



# Essential Life Skills To Increase Independence

Moné Davis, BCBA





**Is your child  
independent ?**





# The Benefits of Cultivating Life Skills Include:

- ❖ **Communication skills** (Gestures, making sounds, words, signing, communication device )
- ❖ **Self-help skills** (Activities of daily living like dressing, bathing, feeding, basic hygiene)
- ❖ **Social skills** (Making friends, good listener, making request, initiating interaction,)
- ❖ **Play & leisure skills** (Taking turns, sharing, )
- ❖ **Home living Skills** ( Cooking, cleaning, laundry)
- ❖ **Executive Function Skills** (Problem Solving, Job Skills)
- ❖ **Community Safety**( Stranger danger, personal information, social media, community helpers, medication management)





# The Benefits of Cultivating Life Skills Include:

## Strengthen Communication

If your child has difficulties with spoken language, a critical step for increasing independence is strengthening his or her ability to communicate by building skills and providing tools to help express preferences, desires and feelings.



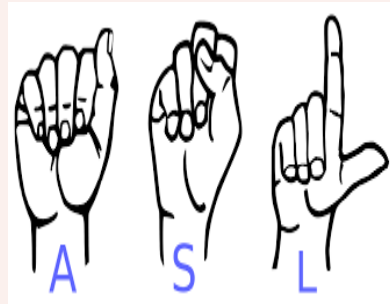
# Communication Skills

## Consider Introducing

- Alternative/Augmentative Communication (AAC) and visual supports. Common types of AAC include
  - Picture exchange communication systems (PECS)
  - Speech output devices (such as Dynavox, iPad, etc.)
    - Sign language.



**Proloquo**



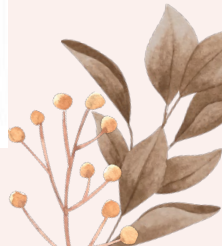
**Sign Language**



**PECS**



**Dynavox**





# Self-help skills

This is a good age to introduce self-care activities into your child's routine. Brushing teeth, combing hair and other activities of daily living (ADLs) are important life skills, and introducing them as early as possible can allow your child to master them down the line. Make sure to include these things on your child's schedule so he or she gets used to having them as part of the daily routine.













# Social skills

- Social Skills mean different things to different people.
- “Appropriate” social skills vary by age, region, and family to family
- The specific social skills to target depend on factors such as : age, cognitive skills, communication skills, behavioral skills and attending skills.
- Multi-faceted





# Social skills

- Remember, to begin....

*Focus on the small skills they can do, and not the whole they can't, then put it all together.....*

Think of how many social deficits typical adults you know have





# Social skills

- Remember, to begin....

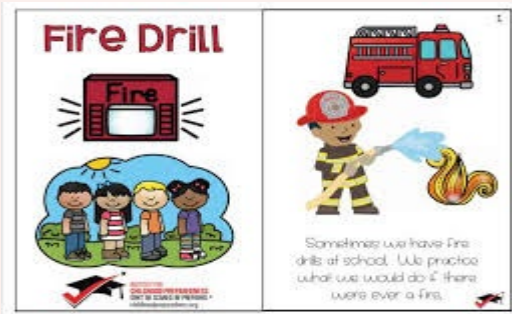
*Focus on the small skills they can do, and not the whole they can't, then put it all together.....*

Think of how many social deficits typical adults you know have



# Social Stories

- Write in first person, but don't tell the child what to do.
- Helps deal with the abstract, such as feelings, emotions, and anxieties
- Explains social situations
- Helps clarify the “social rules” and teaches the students to expect changes.





# Technology and Social Skills

- Our students tend to excel when dealing with technology
- Use it as a jumpstart
- Focus on what they are good at
- Teach all core skills (flexibility, turn taking, losing) while utilizing technology





# Play & leisure skills

- Being able to engage in independent leisure and recreation is something that will serve your child well throughout his or her life. Many people with autism have special interests in one or two subjects; it can help to translate those interests into age appropriate recreational activities.







