

The Skills Builder Partnership

The Essential Skills

Our mission is to ensure that, one day, everyone will build the essential skills to succeed.

Our starting point is eight essential skills. Known by many different names, these eight skills map across to the four domains that come up time and again as the core, transferable skills for every aspect of our lives. In pairs, they cover communication, creative problem-solving, self-management and collaboration skills.



The Universal Framework

The Skills Builder Universal Framework shows how to build essential skills at every stage of life. Developed over four years, the Framework is being used by 500+ schools and colleges, 120+ employers and 100+ organisations, all building the essential skills of 200,000+ individuals. The framework, which is free to access for everyone, features:



- 16 **teachable, learnable** and **measurable** steps for each skill
- **Universal** language for children, young people and adults
- Sets **expectations** for staff and students to assess progress
- Demonstrates and measures short- and long-term **progress**
- Easily **transferable** across contexts
- Allows for tracking over time, to maximise **impact**

Developed over four years, the framework is being used by



The skill is all about being able to effectively receive information - whether it comes from customers, colleagues or stakeholders. Initially, the skill steps concentrate on being able to listen effectively to others - including remembering short instructions, understanding why others are communicating and recording important information.

Step 0	I listen to others without interrupting	BUILD IT >
Step 1	I listen to others and can remember short instructions	BUILD IT >
Step 2	I listen to others and can ask questions if I don't understand	BUILD IT >
Step 3	I listen to others and can tell someone else what it was about	BUILD IT >
Step 4	I listen to others and can tell why they are communicating with me	BUILD IT >

The Interactive Framework

You can explore essential skill development further using our [Interactive Framework](#), which uses the Building Blocks and reflection questions to break each Step down.

The interactive tool then gives advice for Educators, Employers, Organisations, Individuals and Parents & Carers looking to develop this skill in a way that is meaningful in that context and setting.

The Resource Hub

The Skills Builder Hub gives you access to a huge array of resources for building essential skills – plus an easy way to track progress.



Understand skill strengths and gaps



Run targeted interventions



Reflect on progress over time



Find the best resources

You can use the Hub to build essential skills with learners of all ages and abilities and you don't need to be in a classroom.



To make progress more accessible and tangible, the [Skills Builder Inclusion Toolkit](#) supports facilitators through the Expanded Universal Framework.

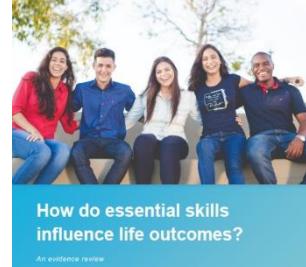
When working with learners with additional needs or developing skills over shorter periods of time, the Expanded Universal Framework breaks each Step down into 3 smaller Stepping Stones to hone in on explicit components of each skill.



How do essential skills influence life outcomes?

An October 2020 evidence review by The Centre for Education & Youth and Skills Builder shows the link between building essential skills and academic outcomes, workplace success, and individual wellbeing.

- Aiming high at school appears to be causally linked to improved academic performance for pupils with special educational needs.
- Speaking and listening skills could support young people's social and emotional wellbeing.
- Teaching of speaking and listening skills were linked to a reduction of symptoms of anxiety and depression for Autistic young people.



How do essential skills influence life outcomes?

An evidence review



The Skills Builder Principles

We have learned a lot over the years about how best to build essential skills. We know that to have a real impact, the skills must be developed with consistency and focus. These principles hold true whatever the setting.



1. Keep it simple

A consistent focus on the same skills helps ensure everyone's shared understanding and makes building these skills as tangible as possible. Using the same language all the time makes a big difference.



2. Start early, keep going

Mastering these essential skills isn't simple and takes time and sustained effort. The skills are not just about employability, but about thriving in all aspects of life.



3. Measure it

Take time to reflect on the skills of individuals – by observing or by self-assessment. This gives a balanced understanding of strengths and weaknesses, highlights progress and shows next steps.



4. Focus tightly

Building essential skills should build upon a student's previous learning and skill attainment. It should allow dedicated time just to explicitly build skills.



5. Keep practising

To accelerate progress in the essential skills, they should be used and reinforced as often as possible – including opportunities for reflection.



Ensure students see the relevance of these skills by linking them with the real world and by bringing real-life problems and challenges to work on.

Find out more at skillsbuilder.org.