Book 5. CHORES AND SELF-HELP (FAMILY LIVING) SKILLS

Martin Kozloff

**1. WHAT THIS SKILL AREA IS ABOUT**

We started working on Chores and Self-help Skills in Chapter Eighteen in the book on Learning Readiness. We called them Life Skills. Other names for these skills are functional skills, daily living skills, family life skills, and adaptive skills. We worked on   
1. Shopping.  
2. Getting out of the car.   
3. Getting in the car.  
4. Car seat buckling.  
5. Dressing.   
6. Toileting.   
7. Tooth brushing.   
8. Bedtime.

This book reviews some of these and works on a few more.

Note: This book and Chapter Eighteen in the book on Learning Readiness cover only a few skills, to model what effective instruction looks like and to get you started. There are hundreds of resources; some are noted at the end of the book.

You know why it’s important to teach Chores and Self-HelpSkills. First, a child learns to hook up smaller behaviors into a *routine.* Instead of cooperating with one simple request (for example, to put something away), he may be (1) unscrewing the toothpaste cap; (2) rinsing the toothbrush; (3) squeezing toothpaste onto the brush; (4) putting down the toothpaste; (5) moving the brush up and down and back and forth across his teeth; (6) rinsing his mouth and rinsing the brush; (7) screwing the cap back on the toothpaste; and (8) putting the toothbrush away. By learning a longer routine---a *sequence* or *chain* of steps---the child learns to *remember* what comesnext, to *organize* her behavior (“Now I load the brush”), and to learn other *complex* behaviors. For instance, a child can transfer steps and movements in sweeping a floor to raking leaves, swinging a hockey stick, and using a hoe to make a trench for planting flowers.

Second, when a child does chores and self-help tasks with more skill, more often, in many places, and more on his own, it takes a load off parents, brothers and sisters, and teachers who might otherwise have to do these things for him. At the same time, the child starts to help out---to take part in family and classroom life. “Jimmy’s starting to join in. A little bit, but it’s really big to us! He’s more plugged into our life!”

Third, chores and self-help tasks are constructive ways to spend time and energy. Tito says, “I’m bored.” Dad says, “Me, too. Let’s get these leaves outa here so we can plants tomatoes!” Steven Rogers is wandering around the house, looking spacy. Mom says, “Steven. C’mere. Let’s make chocolate pudding.”

Fourth, a child may need certain Life Skills and Chore and Self-Help skills (such as toileting) to get into school. Finally, doing everyday tasks increases a child’s participation in family life---she contributes to how things get done. So *as soon as you can (and the child is ready), start teaching Chores and Self-help Skills.*

Before we go on, let’s review Chapter Eighteen in the book on Learning Readiness.

There are lots of examples in Chapter Eighteen and below, of parents teaching Chores and Self-help Skills. Please think about---and make a list of--- how you might use these!!

Okay, let’s see how ready the child is!

**2. LET’S EVALUATE CHORES AND SELF-HELP SKILLS**

We’ll evaluate two things: (1) how a child does chores and self-help skills; and (2) where and when a child might do chores and self-skills in the family’s daily life. First, let’s look at the child.

*Think about how your child does Chores and Self-help tasks.* Which ones does she do---even a little? How cooperative and attentive? How well does she do the steps and the movements that are IN steps? How often does she try to do these on her own? You might spend a few days taking notes on how it goes when you try to get your child to do, or to teach her to do, the chores and self-help skills below.

**CSH1. THE CHILD HELPS IN THE HOME OR SCHOOL BY DOING SIMPLE TASKS**, such as bringing and putting away everyday objects. (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. Child (often; sometimes; rarely; never) does simple tasks on his own, or joins in when he sees other persons doing them.

Please list simple tasks that your child does pretty well on his own or with other persons. It’s a good idea to give plenty of opportunities and reinforcement for these, and to plan how to increase your child’s skill by teaching and firming up steps and the movement elements in steps.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

b. Child (often; sometimes; rarely; never) does simple tasks when asked.

Please list the ones the child is Please list the ones the child is  
 more likely to do when asked. less likely to do when asked.

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

4. 4.

5. 5.

Make sure to give plenty of We can use Grandma’s Law  
 opportunities and to increase these. “As soon as

reinforcement. (you, we) put on your sneakers,   
 (you, we) can go outside.”

c. Child needs (no prompting or help; a little prompting; a great deal of prompting) when doing simple tasks.

d. When you try toteach the child or get him to do a simple task, he usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half-hearted try; often just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

e. Child (has a great deal coordination; has average coordination; is a bit clumsy; is very clumsy) when he tries to do steps in simple tasks.

(1) List movement elements (such as picking things up, placing them in or on something) that the child does fairly well.

(2) List movement elements (such as picking things up, placing them in or on something) that the child does not do well.

We can increase skill at these movements using Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, and the book on Motor Imitation.

**CSH2. THE CHILD HELPS IN THE HOME OR SCHOOL BY DOING MORE COMPLEX TASKS AND CHORES** (such as making beds, setting a table, cleaning the table, washing dishes, taking out the trash, putting chairs around the table) on his own, often. (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a.Child (often; sometimes; rarely; never) does more complex chores on his own, or joins in when he sees others doing them.

b. Child (often; sometimes; rarely; never) does complex tasks when asked.

Please list the ones the child Please list the ones the child

is more likely to do. Is less likely to do.

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

4. 4.

5. 5.

Make sure to give plenty of We can use Grandma’s Law  
 opportunities and to increase these. “As soon as (you, reinforcement. we) take out the trash, (you, we)   
 will have ice cream.”

c.Child needs (no prompting or help; a little prompting; a great deal of prompting) when doing more complex chores.

d.When you try toteach the child or get him to do a more complex chore, he usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half- hearted try; often just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

e. Child (has a great deal coordination; has average coordination; is a bit clumsy; is very clumsy) when he tries to do steps in more complex chores.

(1) List movement elements (such as picking things up, placing them in or on something) that the child does fairly well.

(2) List movement elements (such as picking things up, placing them in or on something) that the child does not do well.

We can increase skill at these movements using Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, and the book on Motor Imitation.

The following are examples of *self-help tasks* that the child can be taught. They are listed starting with tasks that are easiest for most children.

**CSH3. THE CHILD FEEDS HERSELF WITH THE RIGHT UTENSILS. (CIRCLE AS MANY AS APPLY, AND UNDERLINE.)**

a. How many utensils does the child know how to feed herself with well? (spoon, fork, knife, cup or glass, none)

b. Child (often; sometimes; rarely; never) feeds herself with the utensils she knows how to use.

c. When you try to teach the child or get her to eat with the right utensils, she usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half- hearted try; often just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

d. What mealtime problems does the child have? (keeps leaving the table; eats only certain foods; east too fast or slow; has a hard time with certain movement elements in using utensils; none of these). (Underline as many as apply.)

(1) List movement elements (such as grasping utensils, scooping with a spoon) the child does fairly well.

(2) List movement elements (such as grasping utensils, scooping with a spoon) the child does not do fairly well.

We can increase skill at these movements using Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, and the book on Motor Imitation.

**CSH4. THE CHILD UNDRESSES HERSELF. (CIRCLE AS MANY AS APPLY, AND UNDERLINE.)**

a. Child can take off (all or most of; a few pieces of; none of) her clothes by herself.

b. How often does the child, by herself, take off the clothes she is able to? (always or almost always; about half the time; once in a while; never)

c. Child needs (no prompting; a little prompting; a great deal of prompting) when putting on her clothes.

d. When you try to teach or get the child to put on her clothes, she usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half­ hearted try; just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

e. Child (has a great deal coordination; has average coordination; is a bit clumsy; is very clumsy) when undressing.

(1) List movement elements (such as grasping clothing, stepping out of pants; pulling shoes off of feet) the child does fairly well.

(2) List movement elements (such as grasping clothing, stepping out of pants; pulling shoes off of feet) the child does not do fairly well.

We can increase skill at these movements using Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, and the book on Motor Imitation.

**CSH5. THE CHILD DRESS HERSELF.** (Circle as many as apply, and underline. )

a. Child puts on (all or most of; a few pieces of; none of) her clothes by herself.

b. How often does the child, by herself, put on the clothes she is able to? (always or almost always; about half the time; once in a while; never)

c. Child needs (no prompting; a little prompting; a great deal of prompting) when putting on her clothes.

d. When you try to teach or get the child to put on her clothes, she usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half­ hearted try; just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

e. Child (has a great deal coordination; has average coordination; is a bit clumsy; is very clumsy) when she dresses.

(1) List movement elements (such as grasping clothing, pulling up pants or socks, shoving feet into shoes) the child does fairly well.

(2) List movement elements (such as grasping clothing, pulling up pants or socks, shoving feet into shoes) the child does not do fairly well.

We can increase skill at these movements using Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, and the book on Motor Imitation.

**CSH6. THE CHILD WASHES AND DRIES HIS FACE AND HANDS.** (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. Child (often; sometimes; rarely; never) does this on his own.

b. Child needs (no help or prompting; a little prompting; a great deal of prompting) when doing this.

c. When you try to teach or get the child to do this, he usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half-hearted try; just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

d. Child (has a great deal coordination; has average coordination; is a bit clumsy; is very clumsy) when washing and drying face and hands.

(1) List movement elements (such as grasping wash cloth, soaping wash cloth, wiping face) the child does fairly well.

(2) List movement elements (such as grasping wash cloth, soaping wash cloth, wiping face) the child does not do fairly well.

We can increase skill at these movements using Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, and the book on Motor Imitation.

**CSH7. THE CHILD BRUSHES HIS TEETH.** (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. Child (often; sometimes; rarely, never) brushes his teeth on his own.

b. Child needs (no help or prompting; a little prompting; a great deal of prompting) when brushing his teeth.

c. When you try to teach or get the child to brush his teeth, he usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half­ hearted try; just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

d. Child (has a great deal coordination; has average coordination; is a bit clumsy; is very clumsy) when brushing teeth.

(1) List movement elements (such as grasping toothbrush, squeezing toothpaste, moving brush against teeth) the child does fairly well.

(2) List movement elements (such as grasping toothbrush, squeezing toothpaste, moving brush against teeth) the child does not do fairly well.

We can increase skill at these movements using Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, and the book on Motor Imitation.

**CSH8. THE CHILD IS TOILET TRAINED.** (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. Child uses the toilet by himself and rarely or never has an

“accident.”

b. Child has an “accident” once in a while.

c. Child has many “accidents” and does not seem to know or care about using the toilet.

d. When you try to teach the child or get him to use the toilet, he usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half-hearted try; just ignores you; puts up a fuss).

Let’s summarize.

**CSH9. THE CHILD DOES MANY SELF-HELP TASKS** **(SUCH AS DRESSING, WASHING, AND USING THE TOILET) ON HIS OWN, OFTEN.** (Circle as many as apply, and underline.)

a. Child does (many; a few; really no) self-help tasks on his own.

b. Child needs (no prompting; a little prompting; a great deal

of prompting) on self-help tasks.

c. Child usually (cooperates and pays attention; makes a half­hearted try; ignores you; puts up a fuss) when you try to teach him or get him to do self-help tasks.

*Now let’s look at your family’s daily life, to find times and places where your child can use and contribute her chore and self-help (life) skills.* Let’s answer three questions.

1. What are typical days in the family?

2. Can you identify times, places, and family activities where you can teach your child chores and self-help (life) skills?

3. Can you modify family activities so that your child more easily joins in?

An easy way to answer these questions is to take notes on what is going on at different times. Put that information on a table. Then we can answer the other two questions. For instance….

**Table 1. A Typical Day**

1. Time of Day. 2. What Child Could Do to: 3. How to Modify to Make it   
 What’s the activity? a. Learn task. Easier to Teach or for Child  
 Who’ doing what? b. Contribute. to Do.  
 Where?

