

PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS BY AGE

AGE 2

- Undress self
- Put away own pajamas and clothes
- Brush teeth with help
- Pick up toys
- Tidy bedroom and/or playroom
- Clear off own place at table
- Wipe off tables and surfaces with cleaning wipes
- Able to play safely and alone in own room for 30 to 60 minutes (parents staying nearby to supervise, and child learning to self-entertain)

AGE 3

- Dress self with help
- Make own bed (use a comforter for easy making)
- Wipe up own spills
- Help set and clear the table
- Able to snap, zipper and button
- Put dirty clothes in hamper

AGE 4

- Help gather laundry
- Pick up outside toys
- Shake out area rugs
- Help with dusting – use a feather duster or Swiffer wipe
- Empty wastebaskets
- Know cell phone number
- Know address
- Help empty dishwasher
- Help carry in groceries
- Tie own shoes
- Know how to call 911 in emergency



AGE 5

- Put away clean clothes
- Leave bathroom clean after use
- Clean toilet
- Feed and water pets
- Begin to learn the difference and value of money
- Receive a small allowance (if this is a system you want to implement)
- Begin to learn about saving, spending, and giving
- Empty kitchen trash
- Help with mixing during cooking
- Begin to use child-safe scissors
- Sort laundry and easy folding (matching and rolling clean socks, for instance)
- Wipe down kitchen counters and cabinets

AGE 6

- Organize drawers
- Organize closet and toys
- Empty dishwasher and put away dishes
- Wash and dry dishes by hand
- Straighten living and family rooms
- Rake leaves
- Help put away groceries
- Make a sandwich
- Make toast
- Pour milk for cereal
- Pour milk or juice into a cup
- Wash out plastic trash cans
- Clean mirrors
- Bath alone, with adults nearby
- Begin sewing easy pictures (use plastic canvas to lay foundation to lay foundation for knowing how to mend clothes)

AGE 7

- Use a vacuum cleaner
- Clean pet cages and food bowls
- Use a broom and dustpan
- Sweep porches, decks, driveways, and walkways
- Learn basic food groups and healthy nutrition habits
- Cook canned soup
- Read and prepare a simple recipe
- Be familiar with cooking utensils and measuring tools, learning their uses
- Pack own snack
- Boil eggs
- Cut up own meat, pancakes, etc.



- Water outside plants and garden
- Help weed flower beds
- Strip bed sheets
- Carry dirty clothes hamper to the laundry room
- Sort clothes for washing by color and/or fabric and check pockets
- Straighten book and toy shelves

AGE 8

- Fold clothes neatly
- Hang up clothes
- Iron flat items (practice on pillowcases)
- Remake own bed with clean sheets
- Help clean out car
- Water house plants
- Clean bathroom sink, toilet, and tub
- Load and turn on dishwasher
- Mop the floor
- Peel vegetables, like carrots and potatoes

AGE 9

- Load and operate washing machine
- Load and operate dryer
- Fold blankets neatly
- Help clean out refrigerator
- Prepare hot beverages
- Prepare boxed macaroni and cheese
- Cook hot dogs
- Scramble eggs
- Brown hamburger meat
- Dust all household furniture
- Count and give monetary change
- Compare quality and prices, for example at the grocery store
- Begin to manage own school assignments and learn how to use a planner, etc.

AGE 10

- Replace light bulbs
- Distinguish between good and spoiled food (look at expiration date)
- Bake a cake, cookies and brownies from a box mix
- Cook frozen and canned vegetables
- Make pancakes
- Plan a balanced meal
- Know how to select fruits and vegetables
- Know basic first-aid procedures
- Understand uses of medicines and seriousness of overuse



AGE 11

- Clean and straighten garage
- Bake muffins and biscuits
- Make a green salad
- Do simple mending and sew buttons
- Wash the car
- Help with younger children

AGE 12

- Select and purchase own personal hygiene supplies with parent (shampoo, deodorant, etc.)
- Make own haircut appointments
- Tie a necktie (both boys and girls)
- Know basic spot removal oil, blood, coffee, tea, soda, etc.
- Iron clothes
- Hand wash delicate clothes
- Prepare hamburgers
- Make a spaghetti dinner
- Organize pantry
- Clean refrigerator
- Clean stovetop and oven
- Hang and arrange pictures on a wall
- Clean shower stall walls and/or shower curtain
- Build campfire or fire in fireplace with parental supervision

AGE 13

- Wash windows and screens, inside and out
- Unplug a sink or toilet with plunger or chemicals
- Make a fruit salad
- Prepare simple dinners
- Learn pruning for shrubs and trees
- Establish and use simple budget, keeping records and tracking spending
- Open a checking and savings account to assist with money management
- Go clothes shopping in several stores, comparing prices and selection. Take a set amount of cash for school shopping, and walk child through purchasing
- Write a check
- Balance a checkbook
- Make deposits/withdrawals at bank and automated teller machine
- Paint a room
- Clean and organize storage closets and such
- Plant flowers and small bushes
- Take first-aid, CPR, and babysitting certification courses



AGE 14

- Clean bathroom tile and grout
- Properly return items to a store
- Change AC and furnace filters
- Do small repairs on fences, etc.
- Help paint exterior of house or fence
- Do own laundry

AGE 15

- Plan meals and shop for groceries
- Make more complex meals
- Understand what household bills must be paid and when
- Fill car with gas
- Check and fill car fluids (brake, transmission, motor oil, etc.)
- Begin to learn to drive (according to state laws)

AGE 16 & UP

- Take clothes to dry cleaning
- Prepare full, balanced meals start to finish, from planning to shopping to cooking
- Do more difficult sewing, mending and needlework
- Weather-strip and caulk around doors and windows
- Clean gutters
- Repair wall holds with putty
- Steam clean or shampoo carpets
- Obtain driver's license and drive wisely, lawfully and carefully
- Fill tires with air
- Change flat tire
- Fill out a job application
- Handle a job interview
- Secure and maintain a job outside the home
- Type a resume and cover letter
- Know how to arrange for household services, such as electricity, phone, water, etc.
- Understand the basics of car insurance and compare coverages
- Fill out income tax form
- Understand basics of city, state, and federal taxes
- Understand personal financial responsibility/managing money wisely
- Understand local government and community resources
- Understand political parties. Research candidates and issues to form own opinion
- Register to vote at age 18
- Obtain high school diploma
- Continue to prepare for future college applications, vocational training, apprenticeships, military options, etc.

Martin, Gail. *What Every Child Should Know Along the Way*. Simi Valley, California. Growing Families International, 1998.

