



# Developing Skills for Activities of Daily Living

**Activities of daily living (ADLs) are routine tasks that people do every day to take care of themselves.**

**Sleeping • Dressing • Eating and Drinking • Bathing and Grooming • Toileting • Leisure**

## **General ways to assist your child with ADLs:**

- Create a routine
- Use a visual schedule
- Let them try
- Let them learn from their mistakes
- Slowly decrease the amount of cues you give them as they try activities
- Give a demonstration of how to do something first

## **ADL Specific Recommendations**

### **Sleep/Rest**

- Avoid screen time before bed (phones, tablets, TVs, etc.)
- Have a pre-bedtime routine (for example: bath time, read a story, sleep)
- Weighted blanket (monitored for safety, and less than 10% of bodyweight)
- Night light that projects images/colors
- Calming music
- Consistency is key

### **Eating and Drinking**

- When encouraging them to try new foods they are resistant to, try slow exposure: having it on your plate, having it on their plate, poking it, smelling it, licking it, biting it
- Adapted equipment, as needed (angled spoon, scoop plate, utensil holder grip, drinking cups with handles, etc.)
- Use cups that match their swallowing ability

### **Toileting**

- Identify when child is ready for potty training: they are showing interest
- Set up routine for going to the bathroom (when they wake up, before leaving the house, etc.)
- Use clothing they can easily remove to go to the bathroom (avoid buttons, snaps, etc.)
- Set up the environment: stool, toilet paper easy to reach. And explain how a toilet works/the noise
- Reward chart, praise, etc.

### **Dressing**

- Set out clothing for them to put on
- Orienting the clothing for them
- Teach them how to orient the clothing themselves (look for a picture in the front, tag in the back)
- Let them complete the steps that they can do, and then guide them with the final steps
- If averse to different textures, try clothing without tags that's 100% cotton

### **Bathing and Grooming**

- If reluctant to being washed, try different washing tools (sponge, wash cloth, loofa, etc.)
- If reluctant to being in water, trial washing themselves outside of the tub using a basin and washing tool
- Use music or a timer to provide cues for how long to brush their teeth

### **Leisure**

- Encourage them to try new things
- Try games or activities that help them in other areas (educational, fine motor, sensory, visual motor)
- Make a list of things they like to do, or they are interested in trying
- Offer time for a preferred activity if they try something new
- Use a visual timer to signify the end of leisure time