For example. Lay out his own clothes. Make a neat pile of Jimmy’s  
 Morning. Getting Get dressed. clothes for the day. Put on top  
 Jimmy dressed. of his dresser. He moves the pile to his bed and spreads  
 out the items. Then we work on dressing.

Here are examples. Can you use these?

*What Children Can Learn*. *How They Can Join In.*

Turning appliances on and off on request--perhaps as a reinforcer.

Putting items in a shopping cart---reinforced with a treat in the check-out line.  
Pushing cart to the car.

Putting dirty clothes in basket to take downstairs to washer.

Running a vacuum cleaner.

Helping prepare meals by getting utensils and ingredients on request. Also a good opportunity to work on naming and identifying.

Putting letters in or taking mail out of the mailbox.

Bringing mail from the mailbox to the front door.

Hanging up own clothes---on hooks, on hangers.

Putting own clothes in drawers.

Now, how can we change the *order of tasks and activities* so that a child can more easily learn them and do them? For instance,

Help Nancy to pick her school clothes before breakfast to avoid the rush and fuss.

Follow harder, longer, or less enjoyable tasks (chores, spelling lessons, dressing) with easier, shorter, or more enjoyable ones (reading, music). Grandma’s Law.

Have Steven help clear the supper table at home and the snack table at school before he can do a more enjoyable activity.

Have Mark hang up his coat and put away his school lunch box before he can go to his desk at school or have a snack when he comes home.

Bedtime at Tommy’s house is stressful in part because there are so many tasks to do. So, have Tommy’s bath earlier and then let him stay up for a little television or a story reading before bed.

Okay, now let’s use the information, above, to plan teaching.

**3. PLANNING HOW TO TEACH CHORES AND SELF- HELP SKILLS**

Before we begin, let’s review what we did in the book on Learning Readiness.

1. Chapter Seven. Firm up your knowledge of our basic teaching methods, and how to teach routines.  
2. Chores and Self-Help skills are routines. They have steps, and each step uses certain elements (concepts, such as “push”; rules, such as “use both hands”; and movements, such as pushing, holding). We use knowledge analysis to identify the steps and elements in a routine, and then we firm these up before we teach the routine. So, please read Chapter Eight, sections 1 and 2.  
3. Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness tells how to firm up movements used in routines. Please check your evaluations, above, to see which movement elements to firm up, using methods in Chapter Sixteen. See the sections on: (1) Tips For Teaching; (2) Arms And Hands Movements LR3.19-32; and (3) Play Routines and Daily Living Routines LR3.33-59, on how to assess and teach movement elements!

4. Chapter Eighteen, on Life Skills, to remember examples of teaching.

Take Your Time Reviewing.

**Guidelines for Planning Teaching Programs**

This skill area integrates the Learning Readiness, Motor Imitation, Verbal Imitation, and Functional Speech skills shown on Table 3-1 in Chapter Three of the Book on Learning Readiness. Each skill we taught earlier is important by itself. For example, looking at other persons, cooperating, moving arms and legs skillfully, playing, speaking. But it all leads to this area---Chores and Self-help Skills. So, we’ll make sure that we are ready to teach! Here are guidelines, along with materials to review.

1. *Problem behaviors* (whining, looking away, not cooperating) make it hard for you to teach, and hard for your child to learn desirable behaviors. So, let’s be alert *not to* *accidentally reinforce problem behaviors* by looking, staring, telling the child to stop, repeating requests over and over, giving the child something to distract or to soothe her, dropping a request or stopping an activity to which the child is reacting. As much as possible, (1) ignore what you don’t want; (2) wait; and as much as possible, (3) reinforce what you DO want. Skim Chapter Ten in the book on Learning Readiness for examples of families using this rule.

2. *What is the skill or smaller task that we will work on?* Describe it as behavior/movement. For example,

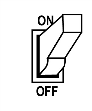
*Put small things in a waste basket.* “I will get Pearl to look at me. I will point-touch a wad of paper by the waste basket. Pearl will look at it. I will say, ‘Put paper IN basket.’ Pearl will reach for the paper, grasp it, lift it, move it over the waste basket, and release her grip.” I will teach all the steps at once*,* using *model* (“Watch Momma put paper IN the basket.)*; lead* (“Momma AND Pearl put paper in the basket.”), *test/check* (“Now, PEARL put paper in the basket)*-tag* (click)*-reinforce* (hug)*-verify.* “Yes, paper IN the basket!”

Would this be a good task for your child?

3. *Break Down the Target Chore or Self-Help Task-Routine into Small Steps.* Please skim Chapter Eight in the book on Learning Readiness to firm up your knowledge of **knowledge analysis**. We need it now! Here’s what we do when we plan how to teach.

a. We list the *steps* in a simple task (turn on a wall light switch) or a self- help skill (brush teeth). We do the routine ourselves and write what we do!  
b. Along with the steps (“First I do this… Then I do the next…”) we think of the *elements* needed to do each step. What elements? Two kinds.  
 (1) *Concepts/words* that your child needs to know---pull, lift, put it, in, open, tight, slowly, basket, fold, push, slowly, up.

(2) Also *movements* your child needs to do. For example, to flip the wall switch to on, you raise your arm UP at the shoulder; reach UP for the light switch while watching your hand move; extend your fingers; touch the bottom of the switch lever and push it UP to turn the lights on.



c. Now we check to see if the child knows (responds to) the words (“up.”) and if the child does the movements. Look at your evaluation of your child, above, to see if you listed any weak elements. “Okay. What if I find out that my child needs work on words/concepts or movements that are part of the task?” Easy…

d. We pre-teach, or we review and firm up, (1) needed words and (2) needed movements **before** we teach the new routine. Why? The main thing we want to teach is the steps---what you do--in a sequence. We don’t want to be teaching both the steps AND all the words and movement elements at the same time. Too big a load for you and for your child. So, we check out the following.  
 (1) Chapter Eighteen, in the book on Learning Readiness, shows how to teach the elements of Life Skills.   
 (2) Chapter Sixteen, in the book on Learning Readiness, shows how to teach and firm up movements.

(3) The books on Verbal Imitation and Functional Speech show how to teach concepts/words. For instance, we might use   
 (a) *One example*.“This is a crease.” “This is UP.” We’ll use more examples each time we practice the task.  
 (b) A *synonym.* “A sleeve is where you push your arm in.”  
 (c) A *definition plus examples*. “This is a spoon. Spoons have a grabber [point-touch the handle], a scooper [point-touch], and you use them to   
 put food in your mouth, like this…. [show] Here are spoons. Let’s see the grabber, the scooper, and how you put food in your mouth.”

*Here’s an example of firming movement elements before we teach a task.*

Ma Ironton wants Pearl to put things in the trash. She checks to see how well Pearl already does this. Uh oh! Pearl does not grip the items firmly. So, Mom works on *picking up, holding, and moving things with a tighter grip*. They squeeze a rubber duck (the squeak is the reinforcer), a wet wash cloth (dripping water is the reinforcer) and bananas---Pearl likes them mushy. Now Mom teaches the task *with* the firmed up tight-grip movement.

4. At first, we teach a child to do simple tasks; for instance, Pearl puts stuff in a waste basket, and Jimmy flips the wall switch on. As the child gets better at simple tasks, we help the child to: (a) link simple tasks into longer *activities*; and to (b) use more *functional speech* to guide and describe what she and other persons are doing. For example…

a. *Link (do) simple tasks into a sequence to form an activity.* For instance,   
 (1) At first, (a) Nancy learns to put her socks in her sock drawer; (b) then socks and shirts in the drawer; then (c) socks, shirts, and pants in the drawer; then (d) socks, shirts, pants in the drawer, and shoes in the closet. Nancy has linked simple tasks into the activity of “putting my clothes away.”

(2) At first (a) Tommy gets his plate, glass, and fork off the nearby counter, and puts each item on his placemat; then (b) he learns to get plates, glasses and forks for himself and for Dad, to set his own place, and then to set Dad’s place; then (c) he gets plates, glasses and forks for himself, Dad, and Mom, sets his own place, and then sets the places of Dad and Mom. Tommy now does the activity of setting the table. Yes, it takes time for Tommy to learn the whole chain. But there’s no rush! Slowly but surely! For Tommy, even step 1 is a great change.  
 (3) One more. Ma Rogers (a) takes items out of the shopping bags and hands them to Steven. She points to a shelf in the fridge and says, “Steven. PUT on shelf.” When Steven becomes fluent at this little task (50 items and five days later), Ma (b) teaches him to take items out of the shopping bags on the kitchen table, and put them in the fridge. When he is good at this (one week later), Ma (c) teaches him to carry a shopping bag from the car and into the kitchen, to put his bag on the table, to take items out of his bag, and to put the items in the fridge. Steven is doing the activity of “putting groceries away.” And all this follows from Steven’s learning the earlier life skill of shopping with Mom, in Chapter Eighteen in the book on Learning Readiness.

So, when we plan how to teach simple tasks, we will also think ahead about how we will help a child to link tasks together to make a longer ACTIVITY. Perhaps you can use the examples above!

b. *Teach a child more functional speech.* At first, we’ll teach only the words/concepts/names needed to do a new task routine—pull, sleeve, paper, shelf, on, basket, put in, crease, spoon, mat, table. But (1) as a child does a task again and again as the days go by; and (2) as we link simple tasks into activities, *we will teach new functional speech so that the child understands and communicates about what we are doing.* For instance,

“The iron is *hot*. What is the iron? *hot.* Yup, the iron IS hot.”  
 “Watch. I fold it FLAT. [pat pat. Flat] Now, YOU fold it flat…. How did you fold it? *flat.* Yup, you fold it FLAT!”  
 “Can of *peaches.* Look at the picture. [point-touch]. Peaches. Say peaches…. *peashh …* Yes, peeCHes. Pick up the can of peeCHes*.*”

“Now we take bags OUT of the car…. Say, ouuut. *ouuut.* Yes, bags OUUUT.”  
 “Now we CARRY the bags. Carrryyy. Say caarryyy. *crreee.* Again. cccaaarrryyy. *carrr.* Yes, caaarrryyy…. Now YOU caaarrryyy the bag.”  
 “This [point-touch] is a mat. Say, mmmaaat. *mmaat.* Yes, mmmaat. Plate, fork, glass ON the MAT.”   
 “Let’s stack two cans. Let’s count. One can…. Two cans…Put one can [point-touch] ON the shelf…. Yes, ON the shelf. Now put TWO can [point- touch] ON TOP….Yes, we stack TWO canzzzz. One can…Say oooonnne. *One.* Yes, ONE can…. TWO canzzz…. Say twooo. *Twooo.* Yes, TWO canzzz.”  
 “Now we *shut* the drawer. *Shut* the drawer. What are we doing? *shshs*… Yes, shshshut the drawer.”

So when we plan how to teach a task, *we will list words/concept/names to add as we go along*. JUST A FEW. We will use our methods in the book on Verbal Imitation to teach the child HOW to say the words, and we will use the book on Functional Speech to teach the child to DO what the words *mean* (what they point to), and to USE words to answer questions, to ask, and to describe. *We will review our words each next time we do a task.* “This is a mat. MMAAT. What is this?.... *mat*…Yes, mat. This is your glass. Glass. What is this?... *gasss.* Listen. gLLLLass. Say, gLLLass. *gyass….*Yes, gLLLass.” [Now we know that we have to firm up the lll sound!]

