

Developing Independence

Independence is being able to complete a task without help from others.

Levels of Assistance

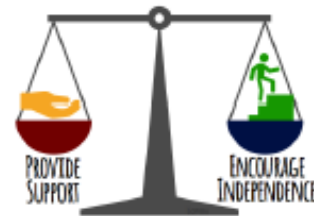
- Independent: completing 100% of the task on their own
- Modified Independent: Completing 100% of the task on their own but requiring extra time or adaptive equipment
- Supervision/Set-Up: Physically completing the task on their own, but requiring another person in the room for safety, to provide needed cues, and/or to collect and set up the necessary materials in the environment
- Minimal Assist: Can complete 75% or more of the task independently
- Moderate Assist: Can complete 50% or more of the task independently
- Maximal Assist: Can complete 25% or more of the task independently
- Total Assist: Can complete less than 25% of the task independently

Examples of School-Related Tasks That Require Some Level of Independence:

- Going to the bathroom
- Eating and opening food containers
- Initiating and completing independent work
- Transitioning between classes
- Completing and turning in homework
- Clothing management
- Managing classroom materials

Signs of Independence Difficulties:

- Reluctant to try new things on their own
- Frequently asks for help before trying themselves
- Requires supervision for safety
- Unable to complete daily tasks without physical assistance
- Requires a lot of cuing to complete a task
- Says "I can't do it" or "You do it"
- Will wait for someone to do things for them



How You Help your Child with Independence:

- Let them try to do things themselves before offering your assistance (if they are safe). It is okay if they fail, they can learn from that.
- Demonstrate for them how to do the task, and then have them try themselves
- Provide verbal, visual, and tactile (touch) cues to help them first before trying hand over hand assistance or doing it for them
- Encourage them to complete part of the tasks independently if they are unable to do the whole thing. For example, they put their school items in their backpack, and you zip it
- Hand over hand assistance: your hands are over theirs to guide them, as needed. Ideally, they will lead the movement while you assist.
- Gradually decrease the amount of cues and assistance you are giving to allow them room for growth
- Let them be creative! You might think something has to be done a certain way, but they might find their own way that works for them.
- Use a visual schedule or check list, so they know what they need to do throughout the day
- Use adaptive equipment to assist them with completing tasks more independently, as needed (elastic shoelaces, universal cuff, button hook, etc.)