

Activities to Increase Independent Living Skills

Organization

1. Skills to improve storing, retrieving toys and supplies at home and school
 - a. Label or put symbols on the outside of the container to show what belongs in the container. For example: A block on the outside of the block container, a puzzle piece on the outside of the puzzle container.
 - b. Follow 1 or 2 step directions. State the directions and have the child the direction back to you. Or Use First/Then boards to increase to 2 step directions.
 - c. Have a specific location for toys and supplies to be located. Keep it consistent.
 - d. Teach child how to neatly arrange toys and stuffed animals on the floor, shelf or basket.
 - e. Teach child how to hang up coats on hangers or hook and line up shoes on the floor, closet, or shelf.
2. Skills to improve organizing closets, cabinets, drawers and pantries at home and at school
 - a. Use a storage system such as 1 cubby for each day of the week and pick out a complete outfit for each day of the week.
 - b. Organize the closet/dresser by color to begin to develop picking out clothes that match.
 - c. Have a specific location for food items, small appliances, plates, cups, silverware, kitchen utensils. Label each cabinet/drawer with what is inside each space.
 - d. Develop an organizational system for materials at school such as using a 3 drawer cart labeled with each category.
 - e. Develop a take home/return to school folder system.
3. Developing and Maintaining the organization of items
 - a. When putting away food, teach your child to move old food to the front and place new food behind.
 - b. When putting clothes away for the season, label the container with what is inside the box.
 - c. Use Seeing AI App with a sighted person to begin to learn how to read labels and expiration dates.
4. Creating digital organization of files, calendars, folders, etc.

- a. When creating a document, first label the document with a name.
 - b. When organizing digital files, create folders for each class, then within each class folder determine how you want or organize. For example: By day of the week, in class/homework, by week etc.
 - c. Use a digital calendar or sticky note system to type assignments for each class and for extracurricular activities and practices.
 - d. When given a worksheet, take a picture with the iPad, label the picture and put it in the correct subject folder.
5. Maintaining digital information
- a. Schedule a time each month to go through files/emails/contact lists to determine what needs to be kept and what can be deleted.
 - b. Generalize skills across settings. Practice and implement all the skills in all areas of everyday activities.

Cleaning/Household Tasks

1. Skills to improve putting items away
 - a. Teach child when to put clothes in the laundry hamper, how to put clothing in and to take out of the washing machine/clothes dryer.
 - b. Teach child how to put books on bookshelves or in containers to keep neat and organized.
 - c. Teach child the proper placement of plates, napkins, cups and utensils to help set the table for meals.
 - d. Determine a routine and keep it consistent.
 - e. Teach child how to fold washcloths and towels.
 - f. Teach child how to water plants (indoors or outdoors)
2. Age-appropriate chores
 - a. Use a chart to keep track of chores for each week. For example- throwing away trash, putting dishes in the sink after meals, etc.
 - b. Label or put symbols on the washing machine/dishwasher. For Example- start button, various settings on the washer/dryer.
 - c. Teach a system for separating clothing for laundry. For example- what goes in each pile: towels, pants, shirts, etc.
 - d. Teach child how to clean up spills. Have child clean up spills with adult supervision.
3. Determining the best tool for the job
 - a. Talk about the different types of chemicals and how to use them safely. For example, don't use bleach in a room with a closed door/ mixing chemicals.
 - b. Teach a systematic cleaning pattern. For example, in the kitchen starting with the counters before cleaning the floors.

- c. Teach how to determine the appropriate cleaning tool. For example, what size/type of cloth for surfaces, broom vs. duster vs. mop, etc.
 - d. Teach how to sort recycling into correct bins.
 - e. Teach how to empty the dishwasher and put away clean dishes.
 - f. Teach how to strip bedding and put in laundry.
4. Create and use a cleaning schedule
 - a. Store cleaning supplies in a safe but accessible location. Label bottles for easier identification. For example- to be used in the bathroom, to be used in the kitchen, universal.
 - b. Brainstorm to create a list of chores and maintenance tasks the child can complete independently.
 - c. Explore a variety of tools such as hammers, screwdrivers, pliers, lightbulbs that are commonly used in the home.
 - d. Teach child how to load the dishwasher in an organized manner.
 - e. Show child how to make bed with fresh linens.
5. Household maintenance
 - a. Interview a plumber, electrician, landscaper, and other careers related to homecare and maintenance.
 - b. Create a household maintenance checklist. For example- changing filters, changing batteries in smoke detectors, scheduling maintenance for heating/cooling.
 - c. Explore options for lawn maintenance and snow removal.
 - d. Show the child different types of plants in the garden. Explore how to weed the garden and check for ripe produce to pick.
 - e. Teach child how to handwash and dry dishes. Discuss that some items are not dishwasher safe.
 - f. Teach child how to iron different clothing items.

