

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



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Published By: Weser Books

*Weser Books, No. 79737Äussere Weberstr. 57
02763 Zittau, Germany
Email: weserbooks@gmail.com*

Editors: Dr. V. Sharmila, Dr. K. Balabaskar, and Dr. N.Panchanatham

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© Weser BooksEdition: 1st

Publication Year: 2022

Pages: 165

ISBN: 978-3-96492-246-5

Price: 750

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LIFE SKILL EDUCATION FOR INDIVIDUAL WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Introduction

According to WHO, “Life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. Life skills enables an individual to act wisely and responsibly. It also modifies their knowledge, attitudes and values into abilities for managing their life effectively. Life skills are considered as an art of living because it makes every individual to perform well in diverse situation and helps to live their life to the fullest potential. So, these are considered as essential skills for the promotion of health and wellbeing of every individuals.

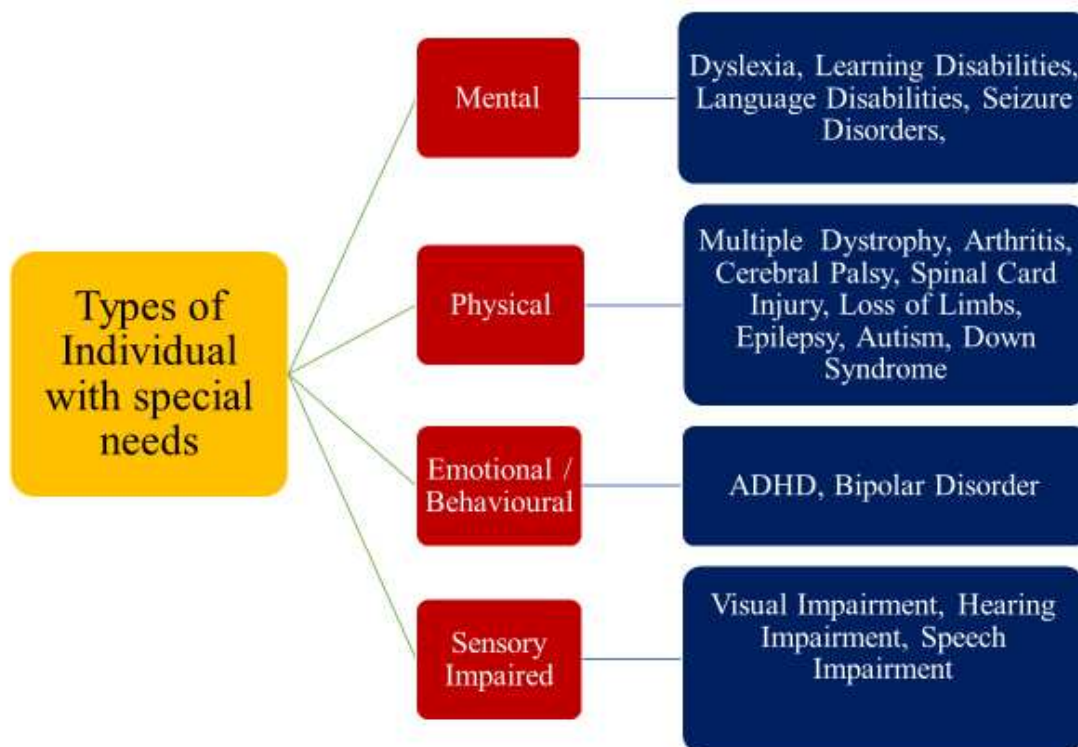
According to dictionary.com, special needs are “the special educational requirements of those with learning difficulties, emotional or behavioural problems, or physical disabilities”.

According to merriam-webster.com, special needs are “any of various difficulties (such as a physical, emotional, behavioural, or learning disability or impairment) that causes an individual to require additional or specialized services or accommodations (such as in education or recreation)”.

Special needs are defined as an individual with a mental, physical, emotional, behavioural or learning disability. They felt difficulty in communication, movement, self-care and decision-making. So, they need special care and attention in all their life activities and also in educational setup.

