



Activities of Daily Living or Self-care Activities

Dressing & Hygiene

- Partially place clothing on child and allow them to finish when first learning.
- Encourage independence with hand washing and drying as early as possible.
- Practice dressing a doll or watch videos and talk about the steps to complete tasks.
- Practice putting laces into holes of shoes to prepare for shoelace tying.
- Practice twirling a pencil for 10 rotations with each hand separately to prepare for shoelace tying.
- Play winter dress-up to practice buttoning and unbuttoning large buttons using jackets or coats.

Feeding

- Allow your child to explore and play with food as a baby even though it makes a mess.
- Pretend feed during play using large plastic serving utensils and buckets are utensils and bowls.
- Pretend feed a doll using non-food items like sand or other items like dry rice or pasta.
- Practice cutting non-food items like modeling clay or play-doh using a plastic knife and fork.
- Practice feeding a doll and have the child feed the doll as well.

Sleeping

- Establish a regular bedtime each night for your child and do not vary from it.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine, such as giving your child a warm bath or reading a story.
- Do not give your child large meals close to bedtime or caffeine less than six hours before bedtime.
- Pay attention to the sleep environment including the noise level, lighting, and temperature.
- Make sure the after dinner playtime is relaxing and does not increase energy level.

Toileting

- If there are siblings, ask them to let the younger child see you praising them for using the toilet.
- Use a potty chair on the floor rather than putting the child on the toilet for training.
- Make going to the potty a part of your child's daily routine.
- Practice demonstrating using the toilet with a doll and give it a "party" when it goes by itself.

Money/Time Management

- Keep an analog clock in the house to encourage telling time from a non-digital source.
- Use time distance when talking, i.e. "It is 8, and we have to be there at 9. So we have one hour."
- Begin counting coins with real coins and have child sort them into piles.
- Play store and ask for your change in return for your purchase.
- Create a calendar and give only a few details, i.e. "There are 30 days. The third is a Monday."
- Create a list of daily activities in sequence, i.e. First, I took a shower.... Next, I got dressed....

Additional Tips from a Therapist

- Try to encourage independence and give a child a chance to figure something out before you step in to help if danger is not a concern.
- Children respond well to stickers and other rewards like free time with a favorite toy.
- Poor self-care skills are often related to decreased fine motor or cognitive-perceptual skills.
- When encouraging proper grasp of utensils, try having child hold onto a small object with middle and pinky finger allowing only the other fingers and thumb to hold onto utensils.
- Don't encourage use of bottles and sippy cups when the child can drink from an open cup.
- Many preschools don't allow the use of plastic forks and knives even though it is age appropriate.
- Encourage use of paper and pencil before using calculator to improve math skills.
- Use Velcro straps for shoes to encourage independence until the child is really for shoelace tying.