5. In addition to rewards like praise, hugs, and activities (“As soon as you put on your coat, you can go outside.”), we will *use TAGTeach to help you and your child to focus on the exact right movements.* Please review TAGTeach in Chapter Seven in the book on Learning Readiness. We will use TAGTeach in three ways.  
a. *Sometimes we will tag-reinforce-verify when the child does the last step in a short routine.* Pearl drops her wad of paper into the waste basket. We want her to feel her fingers letting go, and we want her to see the paper wad fall. 🡪 Tag-reinforce-“Yes, put in!”

b. *We will also tag-reinforce-verify when we pre-teach or review/firm up movements needed in a routine*. For example, Dad *first* teaches Tommy to carry plates to the table, which is one step in the task of setting his place. Dad says, “That a way!” as Tommy carries the plates. IN a few seconds, Dad tag- reinforces as Tommy puts the plates down. “Yes, plates ON the table”---the tag point. After a few practice runs on this *one element* (carrying and putting the plates on the table) Tommy and Dad work on the whole Tommy-sets-his- place routine.

c. *And we will tag-reinforce-verify to shape/improve hard movements IN a routine* ***while*** *we are teaching it.* Dad notices that Tommy plops the plates down too hard. So Dad firms this one tiny part of the routine.  
 (1) *Model*. Dad models “Put soft”---the NEW tag-point—and he tags his own behavior. “Look! I put sssoooffft…. Watch again….I put sssoooffft…. [Dad used two examples.] Watch. This is NOT soft. [Dad clanks the plate down. A NONexample.] This IS ssooofft.” [An example. Now Tommy sees and hears the difference between soft---how to place objects---and not soft—how not to place objects.]  
 (2) *Lead.* Then Dad HOLDS Tommy’s hands and they “Put (the plates on) soft” together. Again, Dad tags this behavior and verifies---“Yes, put soft.”   
 (3) *Test/check.* Then Dad has Tommy practice “Put soft” a few times. He tag- reinforces-verifies each time Tommy “Puts soft.” He prompts as needed. “Soooft.”

(4) Now that this part (put soft) is firm, Dad and Tommy go back to the *whole* routine. Tommy picks up the plates from the counter and carries them to the table. As he begins to lower them, Dad reminds *him of the tag point*. “Put sssoooffft.” Dad gives a little physical help by putting his finger under Tommy’s hand to slow it down. As Tommy places the plates gently, Dad tag-reinforces-verifies---“Yes, put sssoooft.”   
 (5) After a few more meals, Tommy is lowering plates slowly. So, Dad fades out the physical help, but he keeps tagging and verifying until this small part is a solid step in the routine.

Notice in the TAGTeach examples below, that parents start at their child’s *point of success* (what their child already does), and the parents tell their child the *tag point* (what to do). Feel free to use these examples with your child!

*Pearl wipes it up.* Mom wants to teach Pearl the task of wiping something---water on a surface, a spot on a mirror, a dish, a bit of dirt on her arm or face.

1. *Tag point.* At first Mom thought that the tag point could be “wipe it up,” but the word “up” means other things besides dry. Then she thought the tag point might be “wipe across,” but sometimes we wipe round and round or back and forth, or we just dab the spot. So, she decided on “wipe it **gone**.” In other words, wipe until there is no water or no spot.   
 2. *Using model-lead-test/check to teach Pearl how to wipe.* Mom says, “I’ll pick up a cloth and *model* how to wipe. I will say ‘Watch Momma wipe.’ I will repeat ‘Wipe…wipe…wipe’ as I move the cloth. I will give myself a tag-verify. ‘Yes, Momma wipe.’”  
 “Then Pearl will hold the cloth *with me* and we will ‘Wipe…wipe… wipe.’ I will tag-reinforce-and verify. ‘Yes, wipe!’ We’ll repeat until Pearl is firm.”  
 “Then it’s *Pearl’s turn*. I will say, ‘Pearl wipe.’ I will point-touch the cloth and help her to pick it up and hold it. I will point to the small puddle of milk and say, ‘Pearl wipe.’ I will physically help until she is wiping. Then I will fade out my help as *she wipes a few strokes by herself*. I will tag-reinforce- verify. ‘Yes, Pearl wipe!’ We’ll do this a few times a day for a few days, until Pearl picks up the cloth and wipes some kind of spot on the table.”  
 3. *Improving wiping movements.* “Then I’ll teach her to wipe a spot---water, milk---until it’s *gone*. We’ll use model-lead-test-tag-reinforce-verify, and I’ll give just enough physical help to get her moving. *We’ll start with a small spot so that it will be ‘gone’ in one swipe*---Pearl’s point of success. The tag point will be ‘Wipe gone.’ I will make it like a game. ‘Look, all GONE!’”

“Then I’ll make the spot a *little larger*, and we’ll model-lead-test-tag- reinforce-verify wiping two or three swipes until the spot is gone. I will point to where the spot was, and say ‘Gone.’”  
 4. *Spread wiping behavior.* “Once Pearl is firm on ‘Wipe gone,’ I’ll help her to transfer wiping to drying dishes with me.”

*Steven finishes making his bed.* If Steven was pretty good at pulling his blanket to the head of the bed (the last step), praise would be enough. “Yes, pulling. Pulling!” But Steven has a hard time with this last step. So, Mom and Dad *tag-reinforce smaller amounts of pulling*, such as pulling the blanket one foot---Steve’s point of success They tell the tag point---“Pull blanket ”---and point-touch the spot on the bed where Steven should pull the blanket. Then they tag-reinforce-verify. “Yes, pull blanket.”   
 Next, they have Steven pull the blanket another foot, and tag-reinforce. As he gets better at pulling the blanket, they raise the tag point so that he pulls the blanket a little farther. Finally, they tag-reinforce when he pulls the blanket all the way to the head of the bed.

*They* ***do not*** *raise the tag point the first time Steven pulls the blanket far enough.* They use the same tag-point (for example, pull one foot) *several times* *until Steven is firm*. That is, pulling one foot is now easy.

1 2 3 4

Blanket Pillow

So, the teaching sequence is like this.

Pull from 3 to 4 (tag point) several times, until firm; then 2 to 4 (tag point) several times, until firm; then 1 to 4 (last tag point).  
 This is back-chaining. Start at the end and add earlier steps.

*Jimmy Tight Hands.* Ma Maretti writes, “Jimmy has a hard time firmly holding objects with the fingers of both hands. For instance, plates, bowls, a book, a toy truck.” So, here’s Ma and Pa Maretti’s plan.  
 1. We will use model-lead-test-tag-reinforce-verify to firm this movement **before** we work on tasks that use this movement. We’ll work on items LR3.29-31 in Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness.  
 2. Then, while we are working on a task, we will tag-reinforce-verify whenever we say “Tight both hands” (the tag point) and Jimmy does it. Of course, we’ll model ‘tight both hands’ and physically help him to do it, at first.

*Ironman Tito.* Pop and Tito Rodriguez are working on ironing clothes, to help Tito to appreciate “sharp-looking” clothes, and to teach him how to prepare to look sharp. Tito needs to know what the words “crease” and “seam” mean, so that he can follow Pop’s instructions to “Iron along the seam” and “Iron along the edge to make a sharp crease.” So, Pop teaches these words/concepts before he teaches Tito to iron. He simply *models*  (shows an example of) and *names* the movement. For instance, “I iron ALONG the seam.”; and “I iron along the EDGE to make a sharp crease.” Then he has Tito do the same movements and use the new words to tell what he is doing.   
 Here’s how it goes when they start working on ironing….

Pop R. models ironing a crease. “Remember….I iron **along** the EDGE to make a sharp crease.” He hands the iron to Tito and says, “I’ll help you to make a sharp crease. When you run the iron ***along*** *the crease* [tag point], I’ll say ‘Ding.’ Okay?”

“I’m not five years old, Dad. But okay.”

*Mark finds the sleeve hole!* Dad is teaching Mark to put on a winter coat. Mark does the right sleeve fine, because the hole is right there. Easy to see and get to. But he struggles to find the hole for the left sleeve with his hand alone. He needs to *look at the hole to see where it is* before he shoves his hand and arm in.   
 So, Dad and Mark work on JUST this small step/movement before they do the whole put-on-coat routine. Dad checks the sections on (1) Tips for Teaching; and (2) Arms and Hands Movements LR3.19-32, in Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, to see how to assess and teach Mark the movements.

Dad says, “*LOOK hole push arm* IN. [tag point five words or less]. Mark already knows the words “hole” and “push.” Dad models how to do the step and uses the words “hole” and “push.” Then Dad helps Mark to do the step. He holds the coat open a little so that Mark can see and feel the hole. When Mark pushes his arm all the way in, Dad tags-reinforces-and verifies. “YUP. You looked. You found the hole, and PUSHED your arm in!” They practice this step until Mark is firm. Then they work on the whole task, starting with opening it up.

*Decide how you’ll tag or mark the behavior.* Taggers are a good idea. <http://www.theclickercenter.com/clickerstoreclickers.html>

Use anything you can easily hold that makes a clear sound. A pen that makes a loudish sound when you click it; a squeak toy (Ma Ironton uses a tiny toy mouse. Pearl loves the sound.).

6. *Pick reinforcers.* They have to be given fast. And not too much at a time, or your child will soon be “full.” *Make a list of reinforcers and switch among them* so your child will still want them. Treats, hugs, head rubs, play, music, whatever your child would do or get for himself if he had the chance

*Praise with enthusiasm*. “Hey. Way to go! Great. You are pulling sock **up**!” Use tokens, too, for some tasks if you have a token system going. Have the child do a task *just before* a favorite activity. That way, he gets an Activity Reward besides the other rewards (praise, tokens, treats) he gets while he learns.

Reinforce *very often* at first, while she is working at a task. Also, reinforce other good behaviors that happen; for instance, looking at what she is doing, making correct movements, imitating your models when you show what to do, or talking about the task. As she becomes more skilled at the task, slowly decrease the reinforcement until reinforcement is for *finishing* the task well, and you are using mostly praise and *natural* *Activity Rewards.*

7. *Pick a method to teach the sequence of steps in the routine.* Please see these four methods in section 1, Chapter Eighteen, in the book on Learning Readiness.  
a. If there are only a few steps, we might *teach them all at once* with model-lead-test/check-tag-reinforce-verify or correct error. For example, let’s say there are four steps to give your face a quick wash: hold wash cloth under the faucet, squeeze out some of the water, swab your face, put the cloth down. Mom uses model-lead-test to teach Pearl all the steps at once.  
 “Watch. Momma wash face… Wash face with Momma… Your turn. Wash YOUR face.”

Here’s another example.

Put coat on floor, opened up.  
 Stand at the collar, facing the bottom of the coat.

Bend down and put both hands in the sleeve holes.

Stand up and flip the coat over your head.

Push arms through sleeves.

Note. If, after a few tries, the child has a hard time doing all the steps at once, use one of the methods below.

b. Or, we could teach the steps *one* at a time, starting with the *first*, and link the steps together---*forward chaining*. For example,   
 (1) Mom teaches Jimmy to put on his socks (loose and floppy for easy putting on); she helps him with the rest of his clothes, and tells what they are doing.  
 (2) Then she teaches him to put on his socks and then his underpants; she helps him with the rest.

(3) Then she teaches him to put on his socks and his underpants, and to step into his baggy shorts (for easy on) and to pull them up; she helps him with the rest.  
 (4) Finally, she teaches him to put on his socks and his underpants, to step into his shorts and to pull them up, and then to pull on his T-shirt.