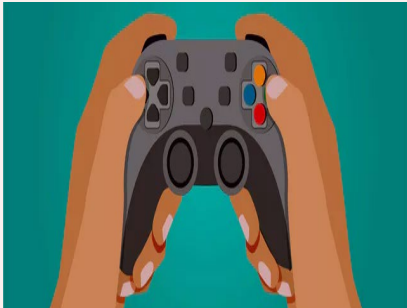
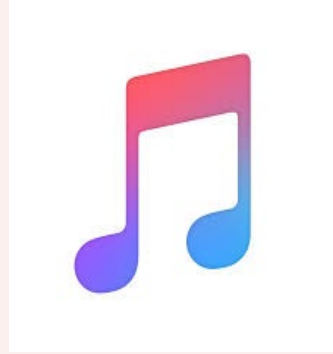
# Play & leisure skills

- TEACH CHOICE MAKING
- HAVE A LIST, PICTURES, ACTUAL ITEMS
- HAVE VARIOUS CHOICES DAILY OR WEEKLY (KNOW YOUR STUDENT). WE DO NOT WANT THEM TO BECOME BORED AND MAY LOSE INTEREST.





# INDOOR LEISURE SKILLS





# OUTDOOR LEISURE SKILLS



# Home Living Skills

## Work on Household Chores

- ❖ Household chores can teach them responsibility.
  - ❑ Getting them involved in family routine gives them useful skills to take with them as they get older.





# Personal care

## ● Daily routine

\*Proper grooming and hygiene, washing and storing clothing

\*Knowing when to seek medical care and how and when to take medication.

\*Chores

**SELF-CARE FOR TWEENS**

**MORNING:**  
Brush & floss teeth  
Comb & style hair  
Apply deodorant  
Get dressed,  
(Remember clean underwear & socks)

**AFTER SCHOOL:**  
Shower (with soap)  
Wash hair (with shampoo)  
Comb & style hair  
Apply deodorant  
Get dressed,  
(Remember clean underwear & socks)

**BEFORE BED:**  
Shower (with soap)  
Wash hair (with shampoo),  
(If you played sports)  
Brush & floss teeth  
Put on PJs  
Go to the bathroom

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?!**

**WOW!**

**THE END.**

Mama In The Now

Old school

Notizen

1. Februar 2020 um 16:02

**Daily Routine** ❤️

6:00-6:10 Wake up 🌞  
6:10-6:30 Breakfast 🍳  
6:30-6:40 Face Routine 🧴  
6:40-6:50 Outfit & Hair 👗  
6:50-7:00 Go to the bus 🚌  
7:00-13:00 **SCHOOL** 🎒  
13:00-15:00 Lunch & Freetime 🍷  
15:00-16:30 Homework & learning 📖  
16:30-17:00 Freetime ✨  
17:00-18:00 Workout 🏃  
18:00-19:00 Dinner 🍲  
19:00-20:00 Shower & Face/Hair/  
Body-Routine 🧴  
20:00-22:00 Reading/Music/Phone  
time 📱  
22:00 Sleep 😴

Share notes on iphones

Today Done

8:00  
9:00  
10:00  
11:00  
12:00  
1:00

Home  
School  
Home  
Home

Now 8:19

Ride the bus

Schedule by Enuma



# Money Skills

- **Practice Money Skills**
- Learning how to use money is a very important skill that can help your child become independent when out and about in the community.
- When you are with your child in a store or supermarket, allow him and her to hand over the money to the cashier. Step by step, you can teach each part of this process. Your child can then begin using these skills in different settings in the community.







# Money Skills

## Teach Different Types of Money Skills

No matter what abilities your child currently has, there are ways that he or she can begin to learn money skills.

Teach how to use a bank card.



Teach how to use apple pay.



# PREPARING A SIMPLE MEAL

Having a wide range of kitchen related skills allows learners to independently obtain food and drinks as desired and makes it possible for the learner to participate with others in the preparation of meals.






# Cooking or Food Skills

- Buying groceries is essential to cook. One of the important skills here is to be able to identify different ingredients and know where they are available.

Knowledge about utensils, cutlery, and how to use them.

