



Top 10 life skills every Kiwi kid should know before they leave home

1. Knowing yourself and what matters to you

Why it matters: Self-awareness helps kids make good choices and build strong relationships

How to practice:

- Ask simple reflection questions at dinner, like “What did you enjoy most today?”
- Encourage teens to write down their top three values and notice when choices line up (or don’t)

Pro tip: Keep a family “values jar” where everyone adds what’s most important to them

2. Cooking and looking after your body

Why it matters: Cooking and caring for your health build independence, resilience, and lifelong wellbeing

How to practice:

- Involve kids in meal planning, shopping, and cooking so they see the full process, for example selecting meals in the HelloFresh app
- Teach one or two easy meals they can own (like pasta or stir-fry)
- Talk about sleep, hydration, movement, and nutrition as everyday choices that fuel the body

Pro tip: HelloFresh recipe cards don’t just teach cooking - they show what a balanced meal looks like, with the right mix of protein, carbs, and veg. Kids learn portion sizes, variety, and how to put together nutritious meals step by step.

3. Budgeting and managing money

Why it matters: Financial literacy reduces stress and helps kids feel in control of their future

How to practice:

- Give kids practice with pocket money or a youth bank account where they manage saving and spending
- Model budgeting by talking openly about choices. For example, “We will skip takeaways this week because we are saving for the holiday.”

Pro tip: Link budgeting to a goal (like a trip or concert ticket) to make saving feel motivating

4. Managing time and daily habits

Why it matters: Good routines make life feel balanced and predictable

How to practice:

- Encourage kids to use a calendar or planner to balance school, chores and downtime
- Agree on consistent morning and bedtime routines that help them feel steady

Pro tip: Start a weekly Sunday “planning check-in” as a family to set the week ahead. Following the clear recipe cards in HelloFresh boxes is another way for young people to practise reading and following practical instructions.

5. Everyday living skills

Why it matters: Knowing the basics of running a household builds independence

How to practice:

- Teach basics like doing laundry, making a doctor’s appointment, or changing a lightbulb by doing it together first
- Rotate household jobs of the week so kids build confidence across a range of skills

Pro tip: Start small - let kids take full ownership of one household task each week so they feel responsible and capable.

6. Problem-solving and critical thinking

Why it matters: Thinking critically helps kids adapt and find solutions

How to practice:

- Instead of giving answers straight away, coach kids to weigh up pros and cons. Ask, “What are three ways we could solve this?”
- Get them involved in everyday decisions, like comparing phone plans or working out the quickest route somewhere

Pro tip: Frame mistakes as experiments - ask, “What did we learn?”

7. Managing feelings and stress

Why it matters: Emotional resilience is just as important as physical health

How to practice:

- Model healthy coping by saying, “I am feeling stressed so I am going for a walk.”
- Teach short calming strategies such as slow breathing, exercise, or journaling

Pro tip: Make a “calm kit” with tools like a journal, stress ball, or playlist.

8. Effective communication and listening

Why it matters: Strong communication supports friendships, family bonds, and future work relationships - both online and in person

How to practice:

- Role-play tricky situations like asking for help from a teacher, turning down an invite, or handling conflict with a friend
- Have regular device-free family time where listening and conversation are the focus

Pro tip: Role model understanding by saying, “So what I hear you saying is...”

9. Knowing when and how to ask for help

Why it matters: Reaching out for support shows strength and builds resilience

How to practice:

- Share times in your own life when you have reached out for support. Normalising it makes kids more likely to do the same
- Encourage them to identify three safe people they could turn to, such as a parent, teacher, coach, or friend

Pro tip: Keep a visible fridge list of trusted contacts and helplines

10. Respecting culture and community

Why it matters: Belonging and empathy come from connecting to culture and contributing to others

How to practice:

- Involve kids in family or community traditions, whether that is cooking kai, celebrating cultural events or volunteering
- Encourage them to think about small ways they can contribute, such as helping neighbours or joining a community clean-up

Pro tip: Explore different recipes (e.g. through HelloFresh) to spark conversations about culture and diversity.

Press release

New research reveals Kiwi kids are losing critical life skills, with cooking top of the list

77% of parents say it's vital kids learn to cook, yet 60% believe today's children are less likely to pick up cooking skills than when they grew up

Auckland, New Zealand – Cooking has long been a cornerstone of independence and intergenerational connection, but new research reveals New Zealand children are at risk of leaving home without this basic life skill, and others that they need to thrive.

The nationally representative study commissioned by HelloFresh and conducted by Talbot Mills Research shows that:

- 77% of parents believe it is “very important” for children to learn to cook before leaving home, rising to 80% among parents with children under 18
- Yet 60% say Kiwi kids today are less likely to learn basic cooking skills at home than when they were growing up
- Only 21% of parents with children aged 5-17 say their kids are often involved in cooking
- Parents fear the long-term consequences: 65% worry kids will become reliant on takeaways, 59% predict struggles to eat healthily, and 42% say money will be wasted on food.

