**How To Prepare Your Child For The Real World**

**Source**: [www.mamasaysnamaste.com](http://www.mamasaysnamaste.com)

Whether they’re 3 or 13, it’s easy to look at your child and see an innocent person who is a long way away from entering the “real” world. And that’s true in many ways, but time goes by quickly. Before you know it, your kid will be leaving home to go to college, see the world, or start their own career. Maybe it's not really about a shift in reality to what is actually "real", but more about helping them navigate the incredibly long process of growing up. I happen to believe it's a life-long event.

You shouldn’t just be preparing yourself for that day they leave the nest, but preparing *them* for that day. Every parent brings up their child in their own way, but one thing that’s true of all parents is they’re trying to give their children the necessary tools to do well as an independent adult. If you want to prepare your child for the real world, then these are the things to consider.

## **Make them a life-long learner:**

If you've been following me for long, you know I'm a huge advocate of the concept of "[functional education](https://www.mamasaysnamaste.com/functionaleducation)." The cliff's notes version is this. I don't believe that education is confined to K-12 or even on to college. It is a life-long journey of mind, body and soul. We start learning and growing from the moment we are created until the moment we pass on, and we have the opportunity to learn from anything and anyone.

There are many amazing resources out there, and you can connect with [gifted students](https://oakcrestacademy.org/), a game-changing new approach through places like [Acton Academy](http://www.actonacademy.org/), [homeschooling](https://www.mamasaysnamaste.com/educational-resources/), and traditional models through your child's grade-school years.

Go beyond the school model, however. Instill in them a growth mindset. [Allow them to struggle](https://www.mamasaysnamaste.com/podcast-struggle/). It is so, so critical that they understand that opportunities to learn and grow never end - the more you can position them to remain teachable, the more equipped they will be to find the resources they need when approached with a new situation, obstacle, or path.

## **Foster Independence:**

Whether you recognize it or not, we are our children's first teachers. They are looking to us as models, and sometimes we miss the mark by focusing so much on taking care of them, we forget to show them how to take care of themselves.

Many young adults leave home without the ability to cook their own meals or organize their own finances. Regardless of your schooling style, include your children in the process of life. Let your child help you bake some fun treats. Include them in grocery shopping, doing laundry, and dinner making plans.

Share with them the ups and downs of how you navigate your own choices, whether that's [what vacation will look like](http://www.90dayfamilyroadtrip.com/webinar) or how you pay the bills.

#### **Instead of being fearful about how we will protect our children,****empower them to protect themselves:**

This is such a big element, and something I'm going to be touching on all this month. Your children have to learn independence at some point. [Foster that independence and help them develop it.](https://www.mamasaysnamaste.com/life-lessons-independence/) **I**f you see your family as a full unit, they are extra sets of eyes and ears. For your safety and theirs, teach them to be aware! Educate them on what's okay and what's not, encourage them to listen to their own intuition, and give them the tools to know what to do in case of emergency.

Be proactive in your approach to educate them on how to stay safe instead of being their eyes and ears at all times. You'll be amazed at how even very young children can notice things that may seem off even when you as a distracted parent didn't. Don't underestimate the insights your own children can bring when they are educated and aware.

## **Listen to them:**

It’s important that your child knows their [opinion matters](http://www.racheous.com/respectful-parenting/preparing-child-real-world/). In our household, we believe in a family-centered home. That means that everyone has a voice. Give your children space - and grace - to talk. As they grow, there are so, so many things to navigate. Having an open dialogue with your children is so, so important. If you can build a firm foundation that they can come to you and know you will listen, this can do so much for your relationship on you really earning that right to give them guidance and them being more open to actually listening to it.

As you embark on the teen years, there is a lot of complexity involved. Understanding a bit of the process that goes on will help you to allow for more grace, and hopefully, more connection.

#### **If you want respect, GIVE respect:**

It's important to hash things out. The best social skill you can teach your child is that their mind is valuable. They need to learn how to talk about the things they think and feel. In turn, you need to teach them to listen to you, of course, but it’s a two-way street. If you demonstrate the value of socializing to your kid then they’ll be able to form meaningful relationships with other people in the future.