



# Strategies for Empowering Independent Living Skills (part 1)

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# Objectives

- Participants will describe the importance of accessing a child's current abilities using a checklist as a foundation for personalized skill development in various aspects of independent living.
- Participants will demonstrate how to use the checklist to evaluate a child's abilities in areas crucial for independent living and apply this assessment to create a tailored plan that addresses individual needs in personal care, organization, and household management.
- Participants will examine their case studies to identify challenges and opportunities in teaching independent living skills to children who are blind or have low vision, comparing different approaches to skill development



# Brittany Williamson

- Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments
- Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist
- Special Education-Moderate to Severe Disabilities



# Mindy Koehne

- Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments
- Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist
- Elementary Education
- Special Education-Mild Interventions



# Organization



# Organization Skills

- Storing, retrieving toys and supplies
- Organizing closet, drawers, and pantries
- Developing and maintaining the organization of items



# Organization Skills—Level 1

## **Skills to improve storing, retrieval of toys/supplies at home and school**

- Label or put symbols on the outside of container to show what belongs in the container.
- Follow 1 or 2 step directions. State the directions and have child repeat. Or use first/then boards to increase to 2-step directions.
- Specify location for toy and supplies. Keep it consistent.



# Organization Skills—Level 2

## **Skills to improve organizing closet, cabinets, drawers and pantries at home and at school**

- Using a storage system (1 cubby for each day of week), select a complete outfit for each day of week.
- Organize the closet/dresser by color to begin to develop picking out clothes that match
- Identify a specific location for food, small appliances, plates, cups, silverware, and utensils. Label cabinets and drawers





# Organization Skills—Level 3

## **Developing and maintaining organization of items**

- When putting away food, teach the child to move old food to the front and place new food behind.
- When putting away clothes for the season, label containers with what is inside the box.
- Use Seeing AI app with a sighted person to begin learning how to read labels and expiration dates.



# Household Cleaning



# Cleaning/Household Tasks

- Skills to improve putting items away
- Age-appropriate chores
- Determining the best tool for the job



# Cleaning/Household Tasks—Level 1

## Skills to improve putting items away

- Label or put symbols on the outside of container to show what belongs in the container.
- Follow 1 or 2 step directions. State the directions and have child repeat. Or use first/then boards to increase to 2-step directions.
- Specify location for toy and supplies. Keep it consistent.
- Create a routine with finished items, putting items back in place



# Cleaning/Household Tasks—Level 2

## **Age-appropriate chores**

- Use a chart to keep track of chores for each week (throwing trash away, putting dishes in sink after meals, etc.)
- Label or put symbols on the washing machine/dish washer (start button, various settings)
- Have a system for separating clothing for laundry



# Cleaning/Household Tasks—Level 3

## **Determine the best tool for the job**

- Talk about different types of chemical and how to use each safely (don't use bleach in a room with a closed door)
- Teach a systematic cleaning pattern (clean counters before floors)
- Teach how to determine the appropriate cleaning tool (size of cloth for surfaces, broom vs. duster vs. mop)



# Time Management



# Time Management Skills

- Understand order of events
- Follow a schedule or routine
- Estimate time





# Time Management Skills—Level 1

## **Understand order of events**

- Use first/then charts
- Follow simple routines
- Practice waiting for gratification of task completion



# Time Management Skills—Level 2

## **Following a schedule or routine**

- Explore types of agendas (digital, paper, etc.)
- Explore various types of clocks (large face, braille, talking, analog, digital) and understanding AM versus PM
- Identifying time and determining AM and PM



# Time Management Skills—Level 3

## Estimating time

- Estimate the time needed to complete a task, time it and compare the time estimate to the actual time necessary to complete
- 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
- Teach how to set a watch and change for time changes and timezones



# Cooking



# Cooking Skills

- Preparing foods
- Kitchen basics
- Using appliances



# Cooking Skills—Level 1

## Preparing Foods

- Stirring solids and pouring liquids
- Rinsing food items
- Practice cutting play dough and soft foods



# Cooking Skills—Level 2

## Kitchen Basics

- Gather supplies for recipes before starting to cook.
- Discuss various types of measurements. Label measuring cups/spoons/etc with braille or tactile labels
- Teach child how to use hygienic methods when preparing food. For example, washing hands after touching chicken, not licking the spoon or fingers, etc.



# Cooking Skills—Level 3

## Using appliances

- Label or put symbols on appliances. (start button, various settings on microwave/oven, etc.)
- Proper use of/and cleaning of appliances. (cleaning the turntable on the microwave, wiping out the airfryer, etc.)
- Discuss different cutting utensils and uses.





# Money Management



# Money Management Skills

- Knowing various currencies
- Making purchases
- Banking solutions



# Money Management Skills—Level 1

## **Knowing various currencies**

- Teaching the value of currency.
- Differentiating between types of coins and dollars.
- Discussing what money is used for in everyday life.



# Money Management Skills—Level 2

## Making Purchases

- Folding money for identification purposes when carrying in purse or wallet.
- Paying for small items or services (vending machine or dollar store).
- Understanding most states have sales tax and that the price tag is the base price



# Money Management Skills—Level 3

## Banking Solutions

- Taking a trip to the bank to set up savings or checking account
- Using an ATM, accessing online banking, etc.
- Balancing a checkbook