Types of individual with special needs

Individual with special needs are classified as mental, physical, emotional/behavioural and sensory impaired individuals. They are:



Life Skills Education for individual with special needs

Life skills are considered as a variety of skills which are very essential for every individual to lead an independent and successful lifestyle. Individual with special needs felt difficulty in acquiring knowledge, communicating with others, maintaining hygiene and safety, sensory processing, doing work and activities independently, having social relationship, etc. So, individual with special needs require special type of Life skills education, teaching strategies, technologies. To cope up with the challenges in the world, they need to learn all these skills. To achieve this, they need support and help from teachers, technologies, etc.

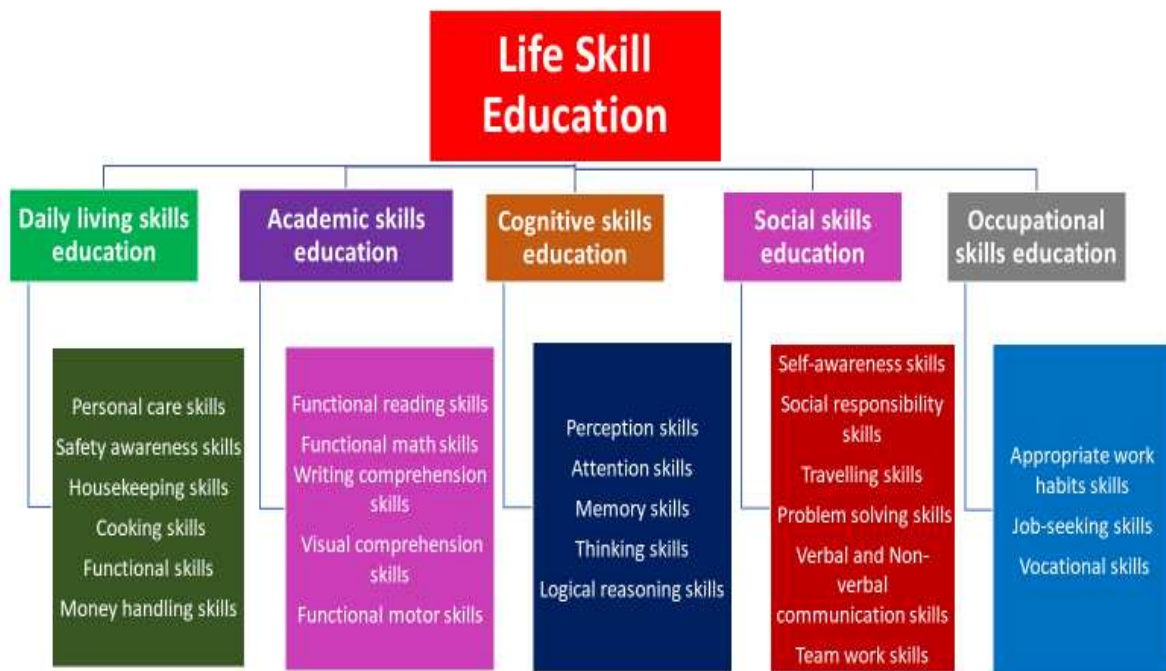
Purpose of Life skills education

The purpose of Life skills education for individual with special needs is to develop confidence, to receive proper education, to find new ways of thinking and problem solving, to acquire greater sense of self-awareness, to obtain better communication skill, to live collaboration and cooperation with others, to manage their time, to spend their leisure time usefully, to gain the benefits of life, etc.

Major areas of Life skills education

Major areas of Life skills education needed for Individual with special needs are daily living skills education, academic skills education, cognitive skills education, social skills education and occupational skills education. They are:

Major areas of Life Skill Education needed for individual with special needs



1. Daily living skills education

Various skills required to perform day-to-day life activities independently and confidently are called as Daily living skills education. They are personal care skills, safety awareness skills, housekeeping skills, cooking skills, functional skills, money handling skills, etc.

a. Personal care skills

Skills which are needed to maintain good health and hygiene are called as Personal care skills. World Health Organisation has mentioned rightly about hygiene as “conditions and practices which help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases”. Personal care skills are brushing teeth, washing hair, bathing, using pads, dressing self, eating with utensils, eating balanced diet, proper exercise, enough sleep, etc.

b. Safety awareness skills

Skills which are necessary to make the individuals aware of the safety measures and allow to lead their life more independently are called as Safety awareness skills. Safety awareness skills are crossing the street safely, protecting from harmful persons, avoiding danger situations, stranger awareness, fire safety skills, knowledge about the community signs, street signs, abduction prevention, tolerating sounds in the community, identifying danger and respecting emergency procedures, etc.

