



The Life Skills Starter Kit

Trackers, prompts, and milestones for the ten skill areas that shape who your kid becomes.

BY PAX EMBER

paxember.com

WELCOME

You just scanned a code from a book I wrote for your family.

Thank you for that. Seriously.

This kit is the companion to Welcome to Real Life. Not a replacement. Not a review. A companion.

The book does the teaching. This kit helps you keep the work going between chapters, between weeks, between the sporadic conversations and the quiet noticing that shapes a kid over months.

You don't need to use all of this. Pick the skill area your kid is actually working on right now. Use the tracker for a month. See what shifts.

The trackers aren't grading tools. They're noticing tools. Ten-year-olds don't grow on a schedule, and the point isn't to measure them. The point is to pay attention long enough to see what they need.

Here's what's in the kit:

1. Ten printable weekly trackers, one per skill area
2. Parent conversation prompts for each skill
3. Age-appropriate milestone markers so you know what "on track" looks like
4. A printable Family Skills Chart for your fridge

Let's begin.

Pax Ember

hello@paxember.com



SECTION ONE

The Ten Weekly Trackers

Each tracker follows the same format. Skill area. What it looks like at age ten. A weekly noticing prompt. A parent conversation prompt. Use them in any order. Start with the skill your kid is already wrestling with. Skip the rest.

TRACKER 1

Knowing Your Strengths

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old who knows their strengths can name three things they're good at, three things they love doing, and three things they care about. The overlap is their superpower zone.

WEEKLY NOTICING

What did your kid light up about this week? What did they complain about? What did they keep coming back to when they weren't being told what to do?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

“Tell me something you did this week that you’re actually proud of. Not something I’d be proud of. Something you are.”

WATCH FOR

Shrinking language (“I’m not really good at anything”) is a flag. Expansive language (“I figured out a better way to do it”) is a muscle they're building.

Handling Screens

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old handling screens well can put a device down without being asked, notice when they've been scrolling too long, and name the feeling that pulled them in.

WEEKLY NOTICING

Is your kid defending their screen time more than usual? Are they using devices to avoid something specific (homework, feelings, siblings)? Are they acting different after screens?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

“Show me something you saw online this week that actually made you feel better afterward.”

WATCH FOR

“Nothing” is an answer. If they can't name a single thing, the feed isn't serving them. That's not a fight. It's a conversation.

TRACKER 3

Money

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old handling money well can explain the difference between saving, spending, and sharing. They can make a choice about a small amount. They don't panic or hoard or blow through it.

WEEKLY NOTICING

Did they ask for something? How did they ask? Did they compare themselves to a friend's family? Did they give something away?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

"If you had twenty dollars right now, no rules, what would you do with it?"

WATCH FOR

The answer you get tells you everything about their current relationship with money. No judgment on the answer. It's data.

Hard Conversations

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old who can have a hard conversation doesn't avoid the topic, doesn't explode, doesn't shut down permanently. They can say "I don't want to talk about it right now, but I will later," and mean it.

WEEKLY NOTICING

Did a hard conversation come up this week? How did it go? Did they stay in the room or leave? Did they come back?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

"Is there anything you wanted to tell me this week and didn't?"

WATCH FOR

Kids who consistently say "no" to this question may not have permission to say yes. Keep asking. Don't push. Just keep asking gently. Eventually they'll answer honestly.

Big Feelings

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old who can handle big feelings can name the feeling, stay with it for a few minutes without needing to escape, and come back to themselves without an adult having to rescue them.

WEEKLY NOTICING

What feelings showed up this week? Were any hidden? Did your kid name them, act them out, or try to make them go away?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

“Name one feeling you had this week that was hard to handle. What did you do with it?”

WATCH FOR

“I ignored it” is honest and common. Not automatically a problem. But a pattern of ignored feelings at ten becomes avoidance at fifteen.

Friendships

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old good at friendships can make a new friend, maintain an old one, and end one that isn't working without needing a dramatic conflict to justify it.

WEEKLY NOTICING

Who did your kid talk about this week? Positively, negatively, not at all? Has a friendship shifted? Is there a kid they mention all the time?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

"Tell me about a friend who made you feel like yourself this week."

WATCH FOR

"Nobody" is a flag. So is "Everybody is mean to me." Either one is a real conversation. The goal isn't to fix the friend situation. It's to understand where your kid is in the social landscape.

Bodies

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old with a healthy relationship to their body knows what it does well, can name what changes might be coming, and isn't embarrassed to ask about it.