Of course, she tells him what he is doing, and praises him as he grasps the items, sticks his feet, arms, and head in, pulls the items on, and looks at what he is doing. And she prompts him as needed.

c. Or, we could teach the steps one at a time, starting with the *last*, and then link them together---*backward chaining*. That is how Mom and Dad taught Steven to pull the blanket to the pillow. They started with the *last* step---the blanket is one foot from the pillow; then two feet; then three feet.

d. Or, we could teach the steps by starting with the *main step*, and then add earlier or later steps. For example,

*Tommy Tucker heats a cheese steak.* Tommy loves cheese steaks. What a perfect way to reward using the microwave! Pop Tucker says, “The main step is pushing the button to start the microwave.” So, he models for Tommy how to open the door, put the plate with a frozen sandwich on the tray, and set the timer for ONE (minute). He tells what he is doing. “Open…. Put in…. close door…. turn to one (on the dial)… push.” Dad pastes a small red arrow pointing to the “One minute” mark on the microwave settings. Now he uses model-lead-test-tag-reinforce-verify to teach Tommy to “Push” (the tag point) the start button. The plate starts to spin. Dad and Tommy watch. The timer dings. Dad says, “Now pull (the door open).” He helps Tommy to pull the door open. 🡪 Natural reward!

*Dad and Tommy will microwave lots of foods.* Tommy will add steps *one at a time*. For example, open the door, put the food in, close the door, set the timer, push the start button, open the door when it dings, take out the food. And Dad will fade out prompts and the tags---using praise and verification instead. “Yes, open…. Yes, put in…Yes, close door…Yes, turn to one…Yes, push.” So, they might work on this routine 10 times or so for Tommy to have it down pretty well

Do you think Tommy needed to firm up the movements in some of the steps? Yes. Dad firmed these up (pushing the start button, turning the dial to the red “One Minute,” and pulling the door open) before they worked on the whole routine.

*Here’s how to help your child to focus and to remember the steps*, *so that she becomes independent.* Let’s say you teach the whole routine all at once, or you teach the last step first (backward chaining), or the first step first (forward chaining), or the main step first. How will we help the child to move from one step to the next more on her own? Here’s what we do.

a. First, we *model the routine and we help the child to do the steps.* We tell what we are doing. “First, (I, we) put bowl ON mat…. Bowl ON mat…. Next, (I, we) put spoon ON mat… Spoon ON mat…” Then,  
b. Prepare the child to do each step by *telling the child what to do.* “First, put bowl ON mat.” Then *ask the child to repeat that, or to point to what to do first.* “What (do you) do first?” Prompt, if needed, with a reminder or a partial answer or by pointing. “First, you put…” When the child answers correctly--- she says, “Bowl” or “Bowl mat,’ or “On mat,” or she points to the bowl, verify. “Yes, first (put) bowl on mat.” Then say, “Go” or “Do it.” Reinforce and verify.   
 Repeat this for each *next* step. “**Next** (you put) spoon on mat. Next (you put) spoon ON mat. What (do you) do **next**?” *Spoon on mat.* “Yes, next (you put) spoon on mat… Do it. Spoon on mat.”

c. When the child has done the routine many times over the days, with you telling the child what to do at each step, switch to *having the child tell YOU what she’ll do*. Say, “Now tell ME what (you’ll, we’ll) do (first, next).” Prompt as needed---by telling or pointing, or both. When the child answers correctly (*First/next, bowl on mat*), verify (“Yes, first/next bowl on mat.”) and say, “Go” or “Do it.” Repeat with each step.

d. Keep doing step “c” (the child tells you what she’ll do first or next) as you practice, and as your child does the routine. Gradually fade out the question, and use it as a prompt. For example, if the child seems stuck, you might say, “What do we do next?”  
e. Finally, say “Your turn to (do the task).” Get the child started with partial prompts such as pointing to the objects or giving part of an instruction, such as “First, bowl….”

The above is adapted from formats in *Teach your child to read in 100 easy lessons*, by Siegfried Engelmann, Phyllis Haddox, and Elaine Brunner. Touchstone. First edition, 1986.

8. *Make sure to use our basic teaching format.*

a. **Gain attention**. “Look at me.” “Look at this [pointe-touch] plate.” “Let’s sit big.”  
 b. **Frame** the instruction. “Now we’ll put plates ON the shelf.”  
 c. **Model** or present a small amount of information. “My turn. Watch me **pick up** (the) plate.”   
 d. **Lead.** Have the child do the modeled behavior with you. “Pick up the plate **with** me. Get ready.”….Short pause for think time….Then give a “Do it” signal, such as “Go” or a hand gesture. You might do the Lead twice, and add a prompt to improve the child’s response.  
 e. **Test/check.** Check that the child gets what to do and does it. “Your turn. Pick up the plate.” Then give a “Do it” signal, such as pointing to the plate. Repeat, with a prompt if needed. Then try once more with LESS of a prompt. Later, try again with less of a prompt, and tag- reinforce more independent responses.

Of course, you can remove some of the steps---the “get ready,” the wait time, and the “Do it” signal. And just say, “Okay, now YOU pick up the plate.”  
 f. Tag-reinforce + verification (“Yes, you picked up the plate.”) if the child’s behavior meets the tag point.  
 g. If the child makes an error, immediately **correct it**, usually like this:  
 (1) Model again. Maybe add a prompt to make the information clearer. For example, point-touch the plate. Use “big” gestures when you model how. Maybe have the child do the modeled behavior with you (lead).   
 (2) Have the child try it by herself (test/check). Again, prompt if needed.  
 (3) Reinforce improved behavior.  
 (4) Repeat a few times to firm up the child’s behavior, and try to fade out the prompts.

(5) If the error shows that a step or an element is weak, and if simple error correction (above) is not enough, use *part-firming*(Gleason, 1999).Practice, or even reteach, a whole step (picking up objects) or just a tiny element in a step (grasping objects with fingers) using model-lead-test/check-tag-reinforce. Then do the whole routine (picking up objects) with the improved step or element.   
9. *What kinds of assistance, or prompts, might you use?*a. Point to the object you want the child pick up; point to the place where you want the child to put it.

b. Put the child’s name, or her picture, or a picture of socks on her sock drawer.  
 c. Say parts of a request louder. “Put (the) cup IN (the) sink.”  
 d. Pause and then punch the information. “Open the…..door.”  
 e. Use gestures and models; for example, pretend to put a cup in the sink or to open the fridge door.

f. Give extra instructions. “TIGHT fingers on handle.” [Model what tight fingers looks and feels like.] Use a series of pictures showing steps in a routine---such as making a bed.  
 g. Physically guide a child to do the right movements. From all or part of the movement, to gently holding or just touching the child’s arm.  
 h. Limit the range of movements, or guide movements, with some kind of template or jig. For example, use a placemat that shows plate, cup, fork and spoon, to guide the child as she places these objects. Tape pictures of objects (utensils, clothing) to drawers or shelves where the objects go. Use a toothbrush with a thick handle. A toothpaste pump.

i. We add or remove prompts in a sequence, so that we know what we are going to try next. For example,  
 (1) We might start with the *least physical guidance, and use more if less guidance does not work.*

(2) Or, we might start with the *most physical guidance* (to prevent errors) and fade out prompts as we find out that more guidance is not needed.

(3) We might give only part of a reminder (“Put iiii…”) and then add more if the child needs it. “Put INNNN.”   
 (4) Or we might give prompts in a series. This is called “time delay” (Neitzel and Wolery, 2009).   
 Give instruction and immediately prompt.  
 Give instruction and wait one second to prompt.  
 Give instruction and wait two seconds to prompt.  
 Up to four seconds. Big reinforcement when child beats the prompt.

10. *When and where will you work on the skill or task?* Look at how you described typical days in your evaluation, above. Now think of times, places, and family activities where you can teach the skill or task, and where the child can do the skill or task to contribute to family life. You want the time or place to become a *signal* for the child to do tasks on her own. A good time is *just before* a *high (enjoyable) behavior* or *activity* is supposed to happen. For example, have the child set the table before mealtime; have him pick up his toys before a favorite TV program; have him brush his teeth after a meal and before he can go outside; or have him put away his clothes (or undress himself) before he can have a bath.

Help the child learn that a certain time or place is a *signal* bytelling him what the time or place is, what the task is, and what the consequence will be. Grandma’s Law will help you to put them all together. Just say, “Okay. ‘It’s SUPPER TIME. Let’s SET THE TABLE. As soon as you (we) set the table, you (we) can EAT SUPPER.” Then start teaching him to do the task. Here are examples.

a. Teaching sessionsof 15 or so minutes several times a day. For example,   
 (1) Everyday activities,such as during meals, while helping your child to get dressed, or when your child is walking around aimlessly; and   
 (2) Special sessions (for example, at a table) where you work on small motor actions, like reaching and placing objects, zipping, buttoning, folding, and fitting things, that your child can use in Chore and Self- help tasks.

Please see the Sections on (1) Tips For Teaching; (2) Arms and Hands Movements LR3.19-32; and (3) Play Routines and Daily Living Routines LR3.33-59, in Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness, to see how to assess and teach movement elements!

b. Times and places that come upwhen you’ll be on the look-out for little tasks your child can do. Open or close the fridge or a door, turn lights on or off, asking your child to bring you some pie.

11. *Generalization****.*** As your child does chores and self-help routines more often, for longer times, and with more skill, we give the child chances to do the tasks in other places and times. List some of these other times and places. Also, think of other tasks that use some of the same movements. When a child learns to brush her teeth, she can: remove caps from other things, put liquid soap on a cloth, use a pot scrubber.

12. *How will we see if your child’s chore and self-help routines are improving?* Here are some simple ways.For example,

a. Make a hash mark on a recording sheet (also known as a piece of paper) each time the child does a simple task when you ask.

b. Make a hash mark each time the child does a simple task on her own. For example…

Monday When asked On her own

Puts things in waste basket. / / / / //

Puts plate or bowl or cup or spoon / / / / / /  
 at table.  
 Pulls blanket to pillow on bed. /

c. Take notes when you are interested in HOW your child does a behavior. For example:

Pearl Stacks Washcloths, Towels, and Sheets on the Shelf

Daily Notes.

Steps Comments

1. Reach into clothes basket. Monday. Need to teach her to  
 focus eyes on the item, while reaching.

2. Grasp a top item with both Monday. Needs to squeeze item.  
 hands.

3. Lift the item out of the Monday. Does this fine!

basket.

4. Move the item over to the Monday. I pointed to the shelf and  
 shelf. said, “Move to shelf.” Will try to  
 fade this.

5. Move the item to the top Monday. Need to put items on a of a pile on the shelf. lower shelf. She’s so little.

6. Lower the item onto the Monday. Does this fine.  
 top of the pile.

7. Release grasp. Monday. I prompted by saying, “Put it down. Open fingers.” Will practice releasing objects and then put this movement back into the routine.

The notes tell you which movements you might have to firm up, or to prompt more, or to reinforce more often, or to prompt less.

Here’s a table for writing your teaching plans.

**Table 2. Teaching Plan for Chores and Self-help Skills**

Please review the examples above, and read the rest of this book, to see what sorts of chore and self-help tasks and activities you might want to work on. Then come back here and write your plan.

1. Please list some possible problem behaviors not to accidentally reinforce, and some desirable alternative behaviors **to** reinforce.

Possible Problem Behaviors: Desirable Alternative Behaviors and  
 How we will not accidentally How We Will Reinforce These.

Reinforce these.

1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

4. 4.

2. Name the skill or small task. Describe it as movements.

3. *Break Down the Target Chore or Self-Help Task-Routine into Small Steps.* Using your evaluation, are there weak elements, such as words your child MUST learn in order to do the task at all (look, cup, hold, put, up, in) and movements your child needs to firm.

Task\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Steps. Words and Movements Words and Movements that   
 (elements) Used. I Need to  
 a. Pre-teach  
   
 b. Give special help (prompts, tags) during teaching.

1.

2.

3.

4.

