

4 ways to
encourage your child's
independence
(while still providing support!)

free
resource!





about Developmenttools

Developmenttools was founded by two pediatric occupational therapists:

**Alison Sims Church, OTD, OTR/L +
Maddie Mello Blas, OTD, OTR/L**

with a mission to equip parents, educators and therapists with the tools needed for optimal development.

Along with managing our therapy practice, our goal is to provide digestible, easy to understand resources for caregivers and providers to utilize for learning and educational purposes.

let's be friends!



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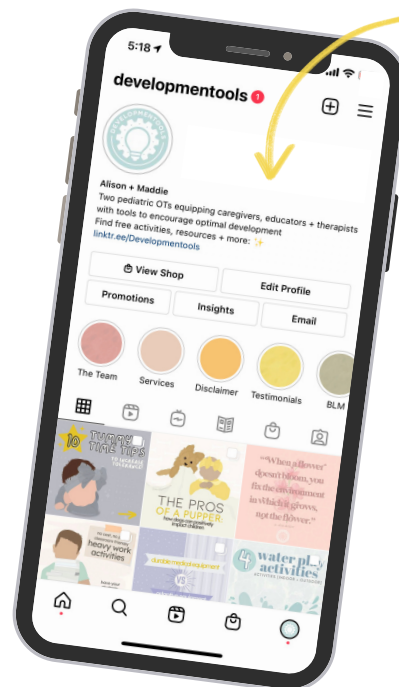


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4 ways to encourage a child's independence (while still providing support!)

1. practice awareness

Before you assist, take a step back and consider the following:

- Is assistance truly needed, or just some extra time as they problem solve?
- If so, what kind of assistance do you need to provide?
- Rather than opening up containers or setting activities up for them, reflect on if they might be able to assist with that. Can they determine what items are needed for a certain activity, and where they might be located?

2. try "hands-off" help

- Remember that you can help without providing physical assistance!
- Consider other ways to assist such as:
 - Gesturing toward objects
 - Imitate or modeling actions
 - Working side-by-side
 - Giving verbal hints or cues

3. designate a time

- Setting aside extra time to allow for problem-solving and trial and error can help alleviate anxiety and stress, as no one feels rushed.
- This can look like:
 - Setting aside a few minutes each day
 - Designating a specific activity or two each week

4. encourage self-help

- As natural as it is for caregivers to step in and help whenever they see their child having difficulty, those moments are excellent opportunities for the child to problem solve!
- If you notice your child has a higher frustration tolerance at certain times in the day (ex. after a nice nap), consider spacing these problem-solving activities throughout the day (ex. while grocery shopping trip or car ride home)
- Encourage their planning skills and forethought: brainstorm possible solutions for activities later in the day (ex. "I know we need to clean up the craft table when we get home, but we are out of paper towels. I wonder what else we could use?")