c. Housekeeping skills

Skills which are performed for keeping the house neatly are called as Housekeeping skills. They are sweeping, mopping, dusting the walls, bathroom and bedroom cleaning, using washer and dryer on own, ironing clothes, fold clothes, make own bed, cleaning the dining table after meals, watering house plants, pulling out the weeds, dusting the furniture, handwash dishes, wash car, put wastes away, etc

d. Cooking skills

Skills which are needed for planning and cooking well balanced meal are called as Cooking skills. They are buying and storing food items, washing, peeling and cutting vegetables and fruits, baking, steaming and cooking food items, making juices, handling the vessels and dishes, washing and cleaning dishes and dining table, handling knife, operating oven, refrigerator, mixer, grinder, electric stove, understanding the kitchen safety, using the cooking tools, reading and following recipe, etc.

e. Functional skills

Skills that support individuals in independent living are called as Functional skills. They are taking public transportation such as looking up the public bus schedule in online, finding out the bus stop locations which are near to the house, schools, colleges, offices, etc, practicing paying the bus fare and getting the balance correctly, etc. Reading the signs such as crosswalk, stop sign, don't walk at an intersection, floor may be wet, caution, enter/exit signs, men's/women's restroom signs, railroad tracks, bike lane, etc. Making shopping list for shops like grocery shop, stationery, laundry, departmental stores, fruit shops, etc.

f. Money handling skills

Skills which are required for handling money transaction in the day-to-day life activities are called as Money handling skills. They are counting money, paying bills for different purchases, shopping, managing bank accounts, withdrawing money from bank, depositing money in the bank, allocating money for daily purposes, maintaining monthly budget, paying payments for travel, money allotment for entertainment purposes, etc.

2. Academic skills education

Specific skills required for study related purposes are called as Academic skills education. They are functional reading skills, functional math skills, writing comprehension skills, visual comprehension skills, functional motor skills, etc.

a. Functional reading skills

Skills which are required for reading purposes are called as Functional reading skills. They are recognizing the symbols and sounds, reading words and sentences, learning with correct spelling, speaking with correct pronunciation, stress, pause and annotation, verbal comprehension, linguistic comprehension, speaking fluently, spoken language, conversational speech, etc

b. Functional math skills

Skills required for doing calculations are called as Functional math skills. They are doing math problem, understanding time, speed and distance calculation, counting, doing addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems using money, understanding measurement and volume, problem solving, reasoning, etc

c. Writing comprehension skills

Specific skills required for writing purposes are called as Writing comprehension skills. They are handwriting, writing without spelling mistakes, organizing ideas, using words and phrases, vocabulary, etc

d. Visual comprehension skills

Skills required for visual purposes are called as Visual comprehension skills. They are reading, doing math, observing maps, charts, symbols, pictures, viewing distance object, reading newspaper, visual discrimination, etc

e. Functional motor skills

Skills required for limb activities (performing actions) are called as Functional motor skills. They are hand-eye coordination, balance, jump, run, climb, manual dexterity, hold the objects, ride a bike, car, handle the apparatus/objects, operating the instruments, adaptive dance, play, sports activities, self-defence, yoga, etc.

3. Cognitive skills education

Specific skills required to recognize various cognitive functions such as classifying, comparing and contrasting, creative thinking, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, defining, dividing, evaluating, hypothesising, identifying, ordering, predicting, rank ordering, reasoning, remembering, arguing, etc. are called as Cognitive skills education. They are perception, attention, memory, thinking, logical reasoning, learning, etc.

a. Perception Skills

Skills required to interpret the received information from the surroundings by our sensation (sense organs) are called as Perception skills. They are visual perception, auditory perception, feeling, smell, taste, speech perception, social touch, etc.

b. Attention skills

Skills required to be focused on what is going on around ourselves are called as Attention skills. They are focused attention, sustained attention, divided attention, etc.

c. Memory skills

Skills required to record and also to recall and recognise the facts which we are observing and receiving are called as Memory skills. They are short-term memory, working memory, long-term memory, episodic memory, visual memory, auditory memory, recognition memory, etc.

d. Thinking skills

Skills required to think critically about the perceiving facts are called as Thinking skills. They are paying attention, observation, interpretation, reflection, inference, explanation, remembering, processing, analysing, judging and evaluating, reasoning, problem solving, decision making, concept formation, etc.

e. Logical reasoning skills

Skills required to use a systematic step to arrive a conclusion are called as Logical reasoning skills. They are deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, thinking creatively and critically, information processing, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, problem solving, etc.