This “skills erosion” reflects wider pressures on families – with time scarcity, convenience food options, and declining family routines all playing a role. The findings point to everyday opportunities for families to nurture resilience, connection and confidence through practical life skills.

Clinical psychologist Jacqui Maguire, who has partnered with HelloFresh to co-develop the *Top 10 Life Skills Every Kiwi Kid Should Know Before They Leave Home*, says the findings highlight more than just practical gaps.

“Cooking is not just about getting dinner on the table. It’s a chance to build confidence, independence and a sense of pride in contributing to family life. When young people learn to cook, they also learn about teamwork, caring for their health and connecting with family traditions,” says Maguire.

“In today’s busy world it can feel difficult to find time for children to practise life skills. What I see in practice is that parents want to involve their children, but often lack the time or energy to make it happen. Focusing on small everyday moments helps reduce overwhelm and creates opportunities for learning - whether it is cooking dinner, budgeting for a goal, or helping around the house. These simple experiences can become powerful lessons that last well into adulthood.”

“Life skills give young people a sense of agency. They reduce stress, build capability and prepare them for adulthood. Creating space for these lessons, even in the middle of modern pressures, helps set children up to thrive long term.”

The research underscores a growing need for practical solutions that help families pass these skills on, even in the face of modern time pressures.

HelloFresh New Zealand Managing Director & VP Operations, Claudia Baptista-Fernandes, says the brand is focused on helping parents reclaim mealtimes as moments of connection.

“At HelloFresh, we see ourselves as an enabler for busy households - helping families reclaim mid-week dinners as an opportunity to connect, share and build life skills together. It’s in these everyday moments – not just special occasions – that confidence and capability are developed, and where kids can experience the joy of contributing to family life.”

“This research shines a light on a quiet crisis – but also a powerful opportunity. At HelloFresh, we’re proud to support Kiwi families by providing practical tools and inspiration that make it easier to pass on these skills. With the right support, families can help the next generation grow up with the confidence, capability and connection they need to thrive.”

As part of the campaign, HelloFresh and Jacqui Maguire will launch the *Top 10 Life Skills Every Kiwi Kid Should Know Before They Leave Home* – a solutions-led guide designed to spark conversation and provide practical tools for families.

For more information about HelloFresh, please visit hellofresh.co.nz

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About the research

HelloFresh engaged Talbot Mills Research to explore how prepared Kiwi kids are for adulthood, with a focus on foundational life skills and the role of cooking.

The findings are based on a nationwide survey conducted by Talbot Mills Research on behalf of HelloFresh. Fieldwork was carried out between 5–17 September 2025 with a nationally representative sample of 1,130 New Zealanders aged 18+.

Age, gender and regional quotas were applied during sampling, with results further weighted to reflect the adult population of New Zealand. The maximum margin of error on a sample of this size is $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

Research results:

- 77% consider it very important for children to learn to cook before leaving home, and a further 19% said it is moderately important
- “Developing practical skills” was considered the most valuable experience for children to gain from being involved in cooking from (80%). This was followed by “learning about nutrition” (49%), “building confidence” (28%) and “quality family time” (23%)
- Thinking about the long-term impacts to young adults who didn’t learn to cook as child, 65% said “reliance on takeaways/ready-made meals” was the most concerning. This was closely followed by “struggles to eat healthy” (59%) and “wasting money on food” (42%). Of less concern was “not being able to contribute to cooking in shared living” (17%)
- 60% think Kiwi kids today are less likely to learn basic cooking skills at home than when they were growing up. 16% think it is about the same, and 18% think kids are learning more
- Among those with children aged 5-17, 21% have them actively involved in cooking often, 50% sometimes, and 19% rarely
- 43% of those with children aged 5-17 say they can cook three or more dinner meals independently - this rises to 60% among those with children 13-17.

The full research report may be provided upon request.

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6. Problem-solving and critical thinking
7. Managing feelings and stress
8. Effective communication and listening
9. Knowing when and how to ask for help
10. Respecting culture and community

About HelloFresh

HelloFresh SE is a global food solutions group and the world's leading meal kit company. The HelloFresh Group consists of six brands that provide customers with high quality food and recipes for different meal occasions. The Company was founded in Berlin in November 2011 and operates in the USA, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Australia, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, France, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Japan and Ireland. In Q3 2022 HelloFresh delivered 243 million meals and reached 7.5 million active customers. HelloFresh went public on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange in November 2017 and is currently traded on the MDAX (Mid-Cap German Stock Market Index). HelloFresh has offices in Berlin, Saarbrücken, New York, Chicago, Boulder, London, Amsterdam, Sydney, Toronto, Auckland, Paris, Copenhagen, Milan, Tokyo and Dublin.