



Developing Self-Care Skills for Children with Disabilities

DALLAS
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Special
Services

Agenda

We will learn about

- The important of self-care skills
- Strategies and tips to support the learning of the skills
- Q & A



Why


Self-care skills are the everyday tasks undertaken in order to participate in life activities including **personal care** and **functional mobility**.

Most children naturally develop basic self-care skills as they grow by exploring and observing the world around them. For children with disabilities, this process can be more challenging.




Challenges

- Fine and gross motor limitations
- Sensory processing difficulties
 - e.g. has difficulty in organizing and responding to information from the senses (over or under sensitive to certain stimuli) or easily distracted
- Limited motor planning skills
 - e.g. has difficulty moving their bodies in space in order to complete an action due to poor coordination
- Low motivation
 - e.g. we do too much for them and it's also easier for them to let us do things for them



Besides helping your child to gain independence and confidence, self-care skills act as precursors for many school related tasks and life skills:

- **Hand control and strength** (e.g. hold and move utensils)
 - **Object manipulation** (e.g. controlled use of daily tools)
 - **Organizing, planning and sequencing** (e.g. complete multi-step tasks)
 - **Communication** (e.g. expressive and receptive languages)
 - **Compliance** (e.g. follow simple routines and procedures)
- 



Strategies and Tips

Activity

1. Collect a pen and seven (7) sticky notes.
2. Write down the first seven things/actions you do when you wake up in the morning. One thing/action per sticky note.
3. Put the sticky note in a sequential order (top to bottom or left to right)

Toileting

Potty training is a basic self-care task that causes anxiety for most caregivers. There are many factors involved in potty training a child with special needs, from recognizing and communicating the need to go to the bathroom to independently standing to pull up pants.

18 months	2 years	3 years	4 years
Showing discomfort when wet, sitting on the potty with supervision.	Needs help getting to the potty, but having fewer accidents	Mostly independent on the potty, may need help with wiping and dressing	Fully potty trained

When potty training a child with special needs, we need to take their abilities into consideration. Here are some signs to consider if your child is ready to handle potty training.

Physically

- Child's diaper stays dry for about two hours at a time during the day
- Bowel movements come at regular times

Developmentally

- Follow two-step instructions and is willing to cooperate
- Can communicate a need to go
- Is aware of wet or soiled diapers
- Shows a need to be independent
- Is able to sit on the potty for 5 minutes without help

Habit Training

We understand a child with disabilities may not meet all the physical and development signs mentioned in the previous slide, but it does not mean we should wait to start the toilet training.



Start the Toilet Training

1. Begin by data collection

- Note on a chart when your child urinates or has a bowel movement throughout the day. Review and look for patterns.

1. Get your child interested in the toilet

- Create an environment that is secure and not overstimulating by reducing distractions.
- Keep your child informed and involved of what's going on by showing them around the bathroom.

Toilet Training (continue)

3. Implement a consistent routine

- Set a potty timer to go off every hour.
- Utilize the visual supports such as toileting schedules to teach the routine.

*On potty training day, be sure to drink plenty of fluids!

*Don't wear diapers during potty training!

Examples of visual support for toileting

Using the Restroom

1. 	5. 
2. 	6. 
3. 	7. 
4. 	

Using the Toilet

 1 Pull down pants	 2 Sit on toilet	 3 Wee in toilet	 4 Get toilet paper
 5 Wipe until dry	 6 Pull up pants	 7 Flush toilet	 8 Wash hands

	pull pants down		flush the toilet
	pull underwear down		wash hands with soap
	sit down and potty		rinse off soap
	wipe		dry hands
	pull up pants		ALL DONE!!

Toilet Training (continue)

4. **Develop a plan with all participating adults**

- Review the expectations so everyone is on the same page.
- Be ready and proactive - When the potty timer goes off, it is time to go to the bathroom.
- Do not have the child sit in toilet more than 5 minutes

5. **Always celebrate success**

- When your child does use the potty successfully, be sure to praise them or provide a treat of some sort that they only receive after using the potty.
- Make it a POSITIVE experience!

How to use the toileting schedule?



Hand Washing

Washing hands is a lifelong healthy habit that children learn with practice. We play an important role in teaching how to wash their hands appropriately at an early age.

2 years	3 years
Washing hands with assistance	Washing hand independently

Tips for teaching hand washing

There are multiple steps to wash our hands.

