

40 Things To Teach My Kids Before They Leave Home

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This is a guest post from Sherri at [Serene Journey](#), where she shares simple tips, tricks and philosophies on enjoying life.

As parents it's our responsibility to teach, guide and encourage our kids. If we do our job right they go on to become responsible contributing members of society.

No pressure...right?

Teaching practical life skills and philosophies are important parts of developing our children into well rounded and happy adults. [The time we have with our kids is precious and relatively short.](#)

With that in mind, I would like to share with you a list of 40 things that I will teach my kids before they leave home. Some are serious while some are lighthearted, since I think an important part of forming a meaningful relationship with our kids is to have a little fun along the way.

Practical life skills

I will teach my kids:

...that doing a proper grocery shop, including meal planning, shopping with a list and comparing prices, can save them a considerable amount of time and money.

...there is more to cooking and baking than simply opening a can or reheating a meal.

...that it's important to sort your laundry not only by color, but by fabric type and care instructions.

...that no matter what the fashion is at the time, when it comes to an interview, work or special occasions — grab an iron. Walking around all wrinkled and creased sends a message of laziness.

...how to **grow and care for a plant**. This is a relatively easy and inexpensive way to instill responsibility. I'd start with an easy to care for houseplant like an umbrella tree or amaryllis or a potted tomato plant out on the deck.

...how to change a car tire so that when they get a flat they are less likely to be stranded on the side of the road not knowing what to do.

...to drive responsibly and to be acutely aware of the **consequences of**

drinking and driving, even if they are the passenger.

...that they can save money on books if they frequent the library.

...how to do standard maintenance on their cars like change the oil and various filters as well as top up fluids and replace light bulbs.

...how to read a bus schedule so if they aren't in a position to afford a car they can still get around with public transportation.

...that **they can have a lot more fun if they build things** from scratch. I'm thinking birdhouses, step stools, go-karts, kites and paper planes.

...how to tie a variety of knots so whether they are tying up a boat or pulling a car out of a ditch or snowbank they are better armed.

...how to barbecue a perfect meal paying particular attention to pre-grill prep and special recipes.

...the importance of reading food labels. Not only to become aware of individual ingredients but to also know the quantities of sugar, additives and types of fats they contain.

...how to hem pants, sew on buttons and mend socks.

...how to **type properly with both hands on the keyboard**. In a society where computers are used for nearly everything, learning how

to type properly will increase their efficiency and productivity.

...the concept of compound interest. Who doesn't want to make interest on interest?

...how to **create an effective budget** that allows them to live within their means and continually increase their net worth.

...how to read a map and use a compass.

...how to **build a quinzee and survive a night in the cold**. (A quinzee is basically a hollowed out mound of snow and are actually quite warm to sleep in! This was one of my favorite experiences as a kid.)

...how to swim and tread water, these skills could potentially save their life.

Philosophical life lessons

I will teach my kids:

...that they can be happy if they **choose to be happy**.

...that a smile is the simplest thing you can do to truly brighten the day of someone else.

...about compassion and **how they can go beyond empathy** by truly

understanding and feeling other people's pain and suffering. Once they have this understanding and a genuine desire to relieve other's pain it will make them better people.

...that there is no such thing as being too polite. You can never say please, thank-you or excuse me too often.

...how listening without judgement, criticism or offering solutions to problems, is a guaranteed way to show someone you care.

...that **respect goes beyond being kind** to their elders – it also includes property, people in general, animals and even themselves.

...to focus on enjoying what they already have instead of wasting time focusing on what they don't have.

...that **NOBODY** knows **EVERYTHING** about **EVERYTHING**.

...that it's okay to be wrong as that's how we learn.

...to pursue things that are right for **them** as opposed to blindly following what society says they should do. The road less traveled usually **brings the greatest rewards**.

...that nobody will care as much about their money as they will, so they should choose their investments and financial advisers wisely.

...that people usually do the best they can with the information and knowledge they have at the time.

...that **if something looks too good to be true it likely is.**

...that the more they become attached to a thought or idea in the future, the greater their disappointment (suffering) will be when it doesn't play out as planned.

...that friends may come and go but **family will always be by their side.** Always.

...that they will *get* more than they ever could have imagined simply by being kind and generous to those less fortunate.

...that life is short and that they should **make the most of each and everyday.** They should do things that make them smile, that make them feel alive and energized. Live.

...to remember that life is more about enjoying the journey than simply reaching the destination.

There are so many things I want to teach my kids and this list grows with each passing day. I want the best for my kids, as any parent does. I occasionally need to remind myself that they are their own little people on their own journeys in life.

How I see my role as a parent — **I'm here to guide them, teach them and make sure they are well equipped with the skills, knowledge and common sense to survive and thrive on their own once they leave home.** Time will tell if I've done my job well.

What do you plan on teaching your kids? What is the best life lesson you've been taught?

If you enjoyed this post then check out [Serene Journey](#) for more simple tips to enjoy life.

Photo courtesy of: [horizontal.integration](#)