

75+ WAYS TO RAISE INDEPENDENT KIDS



2-3 YEAR OLDS CAN LEARN TO...

- Bring plate to sink after meals
- Dress oneself with help
- Help put the toys away
- Follow simple one-step instructions
- Put clothes in the hamper
- Brush teeth, wash face with help
- Assist with setting table
- Fold small hand towels
- Ask an adult for help
- Put water in a cup for drinking
- Make eye contact

- Say their full name
- Mimic other kids' behaviors
- Practice the difference between gentle and rough touch
- Follow a basic routine with help
- Greet others with a wave
- Use a toilet with help
- Look and listen for familiar noises in surrounding environment (e.g. busy street)
- Practice waiting, self-control

4-5 YEAR OLDS CAN LEARN TO...

- Express personal preferences in a respectful way
- Know full name, address and phone number
- Know how to dial 911
- Perform simple cleaning chores
- Identify feelings besides sad, mad, happy
- Understand basic concept of money
- Understand basic concept of time
- Pull weeds
- Water plants
- Hang towels after bathing

- Brush teeth, comb hair, wash face
- Help with basic laundry
- Use a hand vacuum
- Hang up coat
- Put away shoes
- Chose clothes and dress self
- Clean up a spill with help
- Put trash in the trash can
- Take turns with others
- Use basic manners
- Feed pets
- Sort dirty laundry by color
- Choose between two to three selections



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6-7 YEAR OLDS CAN LEARN TO...

- Mix stir and cut with a dull knife
- Make a basic meal, like a sandwich
- Help put groceries away
- Wash a small set of dishes
- Unload the dishwasher
- Use basic, non-toxic cleaners
- Tidy any room after using it
- Follow multi-step directions
- Use a watch, check in at certain times
- Operate a small appliance
- Mend clothing, basic sewing
- Introduce self to someone

- Make bed without assistance
- Start a bath or shower with help
- Recognize and identify emotions
- Know how to save money
- Order off a menu at a restaurant
- Complete tasks using a timer
- Use a vacuum
- Use an alarm clock to wake up
- Keep valuables in a safe place
- Help rake the yard, sweep the patio
- Start the washer or dryer
- Organize a drawer, cabinet, small space

8-9 YEAR OLDS CAN LEARN TO...

- Clean out the car
- Bake cookies or muffins
- Shop for something, price compare
- Create reminders for self
- Learn basic first aid
- Read a recipe
- Make and count change
- Manage allowance, saving, spending
- Use the library
- Pack a lunch
- Show empathy, concern for others
- Listen to others' opinions
- Resolve conflicts using problem-solving

- Understand healthy eating choices
- Think of pros and cons
- Express wants, likes, dislikes to peers and adults
- Write and send a thank you note
- Complete homework independently
- Cut and grooms nails
- Make grocery list, shop for items
- Answer the phone properly
- Do something without being told
- Use a checklist
- Socialize without technology
- Admit a mistake
- Offer a genuine apology
- Dress properly for an occasion

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HOW TO OFFER INDEPENDENT PLAY

1. Offer independent play several times per week for 30-60 minutes to promote independence, problem-solving, creativity, and focus.
2. Create safe, age-appropriate play space.
3. Remind, explain to your child about independent play.
4. Set the timer. Start with 5-15 minutes until your child gets the hang of it.
5. Increase to 30 minutes for younger kids and up to 60 minutes for older kids.
6. Quiet toys only. No electronics.
7. Try doing it at the same time each day, most days.

BENEFITS OF INDEPENDENT PLAY

Mental focusing skills: Helps a child develop the ability to concentrate on an object and apply knowledge to the activity at hand without distraction.

Sustained attention span: The interval during which your child can concentrate on a single object or activity will gradually improve and lengthen over time.

Creativity: Kids learn to find enjoyment out of what's available to them and create meaningful new methods and interpretations during play.

Self-Play adeptness: With freedom from influence, support, or aid from others, kids move from dependent to skillfully independent.

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