

Skill Building

Use This When:

To assist children in developing talents and skills they can feel good about.



Objectives:

- to teach the child benefits of skill building
- to identify a skill that the child wants to develop
- to set a goal involving the talent or skill he/she wants to develop
- to start practicing to master small steps needed until each goal is achieved

Steps:

<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce benefits of skill building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that sometimes we feel bad because we want to do something really well but we don't know how to do it well. • Introduce the idea that one way to feel good is to develop our talents.
<input type="checkbox"/> Give real life examples of people with skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss a few examples of people who have really well-developed skills. • You can make use magazine photos, and/or inspirational stories. • Examples can include famous people, but should also include people who are simply very good at some skill, even though they are not celebrities. • Point out that what these people have in common is that they have developed a special talent or skill that they can do especially well.
<input type="checkbox"/> Educate the child in reasons for developing a skill	<p>Ask the child why people go to all the trouble to develop a special skill. Answer: It feels good to be able to do something really well. Perhaps use yourself as an example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell about some skill you have that you are good at. • Tell the child how good it makes you feel to be exercising that skill. • Note that when you are feeling down, it always helps you feel better if you can spend some time doing that special skill. • Give a specific example of a time doing the skill lifted your mood.
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce the skill building steps	<p>Explain to the child that, once you decide what skill you want to develop, you need to do 3 things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Decide on a specific goal (e.g., making an A on the next spelling test, getting a part in the school play, etc.) 2) Figure out small steps you can take toward that goal (e.g., for a spelling test, memorizing the first five words, then the next five, etc.) 3) Practice the small steps, a lot!
<input type="checkbox"/> Personalize this process for the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the child to pick out one specific goal that the child will aim for in his/her skill development program. • Make sure that the goal identified is one that the child can actually attain, with practice. • Steer the child away from goals that are impossibly grand and from goals that might be so easy that they represent no challenge.

Steps:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Role play | Role playing may assist the child with imagining how practice might go: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish realistic expectations for how much skill development will occur with varying degrees of practice.• Identify potential setbacks to prepare the child to deal with future obstacles and possible failure.• Consider how the child's behavioral or emotional difficulties may affect goal attainment.• Emphasize persistence so that children who are prone to negative thinking learn that they can succeed in spite of difficulties or failures. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plan practice assignment | Tell the child that for this week's practice assignment, the child should: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Practice the step he/she picked out2) Write down what he/she did for practice and how it went3) Record how he/she was feeling before practicing and how he/she was feeling after practicing |
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Helpful Tips:

- Remember to praise often
- Remember to review often, by **asking questions**
- Brief any caregivers, teachers, or other adult figures who may be involved
- Simplify these steps if you have to
- This can material be covered in more than one session/meeting