



Community
Literacy of
Ontario

September 2026

Soft Skills: Annotated Resource Guide

20 Resources for Get SET Programs



Acknowledgments

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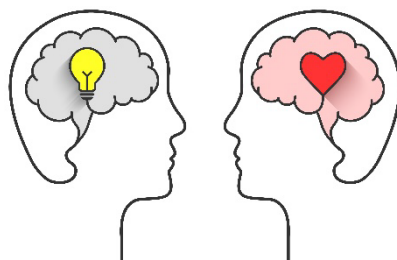
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Table of Contents

1. Can Social and Emotional Skills Be Taught? An Analysis of Adult Training Programs ...	4
2. Catching Confidence	5
3. CLO Soft Skills Validation: Study Protocols, Rationale and Methodology.....	7
4. Earthy Chats Podcast	9
5. Lean In to Learn: Your Skills for Success Podcast.....	10
6. Leveling Up: Your Skills for Success Podcast	11
7. Neuroscience Meets Social and Emotional Learning: Navigating Workplace Conflicts	
8. Ontario Soft Skills Resources Hub	13
9. Open Educational Resources and Instructional Materials	14
10. Research on Teaching Soft Skills: SkillPlan Reviews	15
11. Skills Builder Universal Framework and Hub.....	17
12. Skills for Success: Assessment and Training Tools	18
13. Skills for Success Adult Basic Education Workbooks	19
14. Skills for Success Practitioner Tools and Resources	20
15. Soft Skills and Their Importance in the Labour Market Under the Conditions of Industry 5.0	21
16. Soft Skills in Literacy & Basic Skills Programs: CLO Research and Factsheet	22
17. Soft Skills Salon	23
18. The Heart of the Matter: Understanding Hiring Demand for Social and Emotional Skills	24
19. UP Skills for Work	25
20. What Are Soft Skills?	26





1. Can Social and Emotional Skills Be Taught? An Analysis of Adult Training Programs

Authors: Michelle Gorea and Katrina Campbell; The Conference Board of Canada

Published: 2023

Funder: Government of Canada's Future Skills Program

Link: <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/can-social-and-emotional-skills-be-taught/>

Annotation: This Canadian research briefing examines how social and emotional skills are taught and learned in college programs. Drawing on interviews with 40 instructors and 26 students across Canada, it explores teaching practices, challenges in assessing these skills, and the effects of online learning. It also considers how differences in definitions and expectations influence the way educators teach and learners demonstrate these skills.

This resource:

- identifies barriers to teaching and assessment, including inconsistent definitions and limited attention to these skills in curricula
- discusses practical learning opportunities such as group work, presentations, mock interviews and community or workplace experiences
- highlights supportive instructor relationships and the need to recognize cultural differences in how skills are expressed

This briefing also explores how building on learners' existing strengths and recognizing different ways of demonstrating these skills can help create learning environments where everyone feels included.



2. Catching Confidence

Author: Jan Eldred and colleagues; National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), United Kingdom

Published: Tutor guide, 2006; discussion paper and presentation, 2010

Funding support: Department for Education and Skills, United Kingdom, supported research and development; European Social Fund supported production of the tutor guide

Links:

Guidance for Tutors:

<https://www.ecala.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Catching-Confidence-The-nature-and-role-of-confidence-ways-of-developing-and-recording-changes-in-the-learning-context.pdf>

Discussion paper:

https://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/Catching_Confidence_discussion_paper.pdf

Presentation:

https://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/CatchingConfidence_presentation.pdf

Annotation: *Catching Confidence* brings together three resources exploring how confidence develops through adult learning and how learners can recognize changes over time. The resources consider progress such as speaking in a group, trying unfamiliar tasks and using learning in everyday life. They also explore how confidence can vary across learning, home, social and work situations.

