



SELF-HELP AND MOTOR SKILLS

Self-Help Skills

Self-help skills include behaviors such as caring for one's own bathroom needs, hanging up one's own coat, and controlling one's emotions. This skill area is one of the most important indicators of school readiness according to kindergarten teachers. It is important to help children work on social skill development and adaptive skills in order to help make the transition as smooth as possible.



Motor Skills

Physical skills including large and small muscle movements are important indicators of readiness. Large muscle movements, such as running, walking, jumping, and lifting are known as gross motor movements, which contribute to a child's ability to care for his/her own needs. Fine motor skills are small muscle movements, such as pinching, grasping, squeezing, pressing, and twisting. Fine motor skills are needed for writing, cutting, buttoning, zipping, and tying—all important skills needed for kindergarten activities.



Approaches to Learning

The way a child learns is dependent on his/her self-concept and health. Listening skills are also a part of how a child learns, and this is connected to the ability for a child to have self-control in group situations. Children learn from other children, as well. It is easier for children to focus on what the teacher is saying when they are well rested, healthy, and feel good about themselves. In order for children to acclimate to kindergarten, it is important for them to be part of a social situation with peers before kindergarten. Play dates, library programs, and other group activities help prepare children for the transition.



Books That Encourage Physical Well-Being

- ***I Like Myself!*** –Karen Beaumont; David Catrow
- ***The Vegetables We Eat*** –Gail Gibbons
- ***Ready, Set, Skip!*** –Jane O'Connor; Ann James
- ***The Busy Body Book*** –Julie Sykes; Tim Warnes



Books That Encourage Self-Help Skills

- ***Hands Are Not For Hitting*** –Dr. Martine Agassi; Marieka Heinlen
- ***Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*** –Margaret Chodos-Irvine
- ***It's Hard to be Five: Learning How to Work My Control Panel*** –Jamie Lee Curtis
- ***Llama Llama Time to Share*** –Anna Dewdney
- ***The Kissing Hand*** –Audrey Penn; Ruth E. Harper; Nancy M. Leak

Activities That Encourage Motor/ Self-Help Skills

- Get your child involved in a play group or other social situations where they have plenty of time to work on social skills before kindergarten. Take them to the library to attend story hour programs with children their age.
- Take your child to the park. Encourage them to run, climb, skip, and slide. All of these activities are important to a child's physical development.
- With supervision, allow your child to use scissors to cut out pictures in a magazine. It is important for a child to have practice with scissors before kindergarten.
- Encourage your child to put on their own clothes, shoes, and jacket. Encourage your child to hang up their own jacket and put things away when they are finished. Give them a simple chore to do independently each day, such as set the table, or feed the pet.



Session 6: Self Help & Motor Skills

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Visit the library! Encourage your child to carry some of the books they would like to check out.		Encourage your child to cut pictures from a magazine with supervision. Remind them: thumb in the top of the scissors.		Encourage your child to work on zipping their own zipper.
	Have a "skipping" race outside to help your child practice skipping.		Unlace a pair of shoes and encourage your child to lace them back up correctly.		Encourage your child to walk up and down steps by alternating feet.	
Hang a shirt with buttons on a hanger within reach for your child. Encourage your child to button it.		Visit the library! Check out books about kindergarten.		Supply large beads and pipe cleaners. Encourage your child to string the beads with supervision.		Play with play dough to help strengthen your child's hand muscles.
	Encourage your child to hang up his/her own laundry on hangers.		Play "Simon Says" focusing on physical movements.		Go to the park and run with your child.	
Practice shoe tying with your child. Model how to tie shoes by reaching around your child.		Visit the library! Check out CDs with music and movement activities.				

Early Literacy Practice: Self-Help and Motor Skills

The activities this month will help foster your child's self-help skills. Activities that work on fine motor skills such as writing, cutting, stringing, and lacing, and large motor skills such as running and skipping, are also included.

Readiness Domain Focus: Approaches to Learning; Social-Emotional Development; Health and Physical Well-Being