



Encouraging Independence

The more your child is able to accomplish on his or her own, the more they will feel in control, decreasing tantrums and power struggles.

Strategies for promoting Independent life skills

1. *Create environments that encourage independence*
 - Coat hooks at their level
 - Towel hooks at their level in bathroom
 - Stool at the sink for hand and teeth washing
 - Hamper for dirty clothes that is easy to open
 - Showers instead of baths (so they can wash themselves with your supervision)
 - Easy to put on/take off clothing for getting dressed
 - Easy access cupboard/drawer for utensils, cups, plates, etc.
 - Easy access towels, dust pan, and broom for cleaning up
2. *Provide opportunities for your child to accomplish tasks*
 - Setting the table, getting the newspaper, checking the mailbox, etc.
 - Notice and express gratitude when you see your child helping out
3. *Assign your child a "job" that helps the family out*
 - Sweeping up crumbs from under the table after breakfast, etc.
 - Discuss how this "job" contributes to helping your family run smoothly
 - Try not to criticize your child's efforts

Strategies for promoting independent play

1. Create a play area
 - Include some type of table/desk and child size chair if possible.
2. Store toys in visible and accessible areas (in low or open shelves)
3. Label bins and sort toys whenever possible
4. Encourage your child to put away their toys (this can be done with teamwork on your part)
5. Provide a variety of materials to play with

**Remember, the more toys do, the less creative your child needs to be

- Play-dough and some tools
- Crayons and art supplies

- Wooden blocks
 - Small play people figures
 - Legos
 - Building toys
 - Balls
 - Small scissors
 - Puzzles
 - Colored pencils
6. Try not to interrupt your child playing independently if you don't have to
 - Watch him or her at play
 - Respect his or her focus and let them finish something if you can
 7. Let your child control the play when you do join in