

## 7 Soft Skills in Demand by Employers: A Brief Guide for Families

THE FOLLOWING  
ARE SEVEN SOFT  
SKILLS THAT ARE  
OFTEN CITED BY  
EMPLOYERS AS  
TOP TRAITS THAT  
THEY LOOK FOR IN  
AN EMPLOYEE:



The seven traits listed below are skills and, as such, they can be learned, practiced, and honed.

### 1 PLAN AND PRIORITIZE

The employee is able to balance several tasks and follow steps in an action plan to get the job done as scheduled.

### 2 DEPENDABLE AND RELIABLE

The employee is where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there.

### 3 RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS

The employee works well with both coworkers and supervisors.

### 4 DETAIL ORIENTED

The employee pays attention to all parts of their work activities.

### 5 VOLUNTEER

The employee is willing to try new things and take on additional tasks.

### 6 INQUIRER

The employee is not afraid to ask questions in order to make sure that the job is done right.

### 7 PROBLEM SOLVE

The employee figures out other possible ways around a challenge to get the job done.

**AS A JOB SEEKER OR A FAMILY MEMBER OF A JOB SEEKER, WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT YOU CAN HELP TO BUILD THESE SKILLS BOTH AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY?**



**Activity:** Include opportunities for choice-making and decision-making throughout the day

**Target Skills:** PLAN AND PRIORITIZE, PROBLEM SOLVE

1. Team up with someone who can help guide and provide feedback.
2. Start small and slowly increase choice options as you go along. Start with only two options. Then go to three options.
3. As needed, use cards with words and or pictures to help the person select from possible choices.
4. Provide options as solutions to a problem and talk through each option to practice problem-solving.

**Activity:** Use an organizational system

**Target Skills:** DEPENDABLE AND RELIABLE, DETAIL ORIENTED

1. We all have different ways of keeping organized. Add important activities to a calendar that is accessible to everyone. A calendar

could show the month or just show the week if there are lots of activities.

3. Create checklists for activities or routines that have lots of steps or that are difficult to remember.
4. Make sure the system is something that you can mark as you go – put items in a “done” pocket or check them off the list.
5. Refer to these organizers often. Build this review into the schedule.

**Activity:** Video modeling

**Target skills:** RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS, DETAIL ORIENTED

1. Use video to capture and review details that are often missed in a task.
  - Record video of someone completing the task with a phone or any device.
  - Review the video before practicing the task.
2. Use video to practice social skills.
  - Practice a social skill until you have at least one good example.

- Record that example with a phone or any device.
- Review the video regularly.
- Use the social skill in new situations after reviewing the video.

**Activity:** Promote and develop opportunities for self-advocacy.

**Target skills:** VOLUNTEER, INQUIRER, PROBLEM SOLVE

1. Encourage communication and self-representation.
2. Provide opportunities for leadership roles across home and work.
3. Encourage other self-advocates to share their efforts and stories.
4. Talk about and practice ways to disclose accommodation needs.
5. Create opportunities for self-advocacy and opportunities to speak about issues both at home and in the community.
6. Reinforce efforts of assertiveness and problem solving.

**REMEMBER:** All of the skills listed above require both preparation and opportunities to practice. Make these into fun, learning experiences and celebrate your accomplishments!