This collection includes:

- a tutor guide, *Catching Confidence*, that explains how to introduce the approach, help learners reflect on their confidence and record changes over time, with teaching strategies, case studies and a checklist

- a discussion paper, *Catching Confidence and Learning Essential Skills*, that examines research on confidence and the everyday changes that learners and educators recognize as meaningful progress
- a presentation, *Catching Confidence: The Tools and Process*, that describes activities using discussion, images and reflection to explore confidence

Together, these resources show how learners' experiences of growing confidence can reveal changes in participation, independence and willingness to try new learning activities.



3. CLO Soft Skills Validation: Study Protocols, Rationale and Methodology

Author: Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO), with research methodology developed by Adaptimist Insights and Trent University's Health & Emotion Research Laboratory

Published: March 2026

Funder: Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Link:

<https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/all-resources/soft-skills-research-project-2025-2026>

Annotation: These two documents outline the research plan for CLO's Soft Skills Validation Project, which aims to develop and evaluate soft skills learning materials for adult learners in Ontario's Get SET programs. The full document explains the project's rationale, research methods and planned stages, while the shorter summary provides an overview. Both describe how information about learners' needs, workplace skills and Canada's Skills for Success framework will guide the development of learning materials and practitioner training.

Together, these documents:

- explain the role of emotional, social and motivational skills in learning and employment
- describe how the Multidimensional Inventory for Personal Intelligence (MIPI), a self-assessment tool, will help identify learners' needs and guide the selection of learning activities
- outline how learning materials will connect with workplace skill requirements through the OASIS skills classification system and Canada's Skills for Success framework

- describe plans for flexible learning modules, practitioner training and ongoing support
- outline how learner progress will be evaluated, including assessments before and after training, participant feedback and research ethics procedures

The project's approach connects an understanding of individual learners' needs with practical teaching strategies and the skills used in everyday life, education and employment.



4. Earthy Chats Podcast

Author: Outdoor Learning School & Store; hosted by Ian Shanahan and Jade Berrill

Published: Ongoing podcast; featured episode published November 21, 2025

Funder: Unknown

Links:

Podcast:

<https://outdoorlearning.com/podcast/>

Featured episode:

<https://earthychatspodcast.podbean.com/e/outdoor-learning-for-assessment-and-social-emotional-learning/>

Annotation: *Earthy Chats* is a Canadian podcast featuring conversations with outdoor and environmental educators about teaching practices and learning through nature. The episode *Outdoor Learning for Assessment and Social-Emotional Learning* features teacher, author and outdoor learning educator Lauren MacLean. The conversation explores connections between outdoor learning and social-emotional development.

This podcast:

- shares educators' experiences and perspectives on outdoor and environmental learning
- explores how outdoor learning can support assessment and social-emotional learning in the featured episode
- discusses British Columbia's approach to assessing competencies and documenting progress over time
- provides links to related books, organizations and teaching resources in the episode notes

The featured conversation connects learning experiences in outdoor settings with broader questions about how educators support and recognize social and emotional growth.



5. Lean In to Learn: Your Skills for Success Podcast

Author: Workplace Education Manitoba; hosted by Jessica Soodeen

Published: 2023–2026

Funder: Government of Canada’s Skills for Success Program

Link:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/lean-in-to-learn-your-skills-for-success-podcast/id1691568725>

Annotation: This Canadian podcast explores relational skills, commonly called soft skills, through conversations with educators, trainers and workplace professionals. Host Jessica Soodeen and her guests discuss how these skills relate to learning, inclusion and workplace relationships. Episodes share practical perspectives on developing relational skills and supporting people in different learning and employment settings.

This podcast:

- explores cultural understanding and approaches to creating more inclusive workplaces
- discusses resilience, adaptability and strategies for working with neurodivergent learners
- examines the work of relational skills practitioners and ways to evaluate the impact of training
- includes a conversation about *The Thousand Tool Toolkit* and tools for relational skills development

The conversations connect individual skill development with the relationships and learning environments that support participation and growth at work.



