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## HOW TO TEACH INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENCE IN YOUNG CHILDREN

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From routines like brushing teeth and packing a backpack, to more complex tasks such as planning and finishing school projects, what parent doesn't want their child to be more independent? Let's look at some steps that we as parents can take to teach our children good habits early on.

Start with prioritizing what you will be working on first and plan. Let's say your child needs to wash his hands independently. Create multiple, fun opportunities during your day and make time for it. Many parents are coping with time crunch as they worry about what needs to be done. As you start, tell your child specifically what you would like him to do and model it. Wash hands with them first, teach step by step assisting only with new steps and then pull back on the prompts. Practice multiple times per day and use new or different materials. Nothing does magic like the power of reinforcement! You can create a token board to keep track of successes.

Forget perfection when it comes to independence. Hands not fully dried, shirt backwards, or shoe on the wrong foot is not a big deal. Build their confidence by allowing them to make an error. By acknowledging and appreciating their accomplishments you will be reinforcing their motivation because they have made a decision on their own and it met your approval. They will learn not to depend on you all the time and start to initiate new tasks. This makes them feel confident when making future decisions and taking harder challenges. Building your child's confidence and independence is a worthwhile investment. In the future it will allow them to gain the respect of others and grow up to become leaders and decision makers.



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