Encourage Independence Through the Years

One of our jobs as parents is to safely guide our children toward as much independence as possible. We do this in simple ways, every day, over many years. Through systems and routines, we can help our kids build their skills and self-confidence — all while strengthening their bonds with the family.

Steps toward independence are different for each child, depending on their health and development. Following are examples of tasks that typically-developing children may be able to accomplish as they grow increasingly independent.

Preschoolers can choose what to wear and get dressed with a bit of help from a parent or older sibling. At night they can get undressed, put on their pajamas and choose their bedtime story. They can put their dirty clothes in the hamper, put their toys away and help with family chores.

By elementary school, kids can organize and pack up their own belongings for school, sports and music lessons. They can start to choose their own hobbies and other non-school activities. At home, they can plan a family game night, help with cooking and take on other chores. They can assist and encourage younger siblings with simple tasks, and read to them.

Tweens can walk or bike to and from school, and they can be home alone. They can help with virtually all household chores, and they can babysit younger siblings and kids in the neighborhood. If they are having an issue at school or on a sports team, they can talk directly to their teacher or coach to work out a solution.

Teens can have more of their own social activities. They can talk with their doctor on their own and begin to schedule their own appointments. They may work at a part-time job and do volunteer work. Teens of driving age may earn the privilege of borrowing the family car.

No matter a child’s age, our role as parents is to teach them the skills they need, provide opportunities for lots of practice and encourage them along the way.

Seattle Children’s North Clinic in Everett Opens Aug. 15
Seattle Children’s North will serve families in north King, Snohomish, Whatcom and Skagit counties. The clinic will offer urgent care and services in more than 18 pediatric specialties. The new site opens Aug. 15 and is located on Providence Regional Medical Center Everett’s Colby Campus.

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit www.seattlechildrens.org/northclinic or join us on Sept. 15 at the community open house (see back cover for details).

TO LEARN MORE:
Add More Veggies!

Vegetables are a vital part of an overall healthy diet. These heroes of the food world provide key nutrients like vitamins A and C, potassium and folic acid — plus dietary fiber our bodies need. Eating veggies can even reduce the risk for obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Since most kids don’t exactly beg for broccoli or clamor for cauliflower, try some proven ways to help them get their veggies — and actually enjoy them! Grow your own, visit an outdoor farmer’s market, or explore the produce section of your grocery store and have your child choose a vegetable they haven’t tried. Offer veggies as snacks, and invite your child to help prepare a tasty new recipe for vegetables.

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables-tips.

Building an Emergency Kit

Have you been putting off building an emergency kit? Many families do. But this important task is simpler than you might imagine, so move it to the top of your to-do list! Reasonably priced emergency kits (also called survival kits) are available online and at home-improvement stores — and are even sold by nonprofit groups as fund-raisers. If you’d rather build your own, the internet has lists prepared by experts. You can even buy a few items at a time to spread out the costs and make the task seem more do-able. Building and maintaining an emergency kit can be a fun family activity that teaches kids the value of being prepared. When you have your kit together, be sure all your family members and babysitters know where it’s located. And once or twice a year check your supplies for expiration dates and replenish items as needed. Building an emergency kit does cost a bit of money, but peace of mind and your family’s safety are priceless!

TO LEARN MORE:
Visit www.ready.gov/kids/build-a-kit or https://youtu.be/FNYZtADUDgU.

Drowning Prevention for Older Kids

As parents, we’re vigilant about water safety when our children are very young because they lack swimming skills and experience. But it’s also vitally important to monitor water safety as kids get older and become more physically capable and independent.

One of the tricky things about parenting tweens and teens is that they can be confident and fearless. They often overestimate their own abilities and underestimate potential dangers. This puts them at higher risk for drowning — a leading cause of accidental death among older kids. Statistics tell us that males are more likely than females to drown, and that most drowning deaths happen in open water: lakes, rivers and the ocean.

Kids need the knowledge, skills and environment to be safe around water. Help your child develop strong swimming skills, and talk about water safety. Teach them to swim in lifeguarded areas whenever possible, and to use the buddy system. Have them wear a life jacket when boating and swimming in non-lifeguarded areas.

Explain that open waters can be very cold even in summer, and that currents, waves and tides can overwhelm even strong swimmers. They should know not to dive or jump into shallow or unfamiliar water, nor swim in areas where jet skis and motor boats are in use.

Build the skills they need to deal with peer pressure. Kids commonly dare one another to swim a certain distance or jump from a dangerous height. And while drugs and alcohol are always a bad idea, they can’t ever be used when swimming or boating. Give your child skills and provide them ways to have fun and be safe.