6. Leveling Up: Your Skills for Success Podcast

Author: Workplace Education Manitoba

Published: 2024

Funder: Government of Canada and Government of Manitoba

Link:

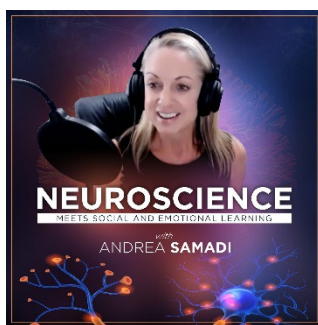
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/leveling-up-your-skills-for-success-podcast/id1727616545>

Annotation: This Canadian podcast explores Canada's nine Skills for Success through discussions about workplace learning and personal development. Several episodes focus on soft skills, including communication, collaboration, problem solving, adaptability, creativity, and innovation. The series connects these skills with everyday experiences, particularly for people entering the Canadian workforce or moving into new employment.

This podcast:

- explores social intelligence and its connections to understanding others, building relationships and solving problems
- discusses creativity and collaboration when responding to workplace challenges
- examines adaptability, mentorship and support during employment transitions
- describes how prior learning and life experiences can translate into workplace skills

The conversations highlight how people can recognize and build on abilities they already use in daily life as they develop workplace relationships and respond to change.



7. Neuroscience Meets Social and Emotional Learning: Navigating Workplace Conflicts

Author: Andrea Samadi, host; featuring John Ford, workplace mediator and author

Published: 2024

Funder: Unknown

Link:

<https://andreasamadi.podbean.com/e/navigating-workplace-conflicts-insights-from-a-mediation-expert/>

Annotation: This episode of *Neuroscience Meets Social and Emotional Learning* explores how soft skills can help people understand and resolve conflict. Host Andrea Samadi speaks with workplace mediator John Ford about communication, empathy, emotional intelligence and building trust. The conversation connects these skills with situations people encounter in their working and personal lives.

This episode:

- explores the role of emotional intelligence in understanding and responding to conflict
- discusses ways to express feelings and needs without blame
- introduces tools such as empathy cards and talking sticks to support communication
- considers common workplace conflict challenges and approaches to developing empathy and trust

The discussion highlights how recognizing emotions and understanding different perspectives can support constructive conversations and stronger relationships.



8. Ontario Soft Skills Resources Hub

Author: Learning Networks of Ontario

Published: Undated collection; includes materials published before 2021 and an April 2021 update

Funder: Government of Canada and Government of Ontario

Link:

<https://sites.google.com/view/lnosoftskillsresources/home>

Annotation: This Ontario website, titled *Soft Skills Resources*, brings together information, teaching resources and partnership examples for Literacy and Basic Skills programs, now known as Get SET. It explores how adult literacy programs support soft skills development and provides resources for building on this work. Materials are organized into background information, resources and community partnerships.

This hub:

- introduces soft skills and their connections to learning, relationships and employment
- brings together links to curriculum materials, learning activities and practitioner professional development
- highlights examples of Ontario literacy programs working with community and employment partners to deliver soft skills training
- shares regional research on the soft skills employers identify in job postings

The collection highlights how soft skills development is already woven into adult literacy instruction and strengthened through activities, learner goals and community partnerships.



9. Open Educational Resources and Instructional Materials

Author: AlphaPlus, with guidance from Ontario adult literacy educators

Published: Ongoing collection; publication dates vary by resource

Funder: Unknown

Links:

Full collection:

<https://oercollection.alphaplus.ca/>

Workplace Culture and Communication:

<https://oercollection.alphaplus.ca/job-preparation-and-hiring/workplace-culture-and-communication>

Annotation: AlphaPlus brings together free instructional materials for adult literacy and foundational learning, selected with input from Ontario educators. Within this broader collection, the *Workplace Culture and Communication* section includes resources for developing communication skills, understanding workplace expectations and responding to interpersonal challenges. Materials include workbooks, videos, discussion guides and learning activities.

This collection:

- includes workbooks from the Northwest Territories Literacy Council on communication, dealing with conflict and managing stress
- features workplace video scenarios with questions and guidance for discussion and problem solving
- provides teaching tips and instructional-level information for many resources
- identifies copyright and licensing information, including whether materials can be copied or modified

The selected materials connect soft skills with everyday workplace situations, creating opportunities to explore different perspectives, discuss responses and practise communication.