Teach your teen the basics of cooking a decent meal using simple ingredients.

Storing food in the right way. You want your children to know where and how to store different food products like fresh produce, packaged food, and liquids.



# Community Safety





# Community Safety

- Safety is a big concern for many families, especially as children become more independent.

Teach and practice travel training including pedestrian safety, identifying signs and other important safety markers; and becoming familiar with public transportation.

Consider having your child carry an ID card which can be very helpful to provide his or her name, a brief explanation of his or her diagnosis, and a contact person.

## Teach using google maps. (Walking Feature)



Find My iPhone



Apple air tag





# Self-Awareness and Self-Confidence

- Identify their emotional, physical, and psychological needs.
- Focus on developing their sense of **self-esteem**.

## **\*Give the freedom to make choices**

This enables them to be the decision-maker and enables them to be in control of their decisions.

## **\*Teach Self-advocacy skills**


It is essential for a child to know about their disability and how and when to disclose their needs to others.





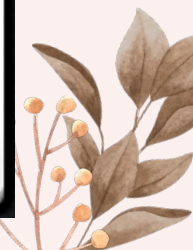


What we teach	Where we go	Goal
Following directions	Post Office or Mail box	Get in and out of van safely to mail letter
Taking turns	Dollar Store	Wait in line to get hair clips
Money skills	Restaurant	Pay bill by exchanging dollars
Functional academics	Building/locker with keypad doors	Obtain code and entire numbers in before opening door





What we teach	Where we go	Goal
Following directions	Post Office or Mail box	Get in and out of van safely to mail letter
Taking turns	Dollar Store	Wait in line to get hair clips
Money skills	Restaurant	Pay bill by exchanging dollars
Functional academics	Building/locker with keypad doors	Obtain code and entire numbers in before opening door





# Prompts(teaching tool).

Prompts are something we add to a situation to increase the likelihood of our child responding correctly

Prompting isn't bad but should be faded.

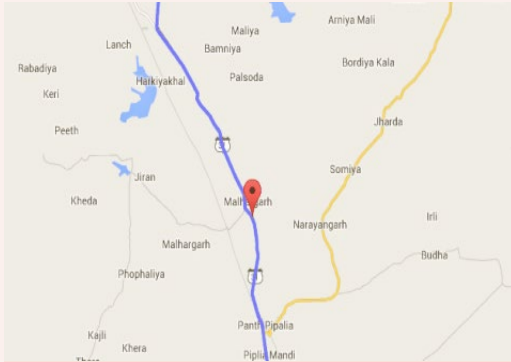
I use prompts all the time.



Verbal  
Physical  
Visuals  
Gestural  
Modeling

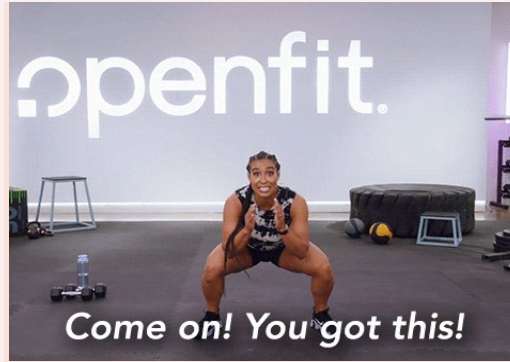


# Examples



## **GPS**

Visual Prompt  
Verbal Prompt



## **Workout Instructor**

Model Prompt  
Verbal Prompt



## **Cooking**

Model Prompt  
Verbal Prompt

**Fading prompts is as important as using the prompts**



## What is prompt dependence?

- Prompt dependence is when a child needs a prompt in order to initiate a skill or activity.

## Why is being prompt dependent bad?

- As a parent you aren't going to be with your child forever. We want them to be successful alone. We want them to not need us.

**\*Not all prompts are bad.**

**Everyone needs prompting to learn new skills – even us!**





## Prompt dependence?

- Prompt dependence is when a child needs a prompt in order to initiate a skill or activity.

## Why is being prompt dependent bad?

- As a parent you aren't going to be with your child forever. We want them to be successful alone. We want them to not need us.

