



4 Key Skills for Success in Learning, Work and Life

CPB-PBS Ready To Learn Initiative 2020-2025

Overview and PBS KIDS Learning Framework Alignment

1. **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is the ability to ask questions and organize, reflect, evaluate and analyze information to make decisions and judgments and solve problems. **Creativity** is possible after critical thinking has occurred because the latter involves our analysis of what is missing. Creativity involves using imagination and **flexible thinking** to find new approaches and solutions to challenges. Fostering creative problem solving and critical thinking are crucial steps in learning and innovation. A form of critical thinking grounded in the field of computer science, **computational thinking**, requires cognitive skills like sequencing and planning and helps young children solve problems that are meaningful to them. Development of these skills, with age-appropriate scaffolding and support, can be encouraged by providing opportunities for children to think sequentially, make connections, and develop a flexible mindset through play.

2. **Functional Literacy:** UNESCO defines functional literacy as “the capacity of a person to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community’s development.” More simply, functional literacy is **everyday literacy** and includes the everyday language and literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to meet personal and social needs at home, in the community, and beyond. **Exposure to a variety of texts**, especially informational and functional texts, in authentic contexts, and the **strategies and executive function skills for comprehending** those texts are critical aspects of functional literacy. In addition, effective **oral and written communication skills** are important for navigating everyday experiences, as is **pragmatic (social) language development** which involves knowing what to express, how to express it given the social context (to a friend or a boss), when to express it, and how to express it.

3. **World of Work Knowledge & Skills:** The “World of Work” can be defined as the career and workforce options that exist now and will be emerging in the future. The RTL Initiative aims to support kids in developing a **positive identity** by helping them identify and expand their interests, while imagining themselves in a vast array of career and job options that align with those interests. Children should believe that they have the ability to consider a wide range of options, especially those options for which there is high underrepresentation due to gender,

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race/ethnicity and disability. Through exciting story worlds and games, PBS KIDS can **expose children to a number of career and job options** in the World of Work that are both recognizable in their own communities and those that are less familiar, while also showcasing **diverse and engaging** characters who are the necessary **role models** that will help kids perceive themselves as belonging in a wide range of careers and jobs both now and in the future. In addition, content can support children’s ability to connect their emerging interests and identities, through the development of key **Executive Function (EF) skills and Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies***, to the possibilities available to them in the wider World of Work. These skills are foundational to success in life, school, and beyond, including contributing to productive and collaborative workforce participation. EF and SEL skills are some of the most in-demand skills sought by employers including communication and interpersonal skills, self-management skills, and collaboration/teamwork.

4. **Collaboration:** Collaboration skills enable people to work together to achieve a common goal and are fundamental expectations in most school and work environments. Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek (2016) state that collaboration is “essential to how humans learn, how they accomplish tasks, and how they improve their own performance.” Social and emotional learning skills such as **social awareness**, including **recognizing the similarities and differences between others and us**, and **perspective taking** are important aspects of collaboration at all ages, including for children to work and play together. Children can practice collaborative skills through **intergenerational** and family play** in games and through real-world activities; by following rules and procedures of group games; and by recognizing the contributions of all participants, including those from a range of social and cultural backgrounds and intellectual and physical abilities.

*** The Role of Executive Function (EF) and Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills:** The four sets of Key Skills are cross-cutting, interdisciplinary competencies dependent on broader domains tied to early learning and development, including social & emotional learning (SEL) and executive function (EF) skills: the processes by which children become better able to understand, express, regulate, and manage their emotions; relate to others; and ultimately navigate the demands of the workplace.

****The Role of Intergenerational Learning:** Intergenerational learning (IL) is broadly defined as reciprocal learning relationships between two or more distinct generations (Simandi, 2019). IL guiding approaches and design considerations can be used to design more effective, culturally relevant, and inclusive learning opportunities that build on family and community strengths and attend to families’ and communities’ diverse learning environments and contexts. Educational media can be used to support the cultivation of IL practice by developing engaging and age-appropriate content that support caregivers and children in joint media engagement; support modeling for engagement and conversation; and connect media content to a child’s experiences to support learning.

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Learning Framework Alignment with The Key Skills

Key Skill Area	Core Learning Framework Alignment
Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Computational Thinking Learning Framework ● Executive Function Skills Mini- Framework ● Science Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Science and Engineering Practices ○ Inquiry Process ○ Engineering and Technology (Design Process) ● Arts Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creative Process and Design Thinking
Functional Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Literacy-ELA Framework ● Executive Function Framework ● Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework
World of Work Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World of Work Knowledge and Skills Overview and Guiding Approaches/Design Considerations ● Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework ● Executive Function Skills Mini-Framework ● Social Studies Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Civics
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intergenerational Learning Overview and Guiding Approaches/Design Considerations ● Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social Competence ● Executive Function Framework ● Literacy-ELA Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Speaking and Listening

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