REVIEW OF

Research on Teaching Communication



10. Research on Teaching Soft Skills: SkillPlan Reviews

Author: SkillPlan and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC)

Published: 2023

Funder: Government of Canada

Links:

Adaptability:

https://sfs-tools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SkillPlan_Adaptability-EN.pdf

Collaboration:

https://sfs-tools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SkillPlan_Collaboration-EN.pdf

Communication:

https://sfs-tools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SkillPlan_Communication-EN.pdf

Creativity:

https://sfs-tools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SkillPlan_Creativity-EN.pdf

Annotation: These four Canadian research reviews explore approaches to teaching and assessing adaptability, collaboration, communication and creativity. Developed to inform the Skills for Success Practitioner Competency Framework, they bring together findings from academic research and relevant reports. Each review explains the skill, describes teaching approaches and considers ways to recognize learners' development.

This collection includes:

- *Review of Research on Teaching Adaptability*, which explores goal setting, managing emotions, responding to feedback and adjusting to change
- *Review of Research on Teaching Collaboration*, which discusses structured group activities, shared goals and strategies for learning to work together
- *Review of Research on Teaching Communication*, which examines modelling, role-play, active listening and communication across cultures

- *Review of Research on Creativity Training*, which explores defining problems, generating and evaluating ideas, and developing solutions

Together, the reviews show how purposeful activities, feedback and reflection can make soft skills an explicit part of teaching and learning.

11. Skills Builder Universal Framework and Hub

Author: Skills Builder Partnership, United Kingdom

Published: 2025

Funder: Unknown

Links:

Universal Framework:

<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/global/universal-framework>

Skills Builder Hub:

<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/global/hub>

Annotation: The Skills Builder Universal Framework breaks eight essential skills into clear, progressive steps: listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, adapting, planning, leadership and teamwork. Each skill has 16 steps that describe development from beginning to advanced levels. The accompanying Hub provides teaching materials designed primarily for learners aged 4–18, along with professional learning and tools for recording group progress.

This resource:

- describes specific behaviours that make broad soft skills easier to recognize, discuss and practise
- organizes skill development into manageable steps that support focused learning goals
- offers free interactive lessons and downloadable teaching resources through the Hub
- includes a group assessment tool that helps educators identify learning needs and track progress
- provides an educator handbook with planning tools, example activities and case studies

The framework offers a shared language for recognizing learners' strengths and describing how their skills develop through practice and experience.



12. Skills for Success: Assessment and Training Tools

Author: Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), with resources from government and other organizations

Published: Ongoing collection; publication dates vary by resource

Funder: Government of Canada; funding for individual resources varies

Link:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/tools.html>

Annotation: This Government of Canada directory brings together assessment and training resources related to the nine Skills for Success. Educators can search specifically for communication, collaboration, adaptability, problem solving, and creativity and innovation. The collection includes tools for individual learners, employers and training providers, with descriptions of each resource's purpose and intended audience.

This directory:

- offers filters to find resources by skill, audience and type of tool
- includes self-assessments, learning activities and courses that support soft skills development
- describes delivery formats, costs and proficiency levels where available
- connects readers directly with organizations providing assessment and training materials

The collection brings together different approaches to identifying strengths, recognizing learning needs and developing skills for work and everyday life.

13. Skills for Success Adult Basic Education Workbooks

Author: Government of Saskatchewan

Published: Publication date not stated on the collection page

Funder: Government of Canada's Skills for Success Program

Link:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/jobs-working-and-training/job-training-and-financial-support-programs/adult-basic-education/skills-for-success>

Annotation: These three free workbooks support skills development in Adult Basic Education programs. They combine learning activities, self-assessments and teaching guidance to explore Canada's nine Skills for Success. The materials connect learners' existing knowledge and experience with skills used in employment and everyday life.

This collection:

- covers adaptability, collaboration and problem solving in Workbook 1
- addresses communication, creativity and innovation, alongside digital skills, in Workbook 3
- includes reading, writing and numeracy activities in Workbook 2
- organizes learning around Skills for Success levels 1 and 2, with defined learning outcomes and opportunities for reflection
- provides instructor videos explaining the workbooks, self-assessments and ways to adapt activities to learners' needs

The activities build on learners' strengths while introducing situations that encourage them to practise skills, reflect on their progress and identify next steps.