**\*Not all prompts are bad.**

**Everyone needs prompting to learn new skills – even us!**







# Strategies for Teaching Life Skills

Now that you know *what* you want to teach your child, let's talk about *how* to teach them. There are a number of different strategies for teaching a skill.

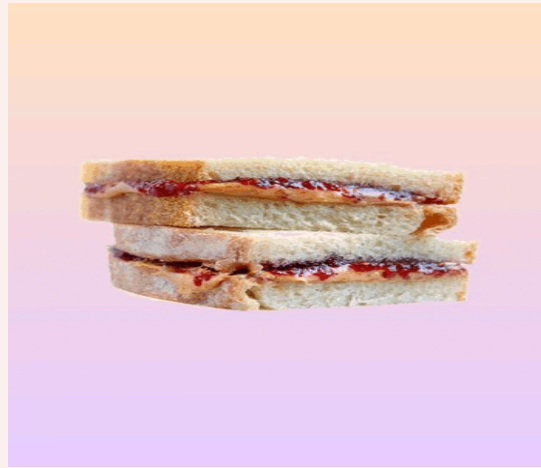
## Task Analysis

- The process of breaking a skill down into smaller steps.
- Teach each step individually until they are mastered and come together as a sequence called "chaining".
- Customize the steps into the smallest action that is needed for each individual.
  - Take into consideration the age, skill level, and prior experience of the person.





# Making a Sandwich





1. Gets bread from bread box
2. Places bread on counter
3. Gets peanut butter from cabinet
4. Places peanut butter beside bread on counter
5. Gets Jelly from refrigerator
6. Places beside bread on counter
7. Gets plate from cabinet
8. Places beside bread on counter
9. Gets knife from drawer
10. Places knife beside bread
11. Opens bread bag
12. Takes out two slices of bread
13. Closes bread bag
14. Places slices of bread on plate
15. Takes knife in dominant hand
16. Dips knife into peanut butter
17. Spreads peanut butter on bread

18. Dips knife into jelly
19. Spreads jelly on bread
20. Places knife on counter
21. Picks up one slice of bread at top and bottom of slice with both hands
22. Turns slice of bread over so peanut butter side faces down
23. Places slice of bread to match slice of bread on plate
24. Picks up knife in dominant hand
25. Holds sandwich with non-dominant hand
26. Cuts sandwich in half using sawing motion
27. Places knife in sink
28. Puts bread, peanut butter and jelly away in appropriate places





# Fading Support

- Learners who have acquired skills in community and now are working on parent fading support.
- This includes distance and prompting of parent, as well as fading of visual aides if possible.

**Example:** Student can independently make a purchase with parent directly next to them, now parent beings to fade behind him/her by 2 feet.





# Fading Support

- Learners who have acquired skills in community and now are working on parent fading support.
- This includes distance and prompting of parent, as well as fading of visual aides if possible.

**Example:** Student can independently make a purchase with parent directly next to them, now parent beings to fade behind him/her by 2 feet.





# Remember

- If the student never learns to do ---- for him/herself, someone will always have to do it for them
- Address problem behavior right away, this is the biggest roadblock to the community
- Make sure learning has occurred by:
  - Fading prompts
  - Reinforcement
  - Parent proximity





# Assessments

Home Skills

Community Participation Skills

Independent Living Skills

Vocational Skills

Basic Living Skills







# Reference

<https://www.lumierechild.com/lumiere-childrens-therapy/what-skills-can-your-child-learn-in-aba-therapy>

- Brealey, B., Yoder, S., (1998). Middle schoolers learn community skills. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 30*, 12-18.
- McDonnell, J., Hardman, M., Hightower J., Keifer-Odonnell, R., & Drew, C., (1993). Impact of Community-based instruction on the development of adaptive behavior of secondary-level students with mental retardation. *American Journal of Mental Retardation, 97*, 575-584.
- Morse, T., & Schuster, J. (2000). Teaching elementary students with moderate intellectual disabilities how to shop for groceries. *Exceptional Children, 66*, 273-288.
- Caldwell social skills