4. Social skills education

Specific skills required for individual with special needs to getting along with others such as sharing, making requests, interacting and communicating with others, following give and take policy, making friendship and relationship, shaking hands, expressing gratitude, taking turn, expressing empathy, etc. and to participate in the activities of society are called as Social skills education. They are self-awareness, social responsibility, travelling, problem solving, verbal and non-verbal communication, team work, etc.

a. Self-awareness skills

Skills required to get aware of self are called as Self-awareness skills. They are identifying needs, methods to manage stress and emotions, self-analysis, respecting others, following directions, organize yourself, using manners, respecting personal space, hide frustrations, coping stress and emotions, taking balanced diet, exercise, sleep, rest, maintaining health, etc.

b. Social responsibility skills

Skills required to be a responsible person of the society are called as Social responsibility skills. They are respecting individuals and cultural differences, environment conservation activities, labour practices, volunteer in the NGOs, being a member for the growth of the organisation, safety social relationships, team work, demonstrating

appropriate behaviour and respect toward others, recognizing authority, following instructions, etc.

c. Travelling skills

Skills required to be a successful traveller are called as Travelling skills. They are journey planning, preparation to travel, using transports, behaving appropriately, getting about, staying safe, identifying and mitigating risk, informing to home about the program, travel map route, valuing other culture and perspectives, observing, respecting others values and beliefs, health care, taking notes about the places, dealing with unexpected situations, knowing about road safety, how to interact with passengers, how to ask help, how to pack things quickly, road signs, using emergency numbers, etc.

d. Problem solving skills

Skills required to solve problems arising during collaborating with others and a part of the society are called as Problem-solving skills. They are following directions, using kind words, listening to others, avoiding conflicts, conflict resolution, reasoning out your vision, being polite, asking permission, accepting the differences, using time wisely, analysing each step, having patience, being a good support to others, avoiding power struggles, recognising difficulties and seeking assistance, etc.

e. Verbal communication skills

Skills required to communicate verbally with others are called as Verbal communication skills. They are effective speaking, listening, understanding, interacting, using appropriate words, sentences, verbs, adjectives, etc. in speech, arguing, pronouncing correctly, written matters, responding appropriately to others, etc.

f. Non-verbal communication skills

Skills required to communicate non-verbally with others are called as Non-verbal communication skills. They are gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, cues, sign language, actions, symbols, pictures, pointing, nodding, body language, tone voices, texting, etc.

g. Team work skills

Skills required to build team and work efficiently are called as Team work skills. They are listening to others, giving chances to others, celebrating diversity and individuality, nurturing shared respect and empathy, cooperation, goal setting, taking responsibility, making friendship and relationship, shaking hands, expressing gratitude, greeting others, flexible approach, turn taking, etc.

5. Occupational skills education

Specific skills required to prepare the individual with special needs for meaningful work and to reach their highest potential are called as Occupational skills education. These are practical oriented skills which makes the individual with special needs to qualify for a job. They are appropriate work habits, job-seeking skills, vocational skills, etc.

a. Appropriate work habit skills

Desirable skills required for the specific work and in turn becoming the habit of an individual are called as Appropriate work habit skills. They are using time card and punch card, punctuality, following the instructions and directions, accepting the errors and mistakes, informing leave, interaction with co-workers, mutual relationships, friendliness and cooperation, making correct decisions, handling the difficult situations, interpersonal skills, maintaining workplace etiquettes, knowing meeting etiquettes, abilities, capabilities, work culture, knowing work environment, seeking assistance from seniors, self-discipline, using time wisely, being productive, being flexible, conflict resolution, commitment and confidence, respecting others, humbleness, integrity, etc.

b. Job-seeking skills

Skills required for job searching related skills are called as Job-seeking skills. It is an act of looking for an employment. They skills related to that are looking for jobs on newspaper and online advertisements, friends and relatives help for job opportunity, seeking help from local resources, preparing resume, filling out applications, writing cover letters, arranging necessary documents and certificates, preparing for interview, self-introductory skills, filling out paperwork, etc.

c. Vocational skills

Skills required for occupation related skills are called as Vocational skills. They are hands-on experience, adequate training, good oral and written communication skills, technical skills, managerial skills, clerical skills, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, job responsibilities, career maturity, time management, aptitude skills, using Strong Interest Inventory, Career Key, Vocational Aptitudes, Differential Aptitude Test, SWOT analysis

and finding out the interests and strengths, following work ethics, quick learner, being sharp, etc.