14. Skills for Success Practitioner Tools and Resources

Author: SkillPlan and project partners, including the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC)

Published: Undated website; resource dates vary

Funder: Government of Canada

Links:

Practitioner tools and resources:

<https://sfs-tools.ca/>

Digital resource library:

<https://sfs-tools.ca/digital-resource-library/>

Annotation: This Canadian website supports educators who plan, deliver and assess Skills for Success training. It brings together a practitioner competency framework, self-assessment tools, a professional growth plan and teaching resources. Its digital library includes material on soft skills such as active listening, collaboration and adaptability, alongside information about adult learning and inclusive instruction.

This website:

- helps practitioners reflect on their teaching strengths and identify professional learning goals
- describes effective practices for planning learning activities, delivering instruction and assessing progress
- links soft skills concepts with research, printable learning materials and teaching strategies
- includes a Get Started Guide and an inventory of courses, workshops and professional development opportunities

The resources connect practitioners' own learning with the teaching approaches and supports that help adults develop and apply their skills.



15. Soft Skills and Their Importance in the Labour Market Under the Conditions of Industry 5.0

Authors: Michaela Poláková, Juliet Horváthová Suleimanová, Peter Madzík, Lukáš Copuš, Ivana Molnárová and Jana Polednová

Published: 2023

Funder: Unknown

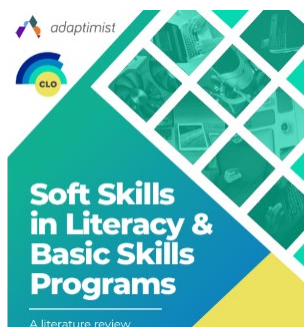
Link: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e18670>

Annotation: This peer-reviewed article explores the importance of soft skills as technology changes the workplace. It combines a review of research with an analysis of Slovak job advertisements from 2017 to 2021. The authors examine how employers' expectations reflect the need for both soft skills and digital skills.

This article:

- explores different definitions of soft skills and how they are grouped
- identifies communication, critical thinking, problem solving, flexibility and taking responsibility among the soft skills most frequently requested by employers
- compares demand for soft skills and digital skills over five years
- discusses the importance of developing soft skills alongside technical knowledge in education and training

The findings highlight the continuing importance of communication, judgement and adaptability in workplaces that increasingly rely on digital technology.



16. Soft Skills in Literacy & Basic Skills Programs: CLO Research and Factsheet

Authors: Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) and Adaptimist Insights; literature review by Maaïke van Benthem, Catherine Toovey and A. Geoffrey Crane

Published: Literature review, March 2024; factsheet, December 2025

Funder: Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Links:

- **Literature review:** <https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/all-resources/soft-skills-in-lbs-programs>
- **Factsheet:** <https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/all-resources/factsheet-soft-skills-in-get-set-programs>

Annotation: This collection brings together CLO's literature review, *Soft Skills in Literacy & Basic Skills Programs*, and its shorter factsheet, *Soft Skills in Get SET Programs*. The resources explore how soft skills influence adult literacy learning and describe approaches for incorporating soft skills development into existing instruction.

Together, these resources:

- examine communication, collaboration, problem solving, adaptability, and creativity and innovation
- explore how confidence, motivation and managing emotions can affect participation and learning
- connect the literature review's research findings with practical approaches for supporting individual learners and group learning in Get SET programs

The resources highlight how supportive relationships and opportunities to practise soft skills can help learners build confidence, participate more fully and persist with their learning.



