

## DEVELOPING SELF-HELP SKILLS

Children, just like adults, want to be independent. Becoming skilled at common tasks, such as dressing, grooming, and daily chores, will help build self-importance and allow your child to gain the confidence to try new things.

- **Set daily routines** so your child learns that some tasks come before others, such as washing hands before cooking or eating food and brushing teeth before going to bed.
- **Break tasks into small steps** with clear and short directions (e.g., for hand washing: wet hands, use soap, scrub front and back of hands, rinse, and dry).
- **Show how to do a task** many times before you ask your child to try it on his or her own. Describe what you are doing as you complete each step.
- **Allow lots of time for practice** of a new skill. Give lots of praise both for trying and for completing a new task.
- **Work together as a family** to get chores done. Teaching your child at a young age to help out will prepare him or her to become a helpful and responsible adult.
- **Explain safety rules** and be sure your child is aware of dangerous things in your home (e.g., don't touch the dials or buttons on the stove). Teach your child his or her full name, phone number, address, and how and when to call 911.
- **Chore charts** that use stickers and a reward system for doing tasks (e.g., getting dressed, putting away toys, washing hands without a reminder) can build self-esteem and foster independence.

### Resources

<http://kidshealth.org/>

This resource website provides articles about child health, development, and behavior.

<http://ada.org/3230.aspx>

The American Dental Association offers videos for children on brushing their teeth.

[http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?info\\_center=14&tax\\_level=2&tax\\_subject=231&topic\\_id=1196](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=2&tax_subject=231&topic_id=1196)

This U.S. Department of Agriculture website includes food safety games and activities designed for children.

<http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com/>

In addition to free printable chore charts that include popular characters, this website offers behavior management resources for parents and teachers.