WEEKLY NOTICING

Did your kid mention their body this week? Positively, negatively? Did they avoid a mirror, or stare into one? Did a body-related joke land weirdly?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

“What’s something your body did well this week?”

WATCH FOR

Negative body talk at ten is common and worth not brushing off. The kids who grow into adults with body confidence were noticed at this age, not lectured.

Decisions

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old who is building decision-making can face a choice, list two or three options, and pick one without needing a parent to decide for them.

WEEKLY NOTICING

What decisions did your kid make this week? Did they sit with the decision or rush through it? Did they ask for your opinion, or not?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

“What was the hardest choice you made this week?”

WATCH FOR

Kids who can't name a single decision they made this week might not have enough actual agency. Decision-making is a muscle. If they never lift, they never get stronger.

Service

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old learning service can do something helpful without being asked, give without expecting return, and notice when someone else needs something.

WEEKLY NOTICING

Did your kid help anyone this week without being told? Did they notice someone struggling? Did they offer something to someone, even something small?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

“Did you notice anyone who needed help this week? What did you do?”

WATCH FOR

The answer doesn't have to be heroic. “I picked up my sister's notebook when she dropped it” counts. The skill is the noticing, not the scale of the help.

Who You're Becoming

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE AT 10

A ten-year-old who is building self-concept can name something about themselves that's changing, something they want to change, and something they're proud of staying the same.

WEEKLY NOTICING

How did your kid describe themselves this week? Positively, negatively? Did they compare themselves to anyone? Did they talk about who they want to be?

PARENT CONVERSATION PROMPT

"If you could change one thing about how you were this week, and keep one thing exactly the same, what would they be?"

WATCH FOR

The answer to this question at ten is astonishingly close to the answer they'll give at twenty-five. Take it seriously.



SECTION TWO

Milestone Markers

Use this section to calibrate. Not every kid will hit every marker.

A kid hitting most at ten is doing fine. A kid hitting some and working on the rest is also doing fine.

WHAT ON-TRACK LOOKS LIKE

By age 10, most kids can

Use this page to calibrate. Normal range is wider than most parents think.

- Identify three things they're good at when asked
- Go 24 hours without a screen without falling apart
- Understand that money runs out if you don't track it
- Have a hard conversation they didn't want to have, and survive it
- Name at least one feeling they're experiencing in the moment
- Maintain at least one friendship through a small conflict
- Ask a question about their body without shame
- Make a small independent decision without asking first
- Help someone unprompted at least a few times a month
- Describe themselves without needing external approval

MARKERS THAT DESERVE ATTENTION (not crisis, attention)

- Can't name any strengths after a real attempt
- Uses screens to avoid specific feelings consistently
- Lies about money or hoards it
- Shuts down completely in hard conversations with no recovery
- Denies feelings they're clearly experiencing
- Has zero friends and says they don't want any
- Hides their body or talks about it with shame
- Refuses to make any decisions themselves
- Never helps anyone without being forced to
- Defines themselves entirely by what others say about them

IF YOU SEE ATTENTION MARKERS

Start the conversation. Gently. Once. Come back next week. Twice if needed. Most of these shift with patient noticing. If multiple markers cluster and persist, talk to a pediatrician or child therapist. That's not failure. That's being the parent who notices.



SECTION THREE

Family Skills Chart

Print this. Put it on the fridge. One skill area per month. Check in together on Sunday nights. This is a ritual, not a report card.

Family Skills Chart

Print this page. One per month. Fill it in together on a Sunday night.

MONTH OF

SKILL AREA WE'RE FOCUSING ON THIS MONTH

WHY WE PICKED IT

WHAT WE NOTICED THIS MONTH (KID)

WHAT WE NOTICED THIS MONTH (PARENT)

ONE SPECIFIC THING THE KID DID WELL THIS MONTH

ONE THING WE WANT TO WORK ON TOGETHER NEXT MONTH



What comes next

This kit is a starting point. Here's what actually matters going forward.

You don't need to use every tracker every week. You need to notice your kid consistently and respond to what you see. The trackers are a habit-builder, not a curriculum.

Ten-year-olds change fast. The skill your kid is struggling with this month may be the one they master by next month. Don't lock in a story about who they are right now.

If you want more, three places to go:

→ **Your Real Life Toolkit** at paxember.com/reallife. Printable worksheets and parent guides for each of the ten skill areas.

→ **Welcome to Real Life (Age 10 Edition)** is the book this kit is built around. paxember.com/books

→ **Reply to any email from me** at hello@paxember.com. I read them. It's a small list, and I like keeping it that way.

Thank you for showing up. That's the whole thing.

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hello@paxember.com | paxember.com