

I would be great if by 18 every young person could do the following:

DOMESTIC SKILLS

- Cook (don't just open and pour!) a traditional breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Wash and iron clothes without ruining them (plus, removing spots).
- Replace a button, baste a fallen hem and polish your own shoes.
- Extra credit:* Make a loaf of bread (without a machine) or bake a cake from scratch.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

- Throw and catch balls of all sizes without breaking your fingers.
- Swim half a mile, tread water or half an hour and float for an hour.
- Ride a bike with confidence.
- Extra credit:* Be able to get a kite up in the air, keep it there and bring it back down in one piece.

HANDYMAN SKILLS

- Hang a picture straight without making extra holes in the wall.
- Paint neatly, including cleaning up the mess.
- Know which tools perform what functions and how to use them around the house.
- Extra credit:* Sharpen a knife without cutting yourself.

OUTDOOR SKILLS

- Hike with friends all day without getting lost, bitten or covered with rash.
- Bait a hook, catch a fish, reel it in, remove the hook, then clean and cook the fish.

- Plan and manage a weekend camping trip with friends.
- Extra credit:* Know enough about the wildlife in your area to recognize and feel like a friend to the animals.

PRACTICAL SKILLS

- Type well with both hands in the normal manner.
- Set up your own computer system without help from anyone.
- Drive a car, including one with a manual transmission, and maintain it properly.
- Extra credit:* Change a flat tire.

SOCIAL SKILLS

- Carry on a conversation for 15 minutes with a person you don't know.
- Speak before a small group of friends for a few minutes.
- Tell a joke well enough so that everybody gets it and maybe even laughs.
- Extra credit:* Learn enough ballroom dancing so you can have fun at parties. (Trust me on this one!)

ARTISTIC SKILLS

- Draw an illustration at least well enough to get your point across.



Julie Bidwell

Is your child able to cook a traditional breakfast, lunch and supper entirely on his own? It's a valuable skill to have before leaving the nest.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

- Create a budget. Note: It takes longer to earn money than to spend it.
- Balance a checkbook manually, even if you bank online.
- Maintain an address book and a personal appointment calendar.
- Extra credit:* Set up a filing system to keep all of the paperwork in your life in one place.

HUMAN SKILLS

- Care for a dog, cat or other animal, including when it's sick.
- Baby-sit for children ranging in age from 6 months to 6 years.
- Aid elderly or handicapped people without looking superior.
- Extra credit:* Help a person in need without exposing either one of you to danger.

ORIENTATION SKILLS

- Get around town on a bus, even if you usually walk or drive.
- Read a map, including road maps.
- Know what to do if you find yourself in a bad neighborhood.
- Extra credit:* Know which direction is north, south, east and west (without a compass) whenever you're outside.

RECREATION SKILLS

- Play a team sport instead of just watching.
- Maintain a fitness regimen.
- Learn a game (like bridge or chess) you can play with friends for life.
- Extra credit:* Know how to ride a horse, handle a boat or enjoy a snow sport.

SURVIVAL SKILLS

- Know basic first aid and maintain a complete first-aid kit.
- Know what to do if you get sick, especially if you're alone.
- Know when to defend yourself; then know how to be effective.
- Extra credit:* Know CPR. The life you save may be your father's or mother's.