CODING FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Prepare your child for the digital age with an indispensable skill of the future — coding.

Children of this generation are digital natives, surrounded by technology from the minute they are born. The world, however, develops so rapidly that it is crucial to prepare them for the unpredictable. We need to instil sustainable learning in them through innovation, critical thinking, computational thinking, collaborative learning, and problem-solving. One of the most essential 21st century skills, coding, is now an indispensable skill of the future. Here are four benefits of equipping your child with coding skills:

1 Develop Computational Thinking

Coding is a way of communicating with computers and develops computational thinking, which is the problem-solving process that trains the brain to break down a problem into sub-problems and find possible solutions. Even if your child does not become a computer programmer, the skillsets learned are in demand and can be readily applied across various disciplines.

2 Improve Academic Performance

Analysing a problem and finding efficient solutions involve creative thinking and logical reasoning. Children who learn coding are better at structured thinking and organising ideas. This results in higher academic performance over time.
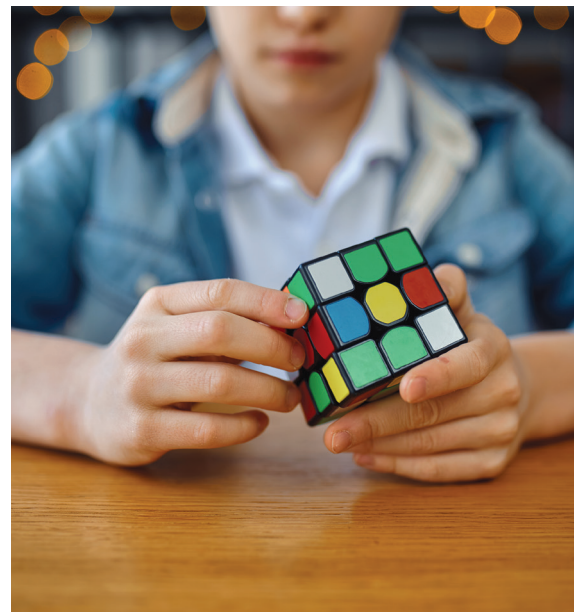
3 Instil Resilience

Resilience may be difficult to teach but can be instilled as a by-product of learning to code. As coders often run into roadblocks and failures where they have to fix errors to make their solution work, this process is very effective in teaching patience and resilience.

4 Improve Career Prospects

Coding prepares your child for high-paying tech jobs as there is a growing demand for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics-related (STEM) jobs worldwide. According to Code.org, in America, 67% of all new STEM jobs are in computing, yet only 11% of STEM graduates are in Computer Science. That's a serious shortage!

To future-proof your child, start by introducing coding from young. Even though coding classes are helpful, they can be expensive; using websites and apps that teach coding may be effective, but the negative effects of excessive screen time can also be troubling.

To address these concerns, parents may opt for the *Pre-Coding for Kids* series by Educational Publishing House, which features engaging, screen-free activities to introduce underlying skills like data comprehension, pattern recognition, algorithmic thinking, and solution optimisation. It includes simple learning notes to explain the concepts behind the activities and an Online Parents' Guide. As this series does not teach any specific coding language and no device or prior knowledge is required, your child will be able to learn useful coding concepts in a non-daunting and enjoyable way!

Vidhi Singhal, author of the *Pre-coding for Kids* series, is a computer programmer with over 10 years of experience working in Google and Facebook.

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