4. *Think about next steps with tasks*.

a. *How can you link one task with other tasks to form an activity?* Get wash cloth, towel and soap; turn on water; rub soap on wash cloth; wash and dry hands; wash and dry face; put away wash cloth and towel;… 🡪 activity of getting ready for bed.   
 b. Also, as you and your child work on tasks and larger activities, what functional speech/words can you **add** to the ones you started with, that describe more of what you and the child are doing? Names of objects and actions, colors and shapes, textures (smooth, rough), warm and cold, big and little, off and on, on top, next to, under, done,

Tasks to Link Together into an Functional Speech/Words to  
 Activity. What activity? Teach as We Do the Task or  
 Activity More and More.

a. Task we are planning to learn now. a. Functional Speech/Words  
 We’ll Start With. [See # 3  
 above.]

b. Next task to link. New Speech/Words We’ll  
 Slowly Add.

c. Next task to link. New Speech/Words We’ll  
 Slowly Add.

d. Next task to link. New Speech/Words We’ll  
 Slowly Add.

5. Behaviors to tag-reinforce when we pre-teach words and movements, or during teaching of the task, or when the child does the last step. Tagger to use. Reinforcers to use. Treats? Hugs? Praise? Can you think of your child’s starting point of success and tag points for the task? For instance,

Behavior. Child’s Point of Success. Tag Point: 5 words or less.

Hold objects She uses both hands but Hold tight two hands.   
 tightly with her grip is about half  
 fingers of strength.  
 both hands.

6. Pick reinforcers. Treats? Praise? Hugs? Activities?

7. Method for teaching the steps in the routine. Please list the order in which you would teach the steps.  
 a. Whole routine, a few steps.

b. Forward chaining.

c. Backward chaining.

d. Start with the main step; then add earlier and later steps.

8. Fill in the words you’ll use in our basic communication format. How will you  
 a. Gain attention.

b. Frame the instruction.

c. Model or present a small amount of information. Remember to tell what you are doing!

d. Have the child do the modeled behavior with you. Lead.

e. How will you test/check?

f. How would you tag-reinforce-verify?

g. Imagine your child makes errors. How would you correct these or firm/reteach?

9. What kinds of assistance, or prompts, might you use?

10. *When and where will you work on the skill?*   
 a. Everyday activities**,** such as during meals?

b. Special sessions; for example, at a table?

c. Times and places *that come up* when you’ll be on the look-out for little tasks your child can do?

11. *Generalization****.***   
 a. In what other times places, and activities can you help your child to do the task? Wash hands in one bath room 🡪 wash hands in another bathroom + in the kitchen sink + plus outside with a hose. Please make a starting list.

b. In what other tasks or activities might the child be able to use (transfer) some of the same movements or steps? Wash face 🡪 wash dish + wipe table + erase stuff written with felt markers. Please make a starting list.

12. *How will we keep track of a behavior to see if and how it’s improving?*

a. Hash mark each time the child does a simple task when you ask.

b. Hash mark each time the child does a simple task on her own.

c. Describe how your child does a behavior. Identify steps or elements to firm.

Remember: when we starting teaching in this skill area, we keep working on eye contact, cooperation, sitting, Large and Small Motor activities, Play, and Motor Imitation; we’ll use Verbal Imitation methods to teach the child how to say words that describe the task (for instance, “bed,” “cover,” “pillow,” “sheet,” “fluff,” “pull”); and we’ll teach him to *use* the words in a functional way to describe what he is doing. “What are you doing? … *Fluffing* *…* Yes, fluffing.”

**4. CHORES**

They two main itemsto work on in this section are CSH1, The Child Helps in the Home or School by Doing Simple Tasks; and CSH2, The Child Helps in the Home or School by Doing More Complex Tasks and Chores

Simple Tasks and Chores

This behavior is much like Learning Readiness Skill 1.7, Cooperate with Simple Requests, in Chapter Fourteen in the book on Learning Readiness.

Please skim it before we go on.

Now we will focus on requests to do simple tasks that are important to a child’s participation in family and school life. We don’t want a child to become some kind of housekeeper or butler! The idea is to teach him to do or to join in on tasks that will be rewarded by *natural activities.* Here are some steps to follow.

1. *Make a list of simple tasks for the child*; for instance,  
 a. Picking up or putting away things around the home or classroom. Start with one kind of thing (for example, putting groceries away), and then help the child transfer the same steps to other things, such as putting away toys, dishes, clothing.  
 b. Opening or closing drawers, windows, and doors.   
 c. Turning on or off the lights, the fan, a faucet.  
 d. Taking out the trash. Teach the child to transfer the steps (picking up, moving, and placing things) to other situations, such as carrying her clothes to her room, carrying things from home to car and from car to home.  
 e. Rinsing dishes or cooking utensils. Transfer this routine to rinsing a sink, a muddy toy, a muddy shirt.  
 f. Helping to cook by stirring, cracking eggs, pouring, carrying, or bringing things you ask for.   
 g. Loading or unloading the washing machine. Transfer this behavior to other situations, such as loading and unloading shopping carts, boxes, shopping bags, and drawers.  
 h. Don’t forget the tasks we described earlier:  
 Mom assesses and firms up gasping movements, and then teaches Pearl to put things in a waste basket.  
 Pearl puts objects in a place that Mom indicates.   
 Mom helps Pearl to transfer this little routine to many situations, such as putting things in the fridge, soap in the soap dish, towels on a shelf.   
 Making and unmaking a bed. Movements of pulling and lining things up (forward edge of blanket with bottom edge of pillow) can transfer to other situations, such as spreading a table cloth or rug, or opening a shirt or jacket to put on.  
 Ironing. Teach a child to transfer steps and movements from this routine to similar routines, such as spreading things out (towels, rugs, table cloth), wiping in a certain direction, lining things up.  
 Mark putting his arm in a coat sleeve.   
 Setting a place at the meal table. Steps and movements in this routine can be transferred to placing objects in a drawer, books and clothing on a shelf.  
 Using a microwave. The steps of opening a door, loading the microwave, closing the door, and starting the device can transfer to loading and unloading a washer and drier, oven, cabinet.  
 Stacking items on a shelf. Stacking things can be used in many situations. Stacking towels, canned goods, utensils and plates.

2. Spend a few days *firming up cooperation with simple requests*, such as to hand you something, take something from you, pick up or put down something, open the fridge. See Chapter Fourteen in the book on Learning Readiness.

3. Then, during the day, ask the child to do *a few* simple tasks that you’ve listed in number 1. Spread the requests out. You don’t want the child to be overwhelmed!

a. Start with tasks she’s most likely to do pretty easily---her point of success.  
 b. It is important that the child do simple tasks that fit into and contribute to family life. Look for opportunities. Here are a few examples.

Jimmy seldom does things for himself, and he never does chores in the house. Around supper time one day, Ma Maretti notices that he is holding a plate. She tells him---and *gestures* for him---to come to the table.

Please see section 6 of Chapter Fourteen in the book on Learning Readiness, on teaching a child to respond to gestures!

Jimmy comes to the table. When he gets to the table, still holding the plate, Mom puts a spoonful of his favorite food on it and he sits down to eat it. When he wants more, she models “Say, mmmoorree.” He imitates and gets more. A *natural consequence.*

Steven rarely watches what other persons are doing. One afternoon when his mother is shelling and eating peanuts, she sees Steven watching her. She tells what she is doing (“Eating peanuts.”), gives him a big smile, and hands him a shelled peanut---to hook him in. He wants another one. So she helps him to reach, grasp, and squeeze it—to get the nuts out. They do this little routine three or four times a week.   
 Then she teaches Steven to link simple tasks into a longer chain---to take a bag of peanuts off the grocery shelf and put it in the cart, to carry the grocery bag with the peanuts into the car and then out of the car at home, to help her to unload and put away all the groceries, and then (as a natural reward for all of these little tasks) to get the bag of peanuts from the cabinet, bring it to the table, and help her to shell peanuts and eat peanuts. A healthful snack!  
 All the while she and Steven work on this longer activity, Mom tells what she is doing as she models the steps! “I put IN cart.” And then she teaches Steven to use some of the same words: “peanut,” “bring,” “put in,” “carry,” “squeeze,” and “shell.” At first, she reinforces any of Steven’s imitations that have some of the right sounds---Steven’s point of success.

Tito rarely helps outside. He doesn’t like to get dirty. One day he wants to ride his bike. Dad has conveniently put a bunch of old hoses, bike tires, and dirty cardboard boxes on Tito’s bike in the back of the garage. “Hey! My bike!” Dad says, “I’ll help you to get your bike out of this mess. Then you can ride it.” Dad tosses a box to the side and tells Tito to copy him. Pretty soon, Tito is pulling junk off his bike as Dad stands back. “That was GOOD work, son!” Dad will *set up* more situations like this, where Tito learns to clean things up, including his bike.

Jimmy loves to play in the water when he takes a bath. Mom figures that Jimmy could *earn* a bath by doing a few simple tasks. Mom and Jimmy are in the bathroom. “Let’s get ready.” She has placed a towel, wash cloth, and soap on the sink. She tells Jimmy to bring these to the bath tub, and prompts by pointing to the objects and then the tub. Jimmy gets the objects. Mom helps him into the tub.   
 After they do this a few days, Mom requires that Jimmy (1) put his toys away *before* he gets to take a bath; (2) take off his clothes more by himself and put them in the hamper, before he can go into the bathroom; and then (3) as they have practiced, get his towel, wash cloth, soap, and a plastic duck. Notice that Mom started with a simple task (bring items to the bath tub), and then she linked several tasks into an activity---getting ready to take a bath.

4. Make sure first to do a knowledge analysis of the routine to identify the steps and the elements in the steps---words, movements. Then pre-teach and firm up words and weak movements. See the examples above.

5. You have four methods for teaching a sequence of steps (routine): teaching all the steps at once; forward chaining, backward chaining, and teaching the main step first. However, *you can probably teach of all the steps at once, using model (“Watch me.”), lead (“Do it with me.”), test/check (“Your turn.”)* *if a task has only 3-5 steps, and if the steps seem to flow into each other.* For instance, each step in using a microwave, or putting on a jacket, or raking leaves, or stacking things in a closet, flows into the next. So,   
 a. First, make sure the child is looking; tell what you are going to do (“I’ll show you how to PUT cans ON the shelf.”), and then model the whole little routine and tell what you are doing.  
 “Pick up can. Look, Can. I pick up a can.”  
 “Next, carry can to shelf. Look, I carry can to shelf. Look again. I carry can to the shelf.”  
 “Next I put the can ON the shelf. Look, ON the shelf. All done.”  
 b. Now have the child do all the steps with you. And tell what you are doing. If the child “has” the words, have the child repeat what you say. “Pick up can.” Prompt as needed---move her hand, remind her of what to do, point-touch the can or the spot on the shelf.  
 Repeat so that the child does the routine right along with you.  
 c. Now have the child do the steps by herself. “Your turn to PUT cans ON the shelf. Get ready.” Prompt as needed------move her hand, remind her of what to do, point-touch the can or the spot on the shelf. Repeat with more cans, and try to fade the prompts.   
 d. Reinforce as she does each step. Big smile and “Yes, you pick UP the can… Yes, you CARRY can to the shelf….Yes, you PUT can ON the shelf.” You might tag-treat-and verify when the child does the last step.  
 e. If a child needs instant feedback to help her to *feel* what she did correctly *during* a step, add the tag, so that it’s model-lead-test/check-tag-reinforce- verify. As the child’s performance becomes more accurate and smooth, fade out prompts, models, and the lead.

f. Repeat the routine with a few cans and packages. Quit while the child is interested. Don’t quite AFTER the child starts to fuss; that will only reward fussing.

g. Remember that when we model, we tell the child what we are doing each step. When it is the child’s turn, we tell the child what to do each step, and (if the child *can*) we have the child repeat that, and then do the step. After several more practices of the same routine, ask the child to tell YOU what she is going to do at each step, and then either verify this or correct it.  
 h. Do not shoot for perfection in one day. We do the routine every day, a little at a time. We firm up the steps and the elements in the steps. If a child has a weak element (such as placing cans), we practice just THIS movement, and then put it back in the routine.

i. When the child completes simple tasks, reinforce with plenty of praise and maybe even tokens. Be sure also to reward many of these tasks with *Activity Rewards* that the child gets when he has finished. For instance, after he loads the washing machine, he can start it or go outside. Again, use tag-reinforce-verify to help your child to improve hard or weak movements IN a task, AND to clearly mark for your child that she completed the task. Tag-treat-“Yes, toys IN the box.”