TO LEARN MORE:
Quick Tip

Store firearms unloaded and locked using a firearm safe, lock box, trigger or cable lock. Store and lock ammunition in a separate place.

Playing with Your Baby

There are many clever toys for infants out there, but what your baby craves and needs most at playtime is you: your full attention and affection. Close-up, loving human interaction helps develop a baby’s brain, body, emotions and personality. There are lots of simple ways to play. Read to them from picture books and provide lively voices and sounds, pointing to the pictures you are describing. Sing songs, play peek-a-boo, make entertaining faces, and hold a tempting object so they can track it with their eyes, reach for it and grab it. Spend plenty of time outdoors and narrate what you are seeing and doing. No toy or device will ever be as fascinating (or more loved!) by your baby than you.

TO LEARN MORE:

Summer Food Safety

Summer fun includes eating outdoors at picnics, barbecues and camping sites. While food safety is crucial all year long, the risk of food-borne illness increases when warmer temperatures allow bacteria to grow faster — and when refrigeration is trickier. So keep items that require refrigeration in coolers with plenty of ice. Keep meat chilled before cooking and immediately after eating, and keep raw meat away from other foods with separate containers, plates and cutting boards. (Ice used with raw meat mustn’t be used for anything else.) Use a food thermometer to ensure meats are safely cooked, and be sure to bring along cleaning supplies for hands, utensils and surfaces. Enjoy the tastes of summer — safely!

TO LEARN MORE:

Stay Hydrated

Especially during summer, busy kids often don’t slow down to drink water. By the time they feel thirsty, they’re already at risk of dehydration — and when playing in or near water, it’s even harder to notice thirst. So bring water bottles with you everywhere, and several times an hour remind your child to drink. Teach your child to check the color of their urine: clear or light yellow shows they’re drinking enough, while dark yellow means mild dehydration. Kids who are especially active or playing a sport should have 12 ounces of water 30 minutes before the activity begins, then at least 10 gulps every 20 minutes during the activity, plus at least 10 gulps every 20 minutes in the first hour after the activity.

TO LEARN MORE:
Classes and Events

To register or view more information, please visit www.seattlechildrens.org/classes. A phone number is provided for those without Internet access. No one will be denied admission if unable to pay the full amount. If you need an interpreter, please let staff know when you register. These classes are popular and often fill up several months in advance, so register early.

**PARENTING CLASSES**

**Autism 101**
WHEN: Thursday, July 26, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Autism 200 Series**
Autism 206: Transition to Adulthood: Housing Options – A Panel Discussion
WHEN: Thursday, July 19, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Autism 207: Transition to Adulthood: Behavioral Support for Adults
WHEN: Thursday, Aug. 16, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Autism 208: Hiding in Plain Sight: Girls With Autism Spectrum Disorder
WHEN: Thursday, Sept. 20, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**HeartSaver First Aid, CPR and AED**
WHEN: Sunday, Aug. 5, 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**Youth Mental Health First Aid**
WHEN: View dates and availability online
FEE: $15 per person
WHERE: Seattle Children's Sand Point Learning Center, 5801 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle
CALL: 206-987-9878

This 8-hour class is for adults who regularly interact with adolescents 12 to 18. Youth Mental Health First Aid will improve your knowledge of mental health and substance use problems, and will teach you how to connect youth with care when needed.

**PRETEEN AND TEEN CLASSES**

**Better Babysitters**
WHEN: Saturday, Aug. 4, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
WHERE: Pavilion for Women & Children, 900 Pacific Ave., Everett

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 22, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
WHERE: Seattle Children's South Clinic, 34920 Enchanted Pkwy. S., Federal Way

**CPR and First Aid for Babysitters**
WHEN: Sunday, July 15, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. or Sunday, Aug. 12, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**For Boys: The Joys and Challenges of Growing Up**
WHEN: Monday, Sept. 17 & Sept. 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus, 4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle
CALL: 206-987-2304

**For Girls: A Heart-to-Heart Talk on Growing Up**
WHEN: Tuesday, Aug. 7 & Aug. 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus, 4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

**Low-Cost Life Jacket Sales**
WHEN: Saturday, August 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
WHERE: Rainier Beach Pool, 8825 Rainier Ave. S, Seattle

**For Families who qualify for Seattle Parks and Rec scholarships pay $10 for any size.**
CALL: 206-684-4961

**Seattle Children's North Clinic Community Open House**
WHEN: Saturday, September 15, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
WHERE: 1815 13th St., Everett
FEE: Free

**EVENTS**

**New Class**