Teaching strategies for inculcating Life skills education for individual with special needs

Teachers should adopt appropriate strategies for teaching Life skills education to the individual with special needs. They are chunking, visual guides, modelling and practice, visual prompts, task analysis, schedules, questioning, performance, role playing, video games, conversation practice, brainstorming, field work, pair work, group work, simulation, excursion, etc. these strategies are taught to the individual with special needs students repeatedly for more sessions. So, that the students will practice these skills at home or in group or independently and use in real life situations.

- **Chunking**

Process of breaking the large information of a skill into small units. Breaking down the larger task into small tasks and teach to the students. This will make the individuals to remember the steps of the skill for a long time.

- **Visual guides**

Use pictures and videos to demonstrate each step of a skill. Show the pictures one by one and explain the steps of the skill. Use relevant and appropriate pictures and videos. This will make the students to perform the skill easily and enrich the visual perception and confident.

- **Modelling and practice**

Demonstrating the skill with help of a model. Make a video with the help of a peer student as a model and use this video as a model for other students. Make other students to practice the skill for several times in various situations. Students imitate and learn the skill and this helps them to be independent.

- **Visual prompts**

Visual prompts are teaching the skills in a small step with the help of pictures, charts, graphic organizers, video prompts, model prompts, etc. loaded with information, sound background and non-verbal expressions. This helps the students to learn the skill efficiently.

- **Task analysis**

Divide the task into small steps. Assign the task step by step process. Explain each step verbally by simple words and clearly. For some individuals it is explained with simple pictures. Task analysis improves the motor skills of the students.

- **Schedules**
 Make the steps of the skill in form of a checklist and give the schedule to the students. This will help the students to perform the skill without any mistake. They will not forget the steps also. This type of teaching is used to teach regular based skills.
- **Questioning**
 By raising a simple question, we can make the individuals to master the skill. Questions should be in clear and precise form.
- **Performance**
 The skills such as yoga, dance, self-defence, programming and robotics are taught by performance based. By performing the skills in real-life situations, the skills are learnt by the students naturally.
- **Role playing**
 This is the more powerful method of teaching. Various skills are taught by role play method with real life examples. By visualising the roles performed by others, the students are motivated to perform the skills independently and wisely.
- **Games**
 Skills are taught with the help of video games, education games, word games, puzzles, drama games and play activities. The steps of the skill are explained in the form of games. So, the individuals learn the skill very interestingly and effortlessly by adopting simulation method.
- **Conversation practice**
 Skills are explained in the form of simple language. Teachers must create situations for making conversation practice with combination of two to three words. This makes the students to learn the skills smoothly. Teachers can also conduct open discussion, debate etc. to enrich their communication skill and language skill.
- **Brainstorming sessions**
 It is a group activity, finding a perfect idea by the group members. There are various brainstorming techniques are available such as rapid ideation, step-ladder technique, mind mapping, figure storming, etc. Teacher can adopt any one of these techniques and follow the steps to teach the skill effectively to the individual with special needs. It promotes the creative thinking of the students.
- **Field study method**
 Teachers can take the students to the field area and explain the generic skills in vocational and academic settings. This method is the integration of cognitive,

affective and psycho motor skills. So that the students can learn these skills easily in the real world.

- **Pair work and Group work**

This type of learning gives the students more speaking time. Allows them to mix well with everyone in the group. By adopting this method, it encourages the communication skill, cooperation skill, interactive skill, interpersonal skill, extracurricular activity skills, etc of the individual with special needs.

- **Excursions**

Teachers arrange a short trip for individual with special needs and explains the travelling skills, academic skills, extracurricular activity skills, etc.