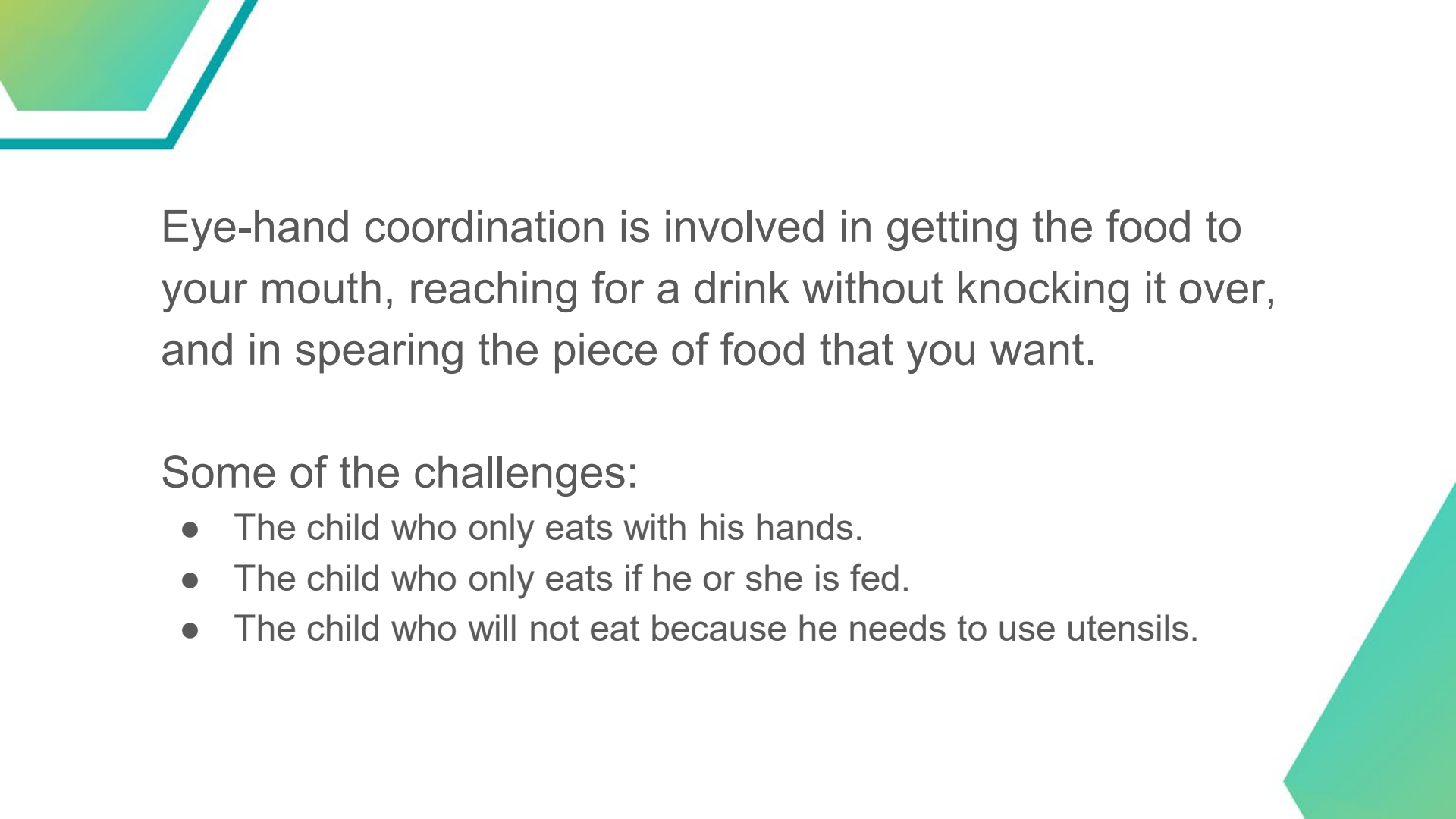
- Create and refer the child to the visual supports when washing their hands.
- In order to complete all steps of handwashing, it typically involves using full physical assistance at first.
- Once the child begins to initiate some knowledge of the steps, we gradually reduce the amount of physical assistance.
- After a few practices, we can move to model and then onto verbal with visual supports.



Feeding

As children age, self-feeding skills will include using different utensils, scooping/stabbing food, transferring food from plate to mouth, and even cutting food independently.

18 months	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Finger feeding small bites and drinking from sippy cup	Eating with a spoon and drinking from a straw	Stabbing food with a fork	Mostly feeding independently, needs help cutting food	Cutting food with knife



Eye-hand coordination is involved in getting the food to your mouth, reaching for a drink without knocking it over, and in spearing the piece of food that you want.

Some of the challenges:

- The child who only eats with his hands.
- The child who only eats if he or she is fed.
- The child who will not eat because he needs to use utensils.

