



## Focus on Skill Building



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

The pandemic has profoundly affected daily life, education and work in a very short period of time, and we have been adjusting to these changes since last spring. We are all doing the best we can to maintain our normal routines or adapt to a new environment by learning as we go.

Our children have watched many of their parents adapt to remote work, and most of them have had to learn and practice remote learning skills for some or all of the school year. It hasn't been easy or perfect, but the bright side may be that they now have experience with rapid change and skills to pivot in a changing environment.

### **Building skills for the future**

According to a report by Dell Technologies Institute For The Future, 85% of the jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet.

<https://bit.ly/3o7bn8H>

Students will need flexibility, adaptability and a willingness to learn quickly. They will need to develop the ability to build skills to meet the demands of the work environment for future jobs as well as the skills for the job itself. If the prediction by Dell is true, they need to start now and keep working on it — 2030 isn't that far away.

The pandemic has been a tragic event that has negatively impacted our lives in so many ways, but it may have helped kick-start a new focus on skills to help students learn how to learn.

### **Key skills now, according to employers**

“Hard skills concern an employee's ability to do a specific task, and soft skills are more about the way they do them — how they adapt, collaborate, solve problems, and make decisions.” <https://bit.ly/2HQgQ4l>

Hard skills, or technical skills, are important for specific jobs. You apply for jobs based on your specific skills for the position. More and more, employers are seeking candidates who also have “soft skills.” They are the non-technical skills for how you work, not the skills for a specific position. Don't let the word “soft” fool you. Employers are serious about hiring staff members who have the traits to be an effective team member and problem solver.

Help your child build in-demand skills at home now. At-home activities can help develop the top skills that employers say they want most:

**Tech Savviness:** More than basic computer and social media skills. Employers want candidates who can adapt to new technologies. This is essential and should be easy for students to develop through computer use for school and play.

*(Over)*

**Emotional intelligence:** Recognizing and responding to our own emotions and the emotions of others to help navigate complex social interactions.

**Decision-making:** Identifying and evaluating options and making decisions that will have a positive outcome.

**Problem-solving capabilities:** Approaching a dilemma from various angles and finding effective solutions.

**Leadership:** Demonstrating good communication, problem-solving, and project management skills.

**Conflict resolution:** Having the ability to work through and move past disagreements.

**Written communication:** Writing clearly, concisely and without errors for any type of business communication.

**Verbal communication:** Speaking clearly and confidently to relay information to save time and help avoid the misinterpretation of messages.

**Creativity:** Designing products and solutions and contributing to team projects.

**Adaptability:** Adapting to change in the workplace and learning new tools. This skill is more important than ever.

**Negotiation:** Having strong negotiation skills is a must-have in the workplace for teamwork or customer relations.

**Willingness to actively help others:** Being a team member who can work with and help others succeed as a unit is highly valued in the workplace.

**Collaboration:** Working with others on the team is a critical attribute in the workplace. When companies are tasked with complex projects, employees' ability to collaborate with others becomes increasingly important.

**People management:** Demonstrating leadership skills by managing people is among the most important leadership skills that hiring managers look for. This skill has a direct impact on productivity and morale. Individuals who possess strong people-management skills can help lead teams through workplace transitions and periods of uncertainty.

**Critical thinking:** Viewing a problem from all angles and understanding how to analyze and evaluate the information they have before they make a decision is high-level thinking about complex problems. Critical thinkers understand that problems aren't always black and white.

**Time management:** Managing time effectively to accomplish more in less time, but strong time-management skills can help you focus and be more successful in the workplace.

<https://online.maryville.edu/blog/2020-skills/>