Time Management

1. Understanding order of events
 - a. Work with child to use first/then charts to complete tasks.
 - b. Teach child how to follow a simple routine.
 - c. Practice waiting your turn and practice waiting for gratification for task completion.
2. Following a schedule or routine.
 - a. Explore types of agendas (digital, paper, etc.)
 - b. Explore various types of clocks (large face, braille, talking, analog and digital) and understand AM vs PM.
 - c. Teach child how to tell time and determine if it is AM and PM.

- d. Develop a daily routine for gathering all electronic items such as Chromebook, iPad, BrailleNote, phone, etc for charging.
- 3. Estimating time
 - a. Estimate the time needed to complete a task, time it and compare the time estimate to the actual time necessary to complete.
 - b. Present scenarios to child to increase time related skills. For example, we will go to dance class in 5 mins, what time will we go to dance?
 - c. Teach child how to set a watch and how to change it for time changes. For example, when moving to daylight saving time.
- 4. Creating a schedule, agenda, or planner
 - a. Set aside time during the day that child can record items in their agenda such as extra curricular activities, assignments, and social activities.
 - b. Determine how much time to allocate for specific tasks and setting priorities. Understand the importance of allowing extra time.
 - c. Determine how to problem solve when creating their schedule.
- 5. Decision making and setting priorities
 - a. Have child keep "time tracking journals" in which they record how long various tasks took and if more or less time is needed.
 - b. Have child interview a person with a vision impairment to find out how they handle time management.

Cooking

- 1. Preparing foods
 - a. Teach child how to stir and pour solids and liquids into bowls, cups, containers, etc.
 - b. Teach child how to rinse and wash food items before eating or cooking.
 - c. Have child practice knife skills by cutting play dough and soft foods.
- 2. Kitchen Basics
 - a. Gather supplies for recipes before starting a recipe.
 - b. Discuss various types of measurements. Label measuring cups/spoons/etc with braille or tactile labels.
 - c. Teach child how to use hygienic methods when preparing food. For example, washing hands after touching chicken, not licking the spoon or fingers, etc.
- 3. Using appliances
 - a. Label or put symbols on appliances. For Example- start button, various settings on microwave/oven, etc.
 - b. Proper use of/and cleaning of appliances. For example, cleaning the turntable on the microwave, wiping out the airfryer, etc.
 - c. Discuss different cutting utensils and their uses.

- d. Teach child oven safety and how to use the oven.
- 4. Making decisions about food
 - a. Look at a recipe with child and determine if it's appropriate to make. Determine any adjustments that may need to be made or if assistance is needed.
 - b. Develop a system for leftovers from daily meals for food safety. For example, coloring coding or date made labels.
 - c. Teach child how to use an app such as Seeing AI or TapTap See to read the nutrition labels on food.
- 5. Advanced Kitchen Skills
 - a. Have child determine the recipe they want to make including the ingredients and supplies needed. For example, if making a bundt cake, a bundt pan is needed.
 - b. Determine a budget for weekly meals. Have child look at weekly sales papers. Make a list of items that have coupons. Clip coupons via apps or Sunday circulars.
 - c. Have child plan a trip to appropriate stores for items needed.
 - d. Teach child how to do a daily kitchen "reset"- cleaning off the counter tops, wiping down counters and stovetop, rinsing out the sink, taking out the trash, etc.

Money

- 1. Knowing various currencies
 - a. Teach child the value of currency. For example nickels, dimes, quarters, pennies, \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20 etc.
 - b. Teach child how to tell the difference between the coins and dollars.
 - c. Have a discussion on what we use money for everyday purchases and expenses. Play games like grocery store or restaurant.
- 2. Making Purchases
 - a. Teach child how to fold money for identification purposes when in a purse or wallet.
 - b. Have child pay for small items or services such as when using a vending machine or at a dollar store.
 - c. Explain to child sales taxes vary by state. Most states have sales tax and that the price tag is the base price for the item they are wanting to purchase.
- 3. Banking Solutions
 - a. Explore your local bank by arranging a trip to the bank. Set up checking and savings accounts for the child.
 - b. Teach child how to use an ATM, online banking, etc.

- c. Teach child how to balance a checkbook.
- 4. Understanding Expenses
 - a. Have child research various jobs. Including requirements for employment, pay, retirement.
 - b. Explain to child how income pays for bills like water, electricity rent/mortgage, trash, phone bill, internet, etc.
 - c. Determine how an income pays for health insurance, car insurance, taxes and other things in a monthly budget.
 - d. Have child develop a budget to contribute to rides, car insurance, gas for rides for a non-driver, etc.
- 5. Develop a personal budget and maintain a financial record.
 - a. Teach child how to use a debit or credit card securely.
 - b. Research financial advisors and plan a trip to talk about finances with an advisor to learn about investing and saving for the future.
 - c. Teach child how to identify scams and ways to protect personal and financial information. Discuss protecting personal information for online purchases.

Resource: ECC Essentials Teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum to Students with Visual Impairments Allman, C. and Lewis, S. and Spungin, S.