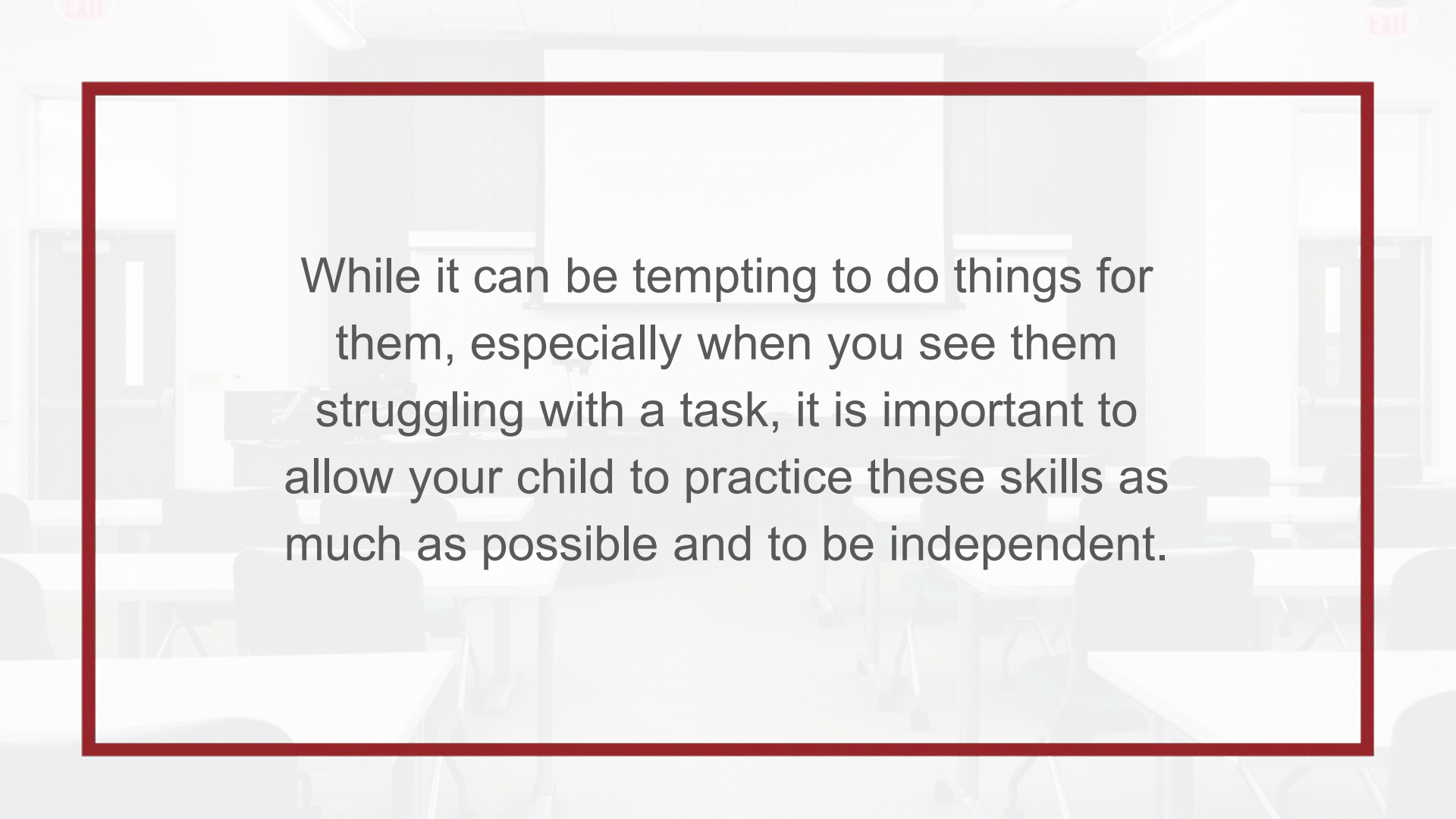
Tips for promoting self-feeding and utensil skills

Use playtime to strengthen skills

- Practice grasping and manipulating utensils during pretend play time (e.g. feeding babydoll, cooking, stabbing and scooping playdoh pieces)

During meal time

- Eat meals with your child (modeling)
- Use appropriate utensils to minimize frustration (soft and short handles)
- First load food onto your child's spoon or fork, then give it to your child to put into their mouth on their own.
- Maintain a proper positioning for motor control and coordination. Elbows should be supported on the tray or table.
- Be consistent and provide motivation.

A blurred background of a classroom with desks and chairs. A red rectangular border frames the text in the center. There are "EXIT" signs visible in the upper corners of the image.

While it can be tempting to do things for them, especially when you see them struggling with a task, it is important to allow your child to practice these skills as much as possible and to be independent.



Q & A