After a while, the child may begin to enjoy doing certain tasks, such as washing dishes, helping you cook, or vacuuming the rug. If so, use these tasks as Activity Rewards for doing other tasks: “As soon as you pick up your clothes (new task), you can help me cook (task he likes).” Please read Chapter Sixteen in the book on Learning Readiness to brush up on how to teach the child Large Motor Movements (items LR3.1-13), Small Motor Movements (LR3.14-32), and Play and Daily Life Routines that integrate and use the Large and Small Motor movements. (LR3.33-59). Make sure to keep track of progress with item 12 on Table 2, above.

More Complex Tasks and Chores

Teaching complex tasks and chores means two things: (1) helping the child to hook up or *chain* simpler movements into the right order, so that they make up a whole task or chore; and (2) helping the child to start tasks or chores when ***she*** sees that they need doing---*natural* signals, such as seeing spilled milk on the table, instead of requests from other persons.

We probably cannot use model-lead-test/check all the steps at once, when there are a lot of steps and when the steps don’t LOOK like one step flows into another. Instead, we have to teach each step, and then add more steps. We have to use with forward chaining, backward chaining, or teaching the main step first.

CHAINING SIMPLER MOVEMENTS INTO A CHORE

Let’s use a few different ways to teach complex routines.

Backward Chaining Clearing the Meal Table

1. Start the chore with a request or Grandma’s Law. For example, when the child has finished eating but before he gets very far from the table, say, “Okay, it’s time to help CLEAR the table” or, better, “As soon as you help CLEAR the table, you can (do something that you always like to do).”

2. For the first few days, show the child all the steps in clearing the table and then prompt him to *join you* through the motions: (1) putting all the silverware on one plate; (2) carrying the plates to the counter; and (3) carrying the glasses or cups to the counter. While you are showing and prompting him make sure that he is *watching* what he and you are doing, and use simple words to *describe* the steps. Try to get him to repeat what you say.

“Next, we carry the plates. See? Carry plates… What are we carrying?.... *Plates.* Yes, plates.”

Or, if the child says simple phrases, you could say, “We carry plates…. Say that… We…. *Carry plates.* Yes, we carry plates.”

3. The next day, prompt him to join you through all the steps as before, *but have him do the* ***last step*** *(carrying one or two cups to the counter)* ***on his own****.* Praise while he is doing the last step. When he has finished, he gets the Activity Reward as stated in Grandma’s Law: “GREAT JOB. You helped to clear the table. Now let’s wrestle.”

4. Still later, show him how to do, and have him join you doing the earlier steps as before, but when you reach the *last two* steps, have him do the last two steps more on his own.   
 “The silverware is on this plate. Now what do you do? *(Carry) plate to (the) counter* ...Yes, carry plate to counter!... Do it. Carry plates.” [Child does this.] And now we CARRY the CUPS ...What do we carry? *Carry cups.* Yes, carry cups. Do it.” [Child does this.] GOOD JOB. You carried cups TO the counter.”

5. As the days go by, *fade out* telling the child what to do in the last steps. Instead, if he still needs a prompt to get him started on the next step, *point* to what you want him to do (for instance, after he carries the plates, point to the cups ). Or just say or whisper *part* of what he is supposed to do (“Now carry the ... cu .. .’’). Praise as he goes through the steps and give him the Activity Reward when he is done.

6. Keep working backwards, a little at a time, teaching the child how to do the steps in the chore, and to do them in the right order. If he leaves out an important step, use *positive practice* by having him back up a few steps and try again, this time putting in all the steps in the right order.

7. When the child has learned to do the chore, it is fine if he does the steps in a little different order, as long as the job gets done well. In fact, reward him for being creative or more efficient. Just make sure to check on how well the job was done. Otherwise, he may get careless as the weeks go by. If the child keeps making the same mistake, give him extra help on those steps at the right time in the chain.

8. Remember to add language that describes the actions. “Yes, spoons on the plate.” “Now the table is CLEAR,” as you wave your hand over the clear table. “All gone!”

Forward Chaining Putting Away Stuff in Her Room

Ma Brown says,   
 “Calling Nancy’s room a pig pen is an insult to pigs. What a mess. I nag and nag. ‘Nancy, clean your room. Room. Clean. Nancy. Nancy….’ That never works. Okay, so I’ll teach her to clean it up! Backward chaining isn’t a good idea because I’d have to clean the whole room to model or show all the steps, and all Nancy would do is the last step. So, we’ll start with the first step, and then we’ll add more---in the forward way.”  
  
 Instead of focusing on putting away different THINGS, **Mom divides Nancy’s room into areas to clean.** *Doing each area is a step*!  
1. The back of Nancy’s room, where the toy box is.  
2. On her bed.  
3. The floor in front of her closet, where shoes, pants, and hats go.  
4. The floor in front of her dresser, where socks and underclothes go.

Mom knows it’s a good idea to start at Nancy’s point of success. Nancy already picks up and puts away a few things before she gets bored. So, that’s where Mom starts. A few toys near the toy box. Sneaker by the closet. Underpants in front of the dresser. A few toys on the bed.  
 Nancy loves McDonald’s fries. They are a powerful reinforcer. So, Mom uses Grandma’s Law. “As soon as you put away your THINGS, THEN we go to McDonalds.” Mom uses the words “put away things,” because it tells what to do. Nancy knows what “put away things” means. “Clean your room” is pretty vague.

1. Mom says, “Let’s put away toys.” Nancy has had a lot of practice doing this with Mom (lead), so Mom says, “Put away toys with me.” She models how to look at, pick up, and put away one toy. Then she prompts Nancy to do this with her. Then she prompts Nancy to do the **last** toy on her own. Big reinforcement and verification. “Yes, you put toy away.”  
2. Mom and Nancy repeat this with the other small areas in the room. Mom says, “You put away ALL toys---and she points to the empty floor and to the items in the toy box, dresser, and closet…. Now, FRIES!”

3. Each day, Mom adds one or two more items to each space in the room. She gives BIG reinforcement at first, because Nancy is doing much more.

4. Once Nancy is on a roll---putting things away in an area by herself---Mom stands back so that Nancy sees that SHE is doing the task on her own. Mom praises as Nancy puts away each item. At first, Mom goes back to having fewer items to put away, so that the task is still within Nancy’s easy reach---her new point of success.

5. Remember that Mom always starts this chore by saying, “Let’s put away toys.” Now that Nancy is doing each area more on her own, Mom starts Nancy off by saying, “You put things away. Then McDonalds.” Mom may have to get Nancy started by doing a few items with her.

6. As Nancy becomes more fluent at this chore, Mom and Dad think of other chores that Nancy can do.

Teaching Jack to Mow The Lawn Starting With The Main Step

Here are the steps some persons use when mowing a lawn.   
Take lawnmower out of the garage and onto the driveway.  
Put in gasoline---several small steps.  
Push mower to lawn.

Push power button to ‘On.”

Step on carriage to secure it; pull the start cord and release.

Mow in rows, back and forth.

Push the power button to off.

Push mower back into garage.

What’s the main step? It’s mowing, isn’t it? It is also the fun step. So Dad starts with this step.

1. Dad shows Jack all the steps. He tells Jack what he is doing and he has Jack repeat the words---row, slow, feet away from carriage. He models mowing a few rows, and then mows a few more *with* Jack. Then Jack mows a few rows by himself. They trade off until the lawn is done. They take short breaks for lemonade---natural reward.

2. Dad and Jack repeat #1, but Dad fades himself out of the mowing part and coaches from the sidelines.

3. Dad teaches Jack to bring the mower to the driveway, helps him put gas in, and pull the start cord. Jack mows. Dad helps Jack to switch off the mower and put it in the garage.

4. Dad carefully teaches Jack the steps in checking the gas tank, opening the gas can, and pouring in the gas. Each time they mow, Dad and Jack practice this. Dad also carefully teaches Jack to start the mower. He practices most on pulling the cord hard and fast---with the power button on “Off.” He and Jack pull the cord together. Dad gradually fades out his help as Jack gets the cord moving. This may take 10 mows for Jack to have this step down. Then Dad adds stepping on the carriage AND pulling the cord. Once Jack is pretty good at steadying the mower with his foot and starting it with the cord, Dad fades back and has Jack start the mower more on his own. Dad prompts and verifies (“Yes, you pulled the cord nice and fast.”) as needed.

5. Now, Dad simply verbally prompts Jack to do each step. Later, he has Jack tell him what he is *going to do* each step. Jack can read. So, Dad writes all the steps on a 3x5 card. Jack uses this to prompt himself.

6. Dad and Jack work on other chores this way. *For each one, Jack has a 3 x 5 card listing all the steps.*

You can use the above examples of four ways to link steps into a longer task or activity.

GETTING CHORE BEHAVIOR UNDER NATURAL CONTROL

The idea is to have the child do his chores at the right times and places and about as often as is proper. At first, *you* may be signaling him when the right times and places are. Slowly, you want the right times and places to be the signals for him to get started on his chores. For example, at first when you were fixing a snack, you might have told the child, “As soon as you set the table, you can have your snack.” So Grandma’s Law was the signal that got him started. But as he becomes more skilled at setting the table, you want just the *sight* of you fixing the snack to be the signal for him to set the table.

Shifting from your statement (“As soon as you set the table, you can have your snack.”) to the more natural time and place signals is a matter of *adding new prompts* and then *fading them out.* Once the child can do the chore well when you tell him to, fade out telling him. Instead, say, “Okay, it’s snack time. What do you do NOW?” or “What do you do BEFORE you eat your snack?” You can also use *gestures* to signal him; for instance, by *pointing* to the plates. As long as these signals and prompts are enough to get him started on the chore, keep fading them out. Instead of saying, “What do you do now?” just point to the plates or say, “Well?” Still later, fix the snack and *wait* to see what he will do when he *sees* the snack sitting on the table. If he starts to set the plates, give him plenty of praise. If he does not start to set the table by himself, give him part of a prompt by *pointing* to the plates. Do not let him sit down and eat until he sets the table.

**5. SELF-HELP TASKS (CSH3 through CSH9)**

There are many self-help tasks that children usually learn. Some of the most important ones are: Eating Properly with a Spoon, Fork, Knife, and Glass (or Cup) (CSH3); Undressing and Dressing (CSH4 and 5); Washing (CSH6); Brushing Teeth (CSH7); and Using the Toilet (CSH8). The goal is toteach the child to Do Many of These Self-Help Tasks on His Own, Often (CSH9). You have the skills to teach all of these self-help tasks. The next sections have some extra tips.

Self-Feeding or Eating with the Right Utensils (CHS3)

Some children do not know how to use a fork, spoon, knife, and glass to feed themselves. They eat with their fingers or lick the food from the bowl or plate. Other children have some skill with utensils. For instance, they may be able touse a spoon, but they do not know how to use a fork to pick up or to cut food. And some children know how to eat the right way with utensils, but they do problem behaviors, such as taking food from another person’s plate, leaving the table many times during a meal, licking food from the table, throwing tantrums during meals, eating only certain foods, or eating too fast or slow. Of course, children who do not know how to use utensils very well may also do the same problem behaviors.

Teaching a child to feed herself the right way means (1) giving her *more skill* at using the right utensils; and (2) *keeping* her new self-feeding behavior *going* after she has learned how. Here are three ways to give the child *more skill* at feeding herself in the right way.

l. *Telling* her how: “Hold the SPOON in your right hand.... That’s it. Now DIP the spoon DOWN to the potatoes.... Good. Now PUSH the spoon IN.”

2. *Showing* her how or *modeling:* “WATCH me.... Okay, PUSH the spoon IN like this.... That’s right. See how I LIFT UP the spoon.... Now YOU LIFT UP the spoon.”

3. *Moving* or *prompting* her through the right motions at the same time you are *telling* or *showing* her how. See the early work of Obrien and Azrin, 1972, for examples of real inventiveness!

On the other hand, *keeping* the child’s self-feeding behavior going means *rewarding* him when he eats the right way and *not* rewarding him when he does not---by telling him “No” and showing and TELLING him what to do instead (“Hold spoon,” or “Use your spoon”), by timing him out or removing his meal for a short time, or by stopping his hand before he finishes a wrong movement. Then model and prompt him through the correct movements, and praise.

WHAT TO DO IF THE CHILD DOES NOT USE UTENSILS VERY WELL

If the child does not use any utensils very well, but instead uses her fingers or licks food from the plate, it may be best first to teach her to eat with a *spoon.*1. Start with foods that are *mushy* and are not supposed to be eaten with fingers, like pudding, mashed potatoes, cereal, and thick soup.   
2. Stand *behind* the child and put the spoon in her hand. If she does not hold the spoon on her own, put your hand around hers.

3. Tell her, “HOLD the spoon.... Yes. You are HOLDING the spoon.” Then tell her, “Now DIP the spoon into the potatoes,” and move her arm so that the spoon dips into the food. If possible, clink the spoon against the bottom of the bowl when you dip it in. This sound will become a *learned reward* for the child when she dips the spoon deep enough into the food on her own. The sound will also become a *signal* for the next step, which is to lift the spoon to her mouth.   
4. If the child turns her head away and does not watch what she and you are doing, *stop* the movement just where it is and wait until she looks again, or tell her to look, before you resume the movement.

5. If the spoon does not pick up enough food, tell the child, “Now PUSH the spoon IN,” and move her hand and arm through the motion. Do not load the spoon too full, though. Then say, “Okay, now LIFT UP the spoon to your MOUTH.” If necessary, move her arm so that the spoon is right in front of her mouth. Praise her. 6. If she opens his mouth, see if she will move the spoon in by herself. If she does not move the spoon into her mouth, move it for her. If she does not even open her mouth, use your other hand to pull down her chin and *gently* open her mouth while you *slide* the spoon in.

7. Finally, move the child’s arm so that the spoon lifts up and out, and the food is taken off the spoon by her upper lip or teeth. Praise her and start the second bite.

8. Repeat the sequence for each bite, many times. Remember to tell the child what to do; use the *same, simple phrases;* move her arm and hand through the right motions; and praise her as he does the different motions in the sequence. If the child gets restless, make the meals shorter (4 or 5 minutes) and have more meal sessions.

9. After a few days, you should be able to start *fading* your prompts.   
 First of all, start fading them from the *back* of the chain. In other words, help the child to get the spoon up to her mouth, but fade out helping her to open her mouth and put the spoon in.   
 When she has done the last step (opening her mouth or putting the spoon in) by herself three or four times in a row, fade out your prompt on the second to last step. This means helping her to load up the spoon, but only moving her arm *part* of the way to her mouth. As the days go by, keep backing down the chain until the child can go through the whole chain by herself.

Second, fade out your prompts by holding the child’s hand with *less and less pressure.* In other words, when you have moved her hand (and spoon) to her mouth, *relax* your grip a bit while she puts the spoon into his mouth. Later, just *lightly* touch her hand.   
 Third, shift *where* you hold or touch her. At first you may be holding her hand. Later, hold her elbow, and, still later, just touch her shoulder to get her started. Also, fade out telling the child what to do at each step. Say less and less (“Dip.... Push.... Lift.... Open”) and say it softer and softer.

10. If, after a few days of fading your prompts, you notice that the child is having trouble with one of the steps, give her a bit more prompting. For instance, *hold the bowl closer to her mouth so that the spoon does not have to travel very far.* Also, tell and show her what to do. Then fade out your prompts again. If the child tries to use her fingers, *stop* her hand *before s*he can eat with her fingers. Say, “NO. Use the SPOON.” And prompt her through the motions. Reward her with praise when she is eating in the right way. If the child repeats using to use her fingers, *remove* her food for 30 seconds or so.

WHAT TO DO IF THE CHILD CAN EAT WITH A SPOON BUT NOT WITH THE OTHER UTENSILS

If the child already eats with a spoon, or you have just taught him to do so, but he cannot eat with a fork and knife, or drink with a cup or glass in the right way, teach him how by *telling, showing,* and *prompting.*1. At first, use just a few foods---one or two for the fork (bites of meat, sliced carrots, beets) and one or two for the spoon (pudding, apple sauce).

2. Stand behind the child and a little to one side. Get him started by *telling* him to eat one of the foods with the right utensil: “Eat the MEAT. Use your FORK.” If he does not reach for the fork, or if he reaches for the wrong utensil, gently stop him and *show* him how to hold the fork. Praise if he picks up the fork. If he does not pick up the fork, *prompt* him to hold it and tell him how: “Now PICK UP the FORK. ... That’s it. Hold it at the BACK.”   
3. Once he is holding the fork, tell him and prompt him, if necessary, to pick up a bite of meat: “Now PICK UP a bite of MEAT. MEAT (move his arm through the motions). That’s good. Okay, now LIFT UP the fork to your MOUTH.” *Show* him how to lift up the fork, and *prompt* him to do it.   
4. When the fork is in front of his mouth, prompt him to open his mouth by gently pulling down on his chin, and put the fork in. Then slide the fork up and out so that his upper lip or teeth pull the meat off the fork.   
5. Start the next bite.   
6. Remember: if the child looks away and stops paying attention, stop talking and prompting him. Wait until he is paying attention again.

7. After a few bites of one food, switch to a food that needs a spoon. Go through the same steps as before. Tell the child which food to eat and which utensil to use. Show him how and prompt him through the motions. Then switch to another food and utensil. For instance, prompt him to take a drink from his glass or cup, using one hand.

8. Slowly fade out telling, showing, and prompting. If the child reaches with his fingers or begins to make a mistake, gently *stop* him before he makes it, correct him (“Use your fork”), and prompt him to make the right movement with the right utensil. If he repeats the same mistake again, remove his plate for 30 seconds and give him extra prompting the next time.

An easy prompt would be to have the right utensil next to the food   
 on the plate that uses the utensil, so the child can see what goes with what.

Of course, this method will not work overnight. It may take 2 or 3 weeks before the child begins to use the spoon and fork with the right foods on his own. Take your time and look for just a little progress each week. It will add up to a big change before you know it.

WHAT TO DO IF THE CHILD KEEPS LEAVING THE TABLE

The easiest way to handle this behavior is to reward the child by talking to him, praising him while he is eating, or even giving him small amounts of his favorite foods every few minutes while he is sitting and eating the other foods. At the same time, let the *natural consequences* of leaving the table do their work. Ignore the child when he leaves the table. Make no effort to stop him. When mealtime is over, he gets no more to eat until the next meal. If he still leaves the table but just eats faster, remove his plate when he gets up and do not let him eat again until the next meal.

WHAT TO DO IF THE CHILD EATS ONLY CERTAIN FOOD

We all have foods we like and do not like. If the child refuses to eat a few foods, it is best to forget about them. No one likes Brussels Sprouts!

“Hey, I love Brussels sprouts!”

Okay, one person!

But if the child will eat only a few foods---soft foods, spicy foods---you can increase the number of different foods he will eat by using Grandma’s Law and by fading new foods in.

1. You can use large bites of the child’s favorite foods as rewards for eating small bites of foods he does not like: “As soon as you eat a bite of meat (point), you can have some mashed potatoes (point).” Slowly, increase the amount of meat the child eats before he gets to eat some potatoes.  
2. You can mix small pieces of foods the child does not like with his potatoes. Slowly increase the amount of meat you mix in. At the same time, reward the child for taking a small bite of the meat and potato mixture with a bite of straight potato.

WHAT TO DO IF THE CHILD EATS TOO FAST OR TOO SLOW

If the child eats too fast and is making messes because of it (drooling, spilling), tell him and show him how to eat slowly.   
1. For instance, show him how to move his fork more slowly and talk to him between bites. Be sure to give plenty of praise when he takes a slower bite. “Yes, eat sssllooowww.”   
2. If he keeps making messes because he is eating too fast, remove his plate for 30 seconds or so each time he makes a mess.   
3. You can also give the child signals for each bite. “Watch. When I point to the potatoes, I take eat potatoes (or take a bite)…. [point and take a bite] See? I point to the potatoes and I take a bite (or whichever words work best).” Then, if possible, have the child point, and YOU take a bite. “Now you tell Daddy to take a bite. Point your finger… Yes, now Daddy takes a bite.” Repeat a few times. Finally, say, “Your turn. When I point, YOU take a bite.”

4. When the child gets better at following your cues, slowly reduce them; make the pointing gesture small and smaller. You could even have the child cue herself! “You point your finger and take a bite.”

5. On the other hand, if he eats too slowly, so that everyone has been done for a half hour while he is still picking at his food, make sure to praise whenever he eats a bit faster. Set up Grandma’s Law so that he gets an Activity Reward when he is done: “As soon as you finish eating, we can wrestle.” Or set a kitchen timer for a *little less* time than it usually takes him to finish. Tell the child how many minutes he has and that you are taking away his plate when the bell lings. Of course, this goes for everyone. Then set the timer and let him see it.

6. Praise him for digging in. When the bell goes off, clear the table. *No* arguments and *no* snacks between meals. Slowly decrease the number of minutes you put on the timer until you are down to a reasonable amount of time.

Undressing (CSH4) and Dressing (CSH5)

Mom taught Pearl dressing in Chapter Eighteen in the book on Learning Readiness. Please see how Mom did it. This section is more general; it applies to many children. As always, *tell* the child what to do, *show* him how, and *prompt* him through the right motions (that is, lead him through the steps). Make sure that a big Activity Reward comes after undressing and dressing. For instance, as soon as the child is undressed, he can (have a bath, have a story read to him, wear his favorite pajamas). And as soon as he is dressed, he can (go outside, have breakfast).

1. In general, teach the child to undress and dress by herself by showing, telling, and prompting her through the whole chain, but have her do the last step more by herself (taking off her socks, putting on her shoes).

2. It is a good idea to give the child *extra* practice on some of the hard steps; for instance, putting on or taking off her shirt, untying or tying her shoes. You can practice these steps a few times *during* the routine, or before you work on the routine, if the child needs a lot of help.

3. Notice that you can break down each step into even smaller ones. For example, you can break down putting on a shirt into (1) opening the shirt; (2) putting the arms and head through the holes; and (3) pulling the shirt down. So, just as for the whole task, you can teach a *hard step* by going in smaller steps, starting with the last one.

Washing and Drying Hands and Face (CSH6) and Brushing Teeth (CSH7)

These self-help tasks should be followed by strong, natural *Activity* *Rewards.* For example, when the child has washed his face or hands, he can eat his meal, go for a ride, or play with his favorite toys. And, when he has brushed his teeth after a meal, he can take a bath, have a bedtime story, or go outside and play. Here are some steps to follow when you teach these tasks.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Washing Hands | Washing Face | Brushing Teeth |
| 1. Turn on the water.  2. Pick up soap.  3. Hold hands with soap under the water.  4. Pick up soap. Rub hands together. **[Main step]**  5. Hold soapy hands under water.  6. Turn off water.  7. Dry hands. | 1. Turn on water.  2. Soap wash cloth.  3. Spread out wash cloth in one hand.  5. Rub soap on wash cloth.  6. Put down soap.  7. Wash face. **[Main step]**  8. Put wash cloth down.  9. Rinse face.  10. Rinse and squeeze wash cloth.  11. Put away wash cloth.  12. Turn off water. | 1. Unscrew toothpaste cap.  2. Rinse toothbrush.  3. Squeeze toothpaste onto brush.  4. Put down toothpaste.  5. Move the brush up and down, front and back, across the teeth. **[Main step]**  6. Rinse mouth and brush.  7. Screw the cap on the toothpaste.  8. Put the toothbrush away. |

It seems best to *teach these routines starting with the main steps:* rubbing soapy hands together, swabbing face; brushing teeth. So, do the main step first. Then work backwards a step and forward a step until the child is doing the whole thing.

Try to correct a wrong movement *before* it goes very far. And give plenty of strong praise for correct movements. Tag-reinforce-verify when a child needs extra help focusing on just the right movements. Note that you can adapt the materials to your child’s point of success. Instead of toothpaste in a tube, you could use a toothpaste pump. You could use a washcloth that is like a glove. You could use a pump soap dispenser.

Becoming Toilet Trained (F8)

We discussed toileting in Chapter Eighteen in the book on Learning Readiness. Please read that section now…. Let’s go into it more here. There are many reasons why a child may not be toilet trained. First, the signals he gets inside his body telling him that he has to go may not be hooked up to walking to the bathroom and going in the toilet. Second, going to the bathroom will be painful to the child if he is often constipated. Third, going to the bathroom happens so little anyway that the child does not have many chances each day to learn how to use the toilet and be rewarded for it. And, fourth, the child may be rewarded for going in his pants; for example, persons holler at him (“What!!?? Again!!??”) or clean him up. So it is important to make sure that the child is not rewarded with attention or any other reward when he goes in his pants.

There are lots of ways to toilet train children. Some children just need a few weeks during which they get a lot of practice and rewards for using the toilet in the right way. Other children may need a toilet training program that takes more time or that has more steps in it. If you have been trying to toilet-train a child for a long time without much success, do not give up. The methods we will talk about have worked well even with children and adults who were “have severe cognitive impairments.” Let us start with the method that has the fewest steps.

THE SIMPLEST METHOD

1. First of all, make sure that no one pays much attention to “accidents.” Just set up a program that will teach the child to use the toilet, and let the program take care of “accidents.” The child should, at first, get *strong* rewards for using the toilet.

2. Several times a day, state Grandma’s Law: “When you go in the toilet (potty), you get (candy, soda pop).” Also, if the child is learning to talk or already talks, tell him, “Tell (Mommy, Daddy, Teacher) when you have to go potty.” Then set up a schedule for *checking* the child, *taking* him to the bathroom, and *rewarding* him for having dry pants or for going in the toilet (Madsen, 1966. An oldie and goodie.).

3. For example, every hour (and especially when the child gets up in the morning or gets up from a nap) check to see if his pants are dry. If they are, give great deal of praise for staying dry. Then tell him, “When you go in the toilet (potty), you get (candy, hugs, a story). Tell (Mommy, Daddy, Teacher) when you have to go.” *In a little while* (5 or 10 minutes), if the child says he has to go, praise him and take him to the bathroom. Help him, if needed, to get undressed and to stand or sit in the right position. Reward him when he goes. If the child does not tell you he has to go within about 5 or 10 minutes after you checked and found him dry, take him anyway and again tell him, “When you go to the toilet (potty), you get (good stuff).” Help him to get undressed and to stand or sit in the right position. If the child goes, reward him with what you promised. If he does not go, give him a small reward for just sitting or standing.

4. Each day, have him sit or stand *longer* and longer before he is rewarded. *If you take him to the bathroom often enough and have him sit or stand longer and longer, he is bound to go in the toilet sooner or later.* Then give him a big reward.

5. Once he starts going in the toilet when you take him, fade out the rewards for sitting or standing, and just reward him when he goes. Later, reward with praise and once in a while with treats or activities or hugs for going. Still later, fade out the treats.

6. “What do I do if the child has accidents at other times?”

There are a few things you can do. First, you can just *ignore* it and make sure to take the child to the bathroom *more often* and to reward *only* when he goes in the toilet. Second, you can give the child a *mild* scolding: “That’s not big boy behavior. We DO NOT go in our pants. Go in the toilet.” And, third, you can make going in the pants mildly unpleasant. Have the child clean up the floor and himself every time he does not go in the toilet. Or have the child rinse out his underpants and wear them wet for about a half hour. Reward with praise and a change of clothes if he stays dry for that half hour.

THE CHAINING METHOD

This method (Mahoney, VanWagenen, and Meyerson, 1971. Another oldie and goodie.) has more steps and may take longer than the first method, but it is more likely to work with some children. The idea is to (1) teach the child all the *steps* in the chain of going to the bathroom; (2) give her lots of *practice* going through the steps; (3) teach her to start the chain of going to the bathroom when she gets a *signal;* (4) *reward* for going in the toilet; and ( 5) *mildly punish* for not going in the toilet.

Here are the steps in the *chain* of going to the bathroom: (1) *walking* to the bathroom; (2) *pulling down* the pants or underpants; ( 3) *standing* in front of or *sitting* on the toilet; (4) *going* in the toilet; ( 5) *pulling up* the pants or underpants; and (6) *flushing* the toilet and *washing* the hands. Of course, the first four steps are the most important. Once the child has learned them, you can work more on the last two steps and add them to the chain.

1. Each day, for an hour or so, give the child practice on the *first three* steps of the chain: (1) *walking* to the bathroom; ( 2) *pulling down* the pants or underpants; and (3) *sitting* on or *standing* in front of the toilet. The reason for working on just these three steps at first is that, if the child is rewarded only when he goes in the toilet (Step 4), he will not be rewarded very often.

2. Start the chain of going to the bathroom with a *signal:* “Let’s go potty.” Walk with the child to the bathroom. Hold his hand if necessary, and reward him with praise and candy while he is walking. As the days go by, have him walk *faster,* start walking more *behind* him, and give him *less prompting* while he is walking. Later, reward only when he gets to the bathroom by himself a few seconds after you give the signal.

3. When the child has learned the first step in the chain (walking to the bathroom on signal), add the second step (pulling down the pants or underpants). As before, start the chain with the signal (“Let’s go potty”). When the child gets into the bathroom, tell him, “Pull DOWN your pants,” and *prompt* him to pull down his pants or underpants while he is in front of the toilet. Use as little prompting as you can. Just *point* to his pants if that is enough. Or touch the waistband. Or put his hands on the waistband. As a last resort, hold his hands while you help him to pull down his pants by the waistband. Reward after he has walked to the bathroom quickly on his own *and* has pulled down his pants. Pull up his pants after you reward him. Later, fade out your prompts by holding his hands with less pressure or by holding his upper arms instead of his hands. Work on this until he can pull his pants down by himself. Then add the third step to the chain (standing or sitting).

4. Again, start the chain with the *signal* (“Let’s go potty”). Reward the child for walking to the bathroom and pulling down his pants. Then prompt him to sit on or stand in front of the toilet. Hold him for about10 seconds and reward. Slowly, increase the length of time the child stands or sits to about 30 seconds before you give the reward. Also, slowly fade out your holding prompts.

5. When the child can do all three of the steps on his own after you give the signal, start teaching him Step 4 (going in the toilet). To do this, have the child drink lots of water or juice during the day. You should know about how long it usually takes him before he needs to go to the bathroom after he has had a drink. When it is just about time for him to have to go, give the *signal* (“Let’s go potty”) and have him repeat the chain. If he goes in the toilet, reward him. If he does not go, let him return to what he was doing. If he then goes in his pants, *quickly give him the signal and a mild scolding* (‘NO! Go to the POTTY”) and have him repeat the chain again. If he goes in the toilet, reward him. If not, have him clean himself and change his clothes. Give him as little attention as you can when you are having him clean and change himself. Stay on this step for a few days or more.

6. When the child has learned to go in the toilet (Steps 1 through 4) when he is given the signal, start teaching him Step 5 (pulling up the pants or underpants). After the child has gone in the toilet, tell him, “Pull UP your PANTS.” Again, give him as little prompting as you can. Point to his pants; touch the waistband; put his hands on the waistband to get him started; or hold his hands on the waistband while you help him to pull up his pants. Reward him after his pants are pulled up. Slowly fade out any prompts you were using. At this time you can also teach him to flush the toilet and wash his hands before he leaves the bathroom.

7. The last part of this method is to get the chain under more *natural* *control*;that is, the signals the child gets inside his body. Up to now, you have waited until the child was just about ready to go after he had eaten or had a big drink. Then you gave him the signal to start the chain (“Let’s go potty.”). Now, be on the lookout for signals from the child that he *feels* as if he has to go; for instance, straining, blushing, bending over, tugging at his pants, or making faces. That is the time to quickly give the signal (“Let’s go potty”). Reward for repeating the chain and going in the toilet. It is also a good idea to teach the child to say where he is going while he is walking to the bathroom (“Where are you going?” . . . “Potty”). Keep giving the child lots of liquids for a while and then slowly fade them out.

THE CRASH PROGRAM

The “crash” program gives the child a lot of practice on all the steps of the chain in a short time. Instead of giving the child an hour-long session, this method (Azrin and Foxx, 1971; Azrin and Foxx, 1989) has the child stay in the bathroom near the toilet for about 8 hours. He leaves the area to eat meals. As in the chaining method, give the child plenty of liquids. He should be placed and kept on the toilet for 20 minutes out of every half hour. He can get up if he goes before the 20 minutes are up. If he goes during the 20 minutes while he is sitting on the toilet, hug him, praise him, and give him a strong food reward; for instance, fruit or a liquid he likes. During the 10 minutes out of each half hour that the child is not sitting on the toilet, reward him every 5 minutes that he stays dry.

When it is time to get on the toilet, prompt the child to pull down his pants. As we said before, use as little prompting as is needed. After the child has been sitting for 20 minutes or has gone in the toilet, prompt him to pull up his pants and flush the toilet. Slowly fade out rewards for staying dry and just reward going in the toilet.

If the child has “accidents” during the 10 minutes he is not on the toilet, scold him and have him clean himself up as well as the bathroom area. Give him as little attention as possible while he is doing this, but make sure that he cleans up. When the “crash” program is over (which should be in less than a week), check the child during the day, especially before bedtime, when he gets up in the morning, and before meals, snacks, and special activities. If he has had an accident, he cleans himself and the area. He also misses the snack or must wait for the meal or activity.

WHAT TO DO IF THE CHILD IS CONSTIPATED

If the child is constipated, going to the bathroom may be painful. Ease the constipation by having the child eat dried fruit. Liquid medication and glycerin suppositories will also help. If you use suppositories, slowly decrease their size as the child learns to use the toilet.

A FEW LAST TIPS

First, if you have other teaching programs going at the same time as toilet training, the child’s training may take longer. So it may be a good idea to relax the other teaching programs for a little while. If you keep other teaching programs going, though, use *different rewards* in the different programs so that the child will be less likely to become satiated.

HOW TO KEEP TRACK OF THE CHILD’s PROGRESS IN TOILET TRAINING

One way to keep track is to count and chart the number of times the child has “accidents” and the number of times he uses the toilet each day. Second, write down how well the child is doing at each of the steps in the chain of going to the bathroom. Write down what kinds of prompts the child needs, if any, or if he can do the step on his own. This will help you to plan what to do on the following days.

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