a purchase by himself and know if change is correct.
- Change and wash his own bedsheets.
- Read labels and follow recipes.
- Assist with caring for younger siblings with patience and maturity.
- Make plan for day and stay on schedule.
- Use alarm clock and wake up independently.
- Do yard work and operate basic machines safely, after being taught.

### **Ages 14-18**

- Be able to clean all areas of the house, including bathrooms, floors, and the entire kitchen.
- Fill car with gas, where legally permitted, and add air to tires.
- Prepare a résumé and apply for job.
- Read medicine labels and follow important directions.
- Contact schools, doctors' offices, or other professionals with confidence.

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- Plan and prepare meals and clean up afterward.
- Open a savings account. Learn the basics of personal finance. Save, spend, and give.
- Begin college preparatory efforts, if pertinent. Contact colleges. Sign up, study, and take standardized tests. Apply to colleges. (Parents can assist but should not do any of this for the student.)

### **Ages 18 and Up**

- Make doctor and dentist appointments, keep track of appointments, and drive himself to appointments.
- Manage his own finances: open a checking account, follow a budget, begin to invest, and have a plan for financial future.
- Take care of cars: learn and practice basic car maintenance and repair.
- Keep a calendar, be responsible for work schedule, know family birthdays and special occasions, and manage social and community relationships.
- Find solutions to household and personal problems using the internet and resources at hand.
- Read and understand basic contracts: apartment lease, car loan or lease, etc.

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