17. Soft Skills Salon

Author: The Soft Skills Group; hosted by Diana Kawarsky

Published: 2022–2024

Funder: Unknown

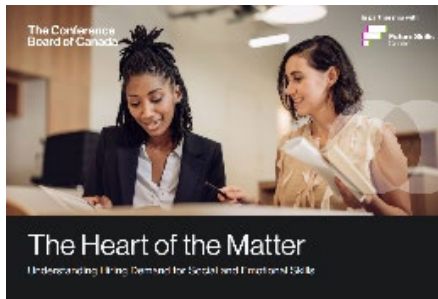
Link: <https://softskillssalon.buzzsprout.com/1966788>

Annotation: *Soft Skills Salon* features conversations about how soft skills influence workplace communication, relationships and teamwork. Hosted by trainer Diana Kawarsky, the podcast brings together guests from different professional backgrounds to share experiences and approaches to everyday workplace challenges.

This podcast:

- explores communication, empathy, teamwork and self-confidence through workplace examples
- discusses ways to build trust, exchange constructive feedback and strengthen working relationships
- examines how listening and open communication can help people navigate conflict and change
- includes conversations about maintaining connections when people work remotely or divide their time between home and the workplace

The conversations illustrate how soft skills shape everyday interactions, from asking questions and responding to feedback to supporting colleagues and working through disagreements.



18. The Heart of the Matter: Understanding Hiring Demand for Social and Emotional Skills

Author: Boxi Yang; The Conference Board of Canada

Published: June 2024

Funder: Government of Canada's Future Skills Program

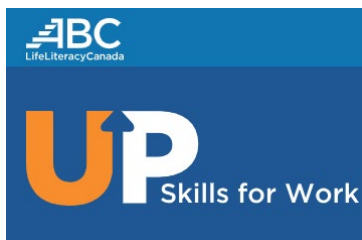
Link: https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/the-heart-of-the-matter_jun2024.pdf

Annotation: This Canadian research briefing examines employer demand for social and emotional skills through online job advertisements from 2018 to 2023. Focusing on knowledge-based occupations, it explores which skills employers request and how demand differs across provinces, industries and education requirements.

This briefing:

- identifies communication, teamwork and leadership among the most frequently requested social and emotional skills
- examines employer expectations for flexibility, planning and organizational skills
- compares hiring patterns across Canada and tracks changes before, during and after the initial pandemic disruption
- discusses the role of post-secondary education and training in developing social and emotional skills alongside technical knowledge

The findings show how the ability to communicate, work with others and adapt to change remains an important part of employers' expectations across a range of Canadian workplaces.



19. UP Skills for Work

Author: ABC Life Literacy Canada

Published: Various dates; Get Started series, 2023.

Funder: Funding varies by resource; supporters include founding sponsor Canada Life and the Government of Canada

Link: <https://upskillsforwork.ca/resources/>

Annotation: *UP Skills for Work* provides free workbooks, activities and online courses that help adults develop skills for employment and everyday life. The materials use clear explanations, familiar situations and opportunities for reflection to explore how soft skills are used at work, at home and in the community.

This collection:

- covers communication, collaboration, adaptability, problem solving, and creativity and innovation
- explores motivation, confidence, accountability, time management and stress management
- includes practical activities, personal skill checks and discussion questions that connect learning with everyday experiences
- offers a *Get Started* series with simpler language and layouts, designed for adults reading at approximately a Grade 2–4 level
- provides resources for educators, including facilitator training and materials for group learning

The activities encourage learners to recognize skills they already use, identify areas they want to strengthen and practise new approaches to familiar situations.



JOHNWHITEHEAD & ASSOCIATES
Executive/Leadership Coach

20. What Are Soft Skills?

Author: John Whitehead; John K. Whitehead & Associates, British Columbia

Published: 2022

Funder: Unknown

Link: <https://johnkwhitehead.ca/videos/>

Annotation: This short introductory video explains what soft skills are and how they help people interact and build relationships. It distinguishes soft skills from technical skills and describes their relevance across different jobs and everyday situations. The revised version includes captions.

This video:

- explains the difference between soft skills and job-specific technical abilities
- connects soft skills with positive relationships and working effectively with others
- identifies empathy as an example of an ability that can be practised
- emphasizes that soft skills can be developed and used across workplaces and other areas of life

The video presents soft skills as abilities that complement technical knowledge and influence how people relate to others at work and beyond.



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