

Why are self-help skills important for your child?

- To become as independent as possible
- These skills are the daily challenges we all face
- When children can do things for themselves it helps them feel good about themselves
- When children can do things for themselves it helps others view them in a positive light

It is also important that children take responsibility for themselves for the sake of their sense of control over their lives and their self-esteem.

Parents should train their children to do these daily habits for self care

- Eat their food on their own
- Put away their food plate after eating
- Brush their teeth regularly
- Shower to clean the body
- Wash and comb hair daily
- Wash hands when needed to maintain cleanliness
- Toilet training
- Wear clean clothes and change undergarments daily



* The extent to which the child can do these daily tasks will depend upon the child's ability and developmental challenges present.

Tips for self-help training of your child

- Self help training should be **on-going** and regular

You should always be thinking about developing your child's independence.

- Don't baby** your child when teaching skills

Parents sometimes feel they are helping their child by constantly supervising daily tasks, but you are not helping them if you keep them from learning to do things for themselves.

There is always the temptation to help the child because it is quicker.

- Be **consistent** and **time-sensitive** when teaching skills

Self-helps skills are time sensitive. E.g. brushing or bathing in the morning. Being consistent will help your child learn how to do skills but also when they should be performed.

- Observe** when your child has mastered a skill and move on

If a child has mastered a skill, don't help them; you can make them dependent on your support and prompts. Something as simple as always asking a child, "Do you need the toilet?", can become a prompt. You have to fade that prompt as soon as possible.

- Once a target is achieved don't stop there. You have to continue to **add targets**

Remember that just teaching beginning self help skills is not enough. Keep adding targets.

e.g. once your child can dress himself, can he dress himself with you out of the room? Can he dress quickly? Can he pick out his own clothes? Can he independently change out of those clothes, take a bath and get and put on pajamas?

Note to parent – If you need help getting your child to perform his/her own daily living activities, you may seek guidance from an occupational therapist.

Please view our video of occupational therapist Ms.Snehal Vaidhya on how occupational therapy can help your child gain daily living skills - <http://www.nayi-disha.org/article/parent-empowerment-workshop-occupational-therapy-daily-living>

Acquisition of self-help skills in children -

These are **the average timelines of milestones achieved by children with DS** at DSFI centre. Please remember every child is an unique individual **and might achieve milestones at his/her own pace**

	D.S.Children	Other Children
Responsive Smile	1.5 - 5 months	1 - 3 months
Finger Feeds	10 - 24 months	7 - 14 months
Drinks From Cup (Unassisted)	12 - 32 months	9 - 17 months
Uses Spoon	13 - 39 months	12 - 20 months
Bowel Control	2 - 7 years	16 - 42 months
Dresses Self (Unassisted)	3.5 - 8.5 years	3.25 - 5 years



She knew where she wanted to go
and came to trust that steps,
rather than speed,
were the way she wanted to get there.

Achieving independence in self-help skills

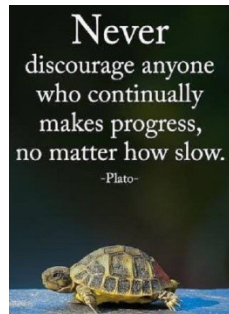
Eating their food

Feeds self with biscuit	10 months (range 6 - 14m)
Drinks from a cup	20 months (range 12 - 30m)
Uses spoon and fork	20 months (range 12 - 36m)
Can make a sandwich	50% at 11 - 20 years
Can make a cup of tea/coffee	46% at 11 - 20 years
Can use microwave	24% at 11 - 20 years
Can lay and clear table	80% at 11 - 20 years
Can eat in a restaurant	100% at 11 - 20 years



Trust the steps, never mind the speed

Achieving independence in self-help skills



Toilet training

Dry during the day	36 months (range 18 - 50m)
Bowel control	36 months (range 20 - 60m)
Dry at night	60% at 7 - 14 years
Use toilet/potty without help	4 - 5 years
Fully continent, day and night	98% at 11 - 20 years
Washes unaided	60% at 12 - 20 years
Can brush hair	95% at 8 -14 years
Does brush own hair	45% at 12 - 20 years
Can wash hair	34% at 14 - 22 years
Can have a bath	50% at 12-20
Can cut toe and fingernails	9% at 16-24

Achieving independence in self-help skills

Development of motor skills

*your speed
doesn't matter
forward
is
forward*



Walks alone	23 months (range 13 - 48m)
Climbs/descends stairs unaided	81 months (range 60 - 96m)
Can ride a bike	35% at 11 - 20 years
Can throw and catch a ball	98% at 11 - 20 years
Dressing	
Dresses self partially (not fastenings)	4 - 5 years
Dresses without help	80% at 11 - 20 years
Chooses appropriate clothes	70% at 11 - 20 years
Practical/Social	
Can tell the time	20% at 11 - 20 years
Can count simple amounts of money	40% at 11 - 20 years
Can go to shop alone	26% at 11 - 20 years
Crosses road alone	40% at 11 - 20 years

This content has been developed by the Down Syndrome Federation of India (DSFI) and designed by Nayi Disha Resource Centre

DSFI, is a parent support group started by Dr. Surekha Ramachandran in order to help persons with Down syndrome and their families to come to terms with Down syndrome. <http://www.downsyndrome.in/about-dsfi.php>

Nayi Disha Resource Centre is an online information resource platform that supports families of persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). <http://www.nayi-disha.org>