

# Independence

This handout has been designed to enable you to support your child with developing strategies to promote their independence in readiness for school. Below is a table with some simple life skills that you can support your child to develop within your home environment to ensure that they are equipped with the skills they need for school and life. As a parent/carer you play a crucial role in building your child's self-esteem and confidence which starts at a very early age. When your child starts school, there will be some very basic skills and tasks that your child will be expected to perform in readiness for being able to cope and function within a classroom environment in which the practitioners at your child's school/nursery are already supporting your child to develop. It is essential that as a parent you are providing consistency in what your child is learning between home and nursery as this enables your child to grasp and master certain skills at a faster rate.

Developing your child's independence, resilience and self-esteem is part of the government initiative in ensuring children are ready for school and life. Some of your children may be transitioning to either pre-school or primary school this year and you can support your child to make a much smoother transition by just supporting your child to develop some very basic skills at home. Did you know that if your child can do basic tasks, like knowing how to wash their hands before and after eating and being able to use the toilet independently, that your child will be more confident within the process of transitioning from Pre-School to Primary School?

Currently at your child's Early Years setting, practitioners work daily on supporting your child's independence right from the start of your child commencing nursery as these skills are outlined in the Early Years and National Curriculum. The core main areas linked to independence, life skills and health and self-care that are outlined in the curriculum is listed below.

Before your child starts school the aims of the curriculum and the government is that your child:



- Displays a good level of personal, social and emotional development
- Is ready to learn and confident in their own abilities
- Has a good level of independence - is able to use the toilet and dress themselves
- Has an understanding of basic hygiene such as knowing when and how to wash their hands
- Can take on basic responsibilities and tasks such as tidying away their toys









You can support your child to be ready for their next step by working on building your child's independence and self-confidence by supportively allowing time for your child to practice these very basic skills, as part of their school readiness at home. It is essential during this process to have patience with allowing your child time to master these skills as rushing your child during the process may delay their progress. Remember confidence grows as your child begins to see themselves as capable. So, let's work together in developing our children's confidence and independence as confident children go on to become confident adults who are ready for the world!



Work on building your child's confidence and independence and at home by supporting your child to develop the following life skills:

Independence/Life Skills	Washing Hands and wiping hands	Washing face
	<p>Support your child to understand the importance of washing hands and learn how to independently wash and dry their hands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently throughout the day</li> <li>• Before and after meals</li> <li>• After playing outside or returning inside the home</li> <li>• After messy play e.g. painting and arts and crafts</li> </ul> 	<p>Teach your child to develop awareness of their personal hygiene and appearance. Encourage your child to identify when their faces and mouths may need cleaning by: encouraging your child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washing their face using a mirror</li> <li>• Washing around face and mouth after meals</li> <li>• Look in the mirror to identify when their faces may need cleaning</li> <li>• To identify when to get a tissue to clean their nose and how to dispose of tissue correctly, placing the tissue in a bin and wash their hands afterwards</li> </ul> 

<b>Dressing</b>	<b>Teeth Brushing</b>	<b>Helping out at home</b>
<p>Build your child's independence in being able to dress and undress themselves and take pride in their appearance by encouraging your child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put on their own shoes and socks on before going out to play</li> <li>• Choosing what clothes, they would like to wear when they are home or going out and identifying what's appropriate/required clothing.</li> <li>• Identifying when clothing may need changing or be messy and changing independently.</li> <li>• Putting on their coat independently</li> </ul> 	<p>Build your child's knowledge on the importance of oral hygiene and personal appearance by supporting your child to learn how to independently:</p> <p>Brush their teeth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least twice a day</li> <li>• Brushing teeth 30 minutes after meals</li> </ul> 	<p>Help your child learn the importance of helping others and how to take on small tasks and responsibilities by allowing your child to:</p> <p>Helping at snack/tea time  Helping to set the dinner table  Helping to sort laundry  Help to put plates, cups, knives and forks away after eating</p> 

<b>Pouring</b>	<b>Tidying Up</b>	<b>Using a knife and fork</b>
<p>Help support your child to learn how to do things independently that they will have to do at school by allowing your child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pour their own drinks e.g. water</li> <li>• Pouring milk onto cereal</li> <li>• Watering plants</li> </ul> 	<p>Help your child to learn the importance of taking ownership in keeping places and items tidy so that they can transfer and use these skills in the classroom by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking responsibility of keeping own toys tidy</li> <li>• Tidying away toys after use</li> <li>• Tidying up activity/ toys before moving onto another activity</li> <li>• Wipe spillages</li> <li>• Clear table after meals put items in sink with supervision then their wash hands afterwards</li> </ul> 	<p>Help your child to learn how to use a knife as they will have to learn how to use a knife and fork in the school canteen by:</p> <p>Allowing your child to use a knife (Supervised) when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading butter and jam on bread or toast</li> <li>• Peel bananas and oranges</li> <li>• Eating at lunch and tea time using a knife and fork</li> </ul> 

### **Top Tips whilst supporting your child in doing the above!**

- Ensure expectations are clearly explained and the reasons why.
- Allow your child time to learn how to develop these skills and be patient, expect mistakes.
- Allow your child to learn through trial and error this is how humans especially children learn.
- Give plenty of warning before requesting for your child to do the above, children need to be prepared and know what to expect. This can also help to reduce tantrums.
- Offer lots of praise and encouragement during the process to boost your child's self-esteem, resilience and confidence.
- Understand that your child will need time to gain and master these skills.
- Children are visual learners so role model how to do these skills at home.

Your role as a parent is to support your child to independently learn how to develop these skills. We also need to work on supporting children to develop the ability to be able to critically think and analyse things for themselves as part of their independence and know how to assess risk. This is an important life and academic skill which you can work on supporting your child to develop from a very early age. Words like be careful or stepping in and taking over from your child exploring with learning how to develop new skills can make them feel incapable and actually does not work to build your child's independence. Here is a list of positive phrases that you can use to support your child to critically think and analyse for themselves to promote independence and self-esteem.

- Notice how.....
- Do you see ..... how the floor is slippery
- Try..... moving your feet
- Try using..... your arms and legs
- Can you hear .....the rushing water
- Do you feel like..... you are going to fall off on the chair
- Are you feeling..... safe, scared, frightened

You can also support your child to learn how to make more efficient choices and decisions whilst developing your child's ability to child problem solve by using the following prompts

- What's your plan.....? to cross that log
- What can you use instead.....? to get across
- Where will you put..... the plate
- How will you .....get down, get off

Happy Learning!

**Produced by the  
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