

# ESSENTIAL 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS

Changemakers are not necessarily born, they are shaped by experiences and people in their childhood. We believe that parents can play a crucial role in creating leaders who see themselves as part of the solution and be powerful changemakers in the world. Ashoka has identified the 4 skills of Empathy, Teamwork, Leadership and Changemaking as essential skills for young people to master to thrive in a world where change is the only constant. This is a list of suggested ideas for parents to practice the 4 skills with their children.

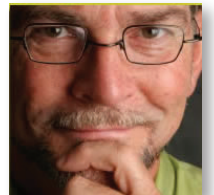


## EMPATHY

- Encourage your child(ren) to volunteer at an organization they are interested in
- Talk to your kids about current events or social challenges that your community is facing and ask them to express how they feel about it
- Learn about a different culture, culminating in cooking an ethnic dish together
- In school, encourage kids to find new students, learn their names and something interesting about them
- Read with your kids about historical events and discuss how they might have felt if they lived during that time

“In sixth grade I switched over to public school, and that was a big deal in my community. I went through an experience of having one big social network of friends and then going to another school and shifting to another social network, and the big change is that people in the Catholic school said, “Oh you’re gonna get knifed in the hall,” but when I switched to public school I loved it. Part of it was because of the racial diversity, I had friends from all different races, particularly African Americans and that had a big impact on me. And I could see how harmful those stereotypical notions were; how untrue they were. That was a big thing.”

—Charlie Murphy, Ashoka Fellow, USA



## LEADERSHIP

- Encourage kids to solve their own problems, lead family meetings
- Explore options and research before buying a toy or a product
- Reframe failures as growth and balance the fine line between when to step in and when to let kids work through problems on their own
- Sometimes, let the kids pick which route they take home. Make sure they understand there is more than one way
- Make your children King/Queen for a day by empowering them to decide the family activities for the day

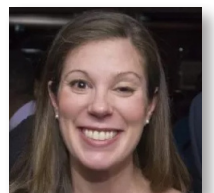
“I had the freedom to choose what I had to do with my life. I had freedom to set my own rules and standards. And so it was rather frightening because I was very small. [I] probably set up very strict standards for myself. But from the freedom of setting your own standards comes a lot of power, and I have felt that power through my life.”

—Ximena Abogabir, Ashoka Fellow, Chile,  
Founder of Casa de la Paz



“My parents exposed us to different things but they did not push us until we showed an interest in an activity. Allowing us to pick our own things meant that we were extremely committed to what we picked and worked really hard at them. We grew a lot in those things. For example, I became an international-level ice skater; my brother was a left-handed pitcher all the way through college, and my sister became a professional ballerina before becoming a doctor.”

—Sarah Hemminger, Ashoka Fellow, USA





## TEAMWORK AND CHANGEMAKING

- Let kids lead on navigating the family when traveling together
- Ask kids for solutions to parenting problems (e.g. How can I get you to come downstairs earlier in the morning?)
- Let your child(ren) help you with a task or problem, even though it may not be the way you would prefer to do it
- Have siblings figure out solutions to fights without parents' help
- Cook dinner together as a family once a week, letting kids decide the menu

“...In our house there was always a big box for recycling even though in Chile nobody else recycled. We were always concerned about energy, about water, but also having the conversations about what's happening in the world. What can we do with our talents towards solving some of those issues, those problems? My mother [would tell] us since we were little that our main goals would be to leave the world at least a little bit better than how it was when we were born.”

—Gonzalo Muñoz Abogabir, Ashoka Fellow, Chile



“My mother taught me to blaze my own path. One day, my mom noticed a boy who was not on my soccer team kicking a soccer ball on the sidelines. My mom approached him and this Vietnamese boy explained in broken English that he loved soccer but couldn't afford soccer shoes. She asked him where he lived, and next thing I knew, we were talking to his mother asking if we could take him to buy soccer shoes. His mom agreed, and I will never forget the boy's face of joy once he had his brand-new soccer shoes. After that, I introduced him to the coach and he joined our soccer team. That left a powerful impression on me for life.”

—Kristin Hayden, Ashoka Fellow, USA



## CHANGEMAKING STARTS WITH YOU, THE PARENT



At Ashoka's Youth Venture, we believe changemakers are not born. Instead, they are shaped by personal experiences and influencers. Parents, as the most critical influence in a child's life, can best enable children to master changemaking.

*Parenting Changemakers* is a parent-led initiative aimed at creating ideas, tools, and practices to support children to be changemakers, thereby evolving parenting practices of the 21st century.

If you want to know more about supporting and guiding young changemakers, or, if you want to start your own parenting changemakers group, visit us at [www.parentingchangemakers.org](http://www.parentingchangemakers.org)



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