

# SELF-CARE SKILLS

## EDUCATIONAL HANDOUT

### What is self-care?

Self-care is the ability to take care of themselves.

### Why is self-care skills important?

A child needs to develop self-care skills to be independent in their life. A child often helps to develop these skills because they may need their parent's support. It is important to instill self-care habits in a child from a young age. They can begin doing some self-care tasks as they become more independent. This would lead the child to develop healthy habits.

### What does research say?

- Children with autism spectrum disorder are more likely to be more independent as they grow older when they master various self-care tasks.
- Self-care helps a child to understand their physical and emotional needs.
- Learning self-care skills helps decrease anxiety and frustration for both child and parents.

### The following are some examples of self-care activities :

Bathe



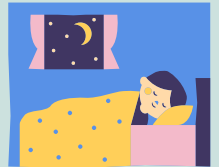
Get dressed



Eat and drink



Sleep



Play



Wash hands



### Self-care skills require a wide range of skills. For example:

#### Fine motor skills

Movements involving the small muscles in the fingers, hands, and wrists



#### Gross motor skills

Physical skills that involve the whole body



#### Oral motor skills

Movements of face muscles



#### Communication skills

Transfer information through oral, written, or sign language

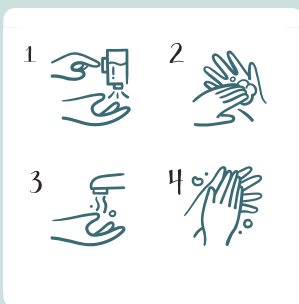


## A child with self-care problems may look like or experience:

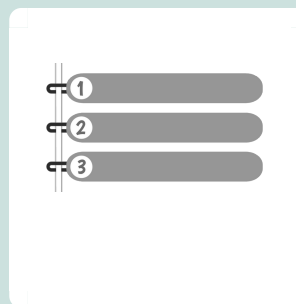
- Unable to independently feed themselves
- Need extra help to fall asleep
- Low motivation to dress themselves and wait for parents to do it for them
- Late on being potty trained where would prefer to wear a diaper in later age
- Hard time using a fork and spoon to eat

## The following are some examples of activities for a child to improve self-care skills:

### Create visual schedule of the steps for a task, like handwash



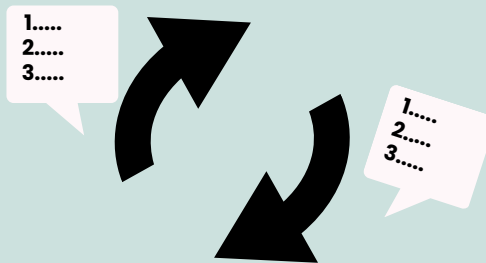
### Break down the task to small steps



### Use the same strategy each time the child does a task



### Be consistent and simple words to help the child do a task



**For more information or concerns about your child's self-care skills, please consult your child's occupational therapist or contact your pediatrician. You may also refer to [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org) for additional information.**

#### References

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