

# The Crisis with Soft Skills

## What is iQ: smartparent?

*iQ: smartparent* is an Emmy-winning multimedia television and web series designed for parents that will empower them with new knowledge, tools, and abilities to successfully guide their children through the changing landscape of digital media and technology. It's a growing community of caregivers, national experts, educators, and parent bloggers who want to understand the opportunities and challenges of media as it relates to the development of their children. *iQ: smartparent* was created by WQED Multimedia in 2012.

## About this Episode

"Soft skills" are defined as personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively with other people – and workforce experts say today's young people are facing a significant deficit in soft skills. It's a problem that's having a serious impact on young people as they search for jobs, and even as they apply and interview for college and other crucial post-high school education opportunities. Discover which soft skills employers value the most and hear from experts about ways to help your child start building these crucial skills *now*.

## Discussion Questions

1. How can you encourage soft skills development in your children? When do they get to be creative and innovative during their day?
2. What are some ways you can be a role model to show problem-solving skills and interpersonal skills?
3. What are some opportunities in your area where your child can get some real-world experiences?
4. This episode talked about creating intentional spaces and moments for children to practice trial and error in a controlled environment. What does that look like for you and your family?
5. Self-reflection and lifelong learning are key to developing soft skills. What are some soft skills that your child is good at and can continue to practice? What are some gaps which need some extra help in building?

## About the Guests



**Dr. Rueben Brock** is an assistant professor of psychology at California University of Pennsylvania. He is also a licensed counselor in private practice. He is a 20-year veteran of the mental health field and has spent most of that time working in mental health and drug & alcohol treatment. Dr. Brock's research focuses on issues related to Black culture and particularly Black students. Brock is also the host of a web show, House Call with Dr. Rueben Brock, which focuses on health and wellness issues, parenting, and issues related to adolescents.



**Wesley Jackson Wade** is a career counselor for the College of Sciences at NC State University in Raleigh, NC and is a licensed, certified, and clinical counselor in mental health and addictions with his own private practice. Currently, Wesley is working on his Ph.D. in Counseling & Counselor Education and researching the connection between mental health and career development in adolescents and young adults, specifically within African-American and autistic populations.



**Emily Donato** Career Development Coordinator at Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. She is a facilitator of professional and personal development for youth. Emily believes strongly in the power of positive mentoring relationships, which she experienced during her time as a Pittsburgh Public Allies AmeriCorps Apprentice and continues to infuse in her work. Emily's previous role as Career Coach and Service Learning Coordinator at Nazareth Prep in Emsworth allowed her to explore models of real world learning, during which time she implemented an internship class modeled around the LUMA Institute's methods for Human Centered Design. Emily's background includes Restorative Justice training from the Restorative Justice Institute of Atlanta and a RYT-200 Yoga Teacher Certification following the completion of YogaRoots on Location's Anti-Racist Raja Yoga Teacher Training with Felicia Savage Friedman. Born and raised in Butler, PA, Emily now proudly calls Pittsburgh her home and her community.



**Dr. Lisa Abel-Palmieri** is President & CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. She is an education & non-profit leader passionate about shaping the future of learning by designing equitable experiences that engage the heart, mind and innate skills in youth. She has run workforce development programs, summer "Learn & Earn" programs and internships with over 100 companies. Lisa has previously been an executive director/head of school, classroom teacher, after-school program leader, STEAM Coordinator, director of technology and has held positions in industry a decade before entering education and nonprofit spaces. Most importantly, she's a champion for youth and enjoys long-standing relationships with her past students who are now adults. She received a Bachelor's at Duquesne University as well as a Master of Arts in Integrated Marketing and Master of Science in Technology. Lisa's Doctorate of Philosophy was earned at Robert Morris University in Instructional Management and Leadership. She was named Non-Profit CIO of the Year by the Pittsburgh Technology Council in 2013. She was honored to join the Deeper Learning Equity Fellows in 2016. She's been named an ASCD Emerging Leader, Robert F. Kennedy Urban Education Leader of the Year finalist, "Who's Next in Education," 40 Under 40 by Pittsburgh Magazine and Woman of Achievement. Lisa believes partnerships and culturally relevant experiences launch innovative ideas and programs. She's been on numerous advisory committees in the region and is currently the Senior Vice-President of Growth for the Boy Scouts of America, Laurel Highlands Council, on the strategic advisory board for Rosedale Technical College and President of Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship Foundation.

iQ: smartparent is created with support from:

