

5 ways to build self help skills

Self help skills are really important for children to gain independence. They don't just happen overnight and require support to help children achieve success. Here are some tips on how this can be achieved...



Give children time

learning new skills takes time, especially when you are young and are still developing an awareness of how your body works and how to control it. When working on self help skills with children don't put pressure on them as this can impact their ability to succeed.



Build similar skills into play

Home corner is a great way to develop self help skills through feeding, clothing and generally caring for dolls. Not every child is interested in home corner though so find other ways such as shovelling sand or rocks with a small shovel, attaching signs to environments etc.



Offer constructive feedback

Instead of giving really broad feedback such as "good job" or "nice try" give specific feedback so children can know what worked and what they could try next time, such as 'That was a great try at feeding yourself, if you try holding the spoon further down you can keep it steady so things don't fall off'.



Remind families of the importance

Families are usually busy and time poor, so waiting for a child to put their socks and shoes on themselves can feel frustrating. Let families know how the child is developing their self help skills in the service and encourage them to give their child space to try it themselves, even if it does take a little bit longer.



Don't compare children to each other

It should not matter whether a child is developing skills at the same rate as others, as everyone is different and may have different amount of time to practice skills outside the service. What is important is that children are progressing in their own developmental journey.