Assistive Technology Tools for Individual with special needs

Assistive devices such as mobility aids, hearing aids, cognitive aids, computer software and hardware tools, adaptive switches and utensils, lightweight, high performance mobility devices, physical modifications in the building environments, etc are used for individual with special needs. Among those devices some are specified here.

Assistive Technology for individual with special needs



➤ **Text-To-Speech Assistive Tools**

This tool scans the text portion and then read the words to the students in the form of a speech sound. This software is more helpful for the students who have difficulties in reading, visual impairment, learning disability, autism, etc.

➤ **Draft:Builder**

It is a writing tool which helps in outlining, note taking and draft writing functions in the writing process. With the help of the graphic organizer, the student can visualize the project and insert the information in the appropriate places through drag and drop method. It also checks the spelling errors in the text.

➤ **FM Systems**

This system work using radio broadcast technology. This device helps the hearing-impaired students to listen the sounds. It uses the microphone for capturing and bringing the sound to the ear. It consists of a transmitting microphone and a receiver. It can be used for the teaching-learning process. The student with sensorineural hearing loss can hear the lesson and speak to the teacher with the help of this device.

➤ **Jouse3**

This device is used by physically impaired individuals. With the help of a sip or a puff of this device, physically impaired student using his/her body parts such as mouth, cheek, chin or tongue can control computer, change the direction of the mobile device, type in the screen keyboard, etc.

➤ **Ginger**

This is mainly used by individuals with dyslexia and learning disorders. Grammar checking, word prediction, sentence rephrasing, Text-To- Speech, etc. are done with the help of this tool.

➤ **MathTalk**

It is a speech recognition software for students with dyscalculia, fine motor skill disabilities, etc. By speaking into microphone, the students can do math calculations. Math calculations are done in the math worksheet and it can be altered by the students according to their needs.

Educational Apps for individual with special needs

There are abundant educational apps are available for individual with special needs. Among them some are stated here.

- ❖ Bookshare – Exceptional digital library

- ❖ Goalbook Toolkit – Expensive kit of tools and strategies
- ❖ Scan and Read Pro – Makes reading easy
- ❖ Natural Reader – Organic text-to-speech tool
- ❖ Voice4U – Augmentative and alternative communication app which communicates their ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc
- ❖ Memory Trainer – Improves their spatial and working memory
- ❖ Proloquo2Go – Symbol-based communication app
- ❖ Todo Math – Math app
- ❖ Magnify – Digital magnifying glass with built-in flashlight / torch
- ❖ JABTalk – Free speech communication application

Websites for teaching for individual with special needs

There are numerous websites available for teaching for individual with special needs. Some of them are mentioned here.

- Teachers Pay Teachers - <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/>
- Engage NY – <https://www.engageny.org/>
- IXL – <https://in.ixl.com/>
- Reading A-Z – <https://www.readinga-z.com/>
- Edhelper.com – <https://www.edhelper.com/>
- www.education.com – <https://www.education.com/common-core/>
- Khan Academy - <https://www.khanacademy.org/commoncore/map>
- Adapting for Autism - <https://www.adaptingforautism.com/>
- Glenda’s Assistive Technology - <https://atclassroom.blogspot.com/>
- Interventional Central - <https://www.interventioncentral.org/>
- Newsela – <https://newsela.com/>
- Scaffolded Math and Science – <https://www.scaffoldedmath.com/>
- Special Needs Book Review – <https://www.specialneedsbookreview.com/>
- Wrightslaw – <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Conclusion

Life skills education paves the way for individual with special needs to empower them to live independently and confidently. These skills help them to live their life positively and to achieve their dreams. It also assists them to express their potential to the fullest. Life skills education lays the basis for learning all other 21st century skills in their life and improves their standard of living. Their basic needs are fulfilled by the various technology devices and apps.

With the help of all these devices, they are also ready to prepare for dynamic future. Now-a-days, they are capable to adapt to new circumstances and act as a responsible citizen in the society. They are thinking innovatively, concerning about others welfare, working collaboratively, influencing the world by their abilities and capabilities, participating in all the social and political issues, etc. a becoming part and parcel of the 21st century. Individual with special needs must learn all the life skills and have to achieve success in all their future endeavours.

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Email: weserbooks@gmail.com

ISBN: 978-3-96492-246-5