

*“The greatest gifts
you can give your
children are the
roots of
responsibility and
wings of
independence.”
-Denis Waitley*

ADDITIONAL READING

<https://childmind.org/article/how-to-build-independence-in-preschoolers/>



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Social Emotional Learning At Home



WHY IS FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE IMPORTANT?

Choices

- The opportunity to choose between two or more options lets our children know that they can have their ideas and stand by them.
- Giving our children some control helps in building their decision-making skills and their independence too.

Create an environment that fosters independence

- Make your home child friendly
- Examples:
 1. You can make your home friendly by having many stools to choose from or getting light switch extenders for him or her to switch off their lights.
 2. Small chairs and tables encourage kids to do their artwork or homework.
 3. You will also note that snack preparation is not as hard when your child can reach the table with ease.
 4. You may want to have children-friendly activities within their reach always. Drawers with easy-to-reach arts and crafts materials mean your child will get it and get on with their project. You can also create secret spots with materials for different activities.

Have a routine

- Children need a sense of direction to function. Morning, weekday, weekend, mealtime, or bedtime routines give children direction. It is easy to go through the motions when you know what is coming next.
- Children like to know how things are going to happen because it helps them feel like they have some control. The sense of control makes a child learn how to be independent. (To stick to the routine easily, carve out extra time for mornings as they dress.)

Let your child help

- Even though they cannot assist in a big way, letting them take up small roles builds their independence.
- Examples: Maybe, your child could dress themselves. This is a hard one, but when eating, let your child pick out what he or she want to eat from their plate. Providing children with (healthy) choices again gives them a sense of control, which leads to independence.

Praise wisely

- Praise him or her! When a compliment is earned, and it is genuine, you will realize that it is a great confidence builder. Give praise when he or she succeeds at something the first time.
- Be cautious not to overdo it because sometimes children will expect praise for little effort.

Let them clean up after themselves

- Responsibility and independence go hand in hand. To build these two, let him or her clean up their mess. Get a cleaning set with child safe cleaning items, clean up after playing, and have them make their bed or have them assist you in doing so.

Do not try to solve their minor problems

- This one is usually difficult for parents, because we do not want to see our children hurt or upset. However, letting that spill linger for a few minutes as your child picks him/herself up and wipes the spill will help foster independence.
- Do not rush into solving minor issues. Encouraging your child to come up with solutions to a problem before you assist will help build their problem-solving skills which leads to independence.