

SELF CARE SKILLS FOR KINDERGARTEN

At school your child will participate in many self-care activities including going to the washroom, dressing, and eating. The purpose of this handout is to help you think about how your child is progressing with these self-care skills and, if needed, how you can help them continue to develop these skills.

Going to the Washroom

Most children are ready to start using the toilet between the ages of 2-4 years. There are many skills involved in going to the washroom, as you can see in the questions below. Children develop these skills at different ages, and the more practice they have before starting school the better.

Here are some questions to consider. Does your child:

- pull their pants and underwear up/down on their own?
- get on and off the toilet on their own?
- wipe themselves on their own?
- flush the toilet?
- wash and dry their hands?

Here are some tips to practice with your child before they start school:

- When toileting, it is important to feel relaxed and comfortable when sitting on the toilet. A good set up includes making sure your **child's feet are supported (ex. on a footstool)** and using a **reducer ring** if the toilet seat is too large.
- Dress your child in clothes that are **easy to pull up and down**.
- **Teach your child how to wipe**. You may have to do this at first but give them lots of opportunity to **practice** with you before they do this on their own. Consider starting with wet toilet paper to wipe before moving to regular toilet paper.
- At home, have your child practice washing their hands. When in a public washroom show your child, and have them practice, **how to use the soap and paper towel dispensers, turn taps on and off, and lock/unlock stall doors**.



Dressing

During the school day there are many times where your child will need to put on and take off their outdoor clothing and footwear.

Here are some questions to consider. Does your child:

- put on/take off their jacket (including zipper) on their own?
- wear clothes with fasteners such as buttons and snaps? If yes, can they fasten/undo these on their own?
- put on/take off their shoes on their own?
- put on/take off their hat on their own?

Here are some tips to practice with your child before they start school. Show your child and have them practice the following:

- Doing/undoing fasteners such as **zippers, buttons, and snaps**. Larger zippers, buttons and snaps are easier to start with.
- Putting on **slip-on or velcro shoes**.
- Practice putting on and taking off **winter clothes** before sending these clothing items to school (ex. snow pants, mittens, gloves, hat, boots).

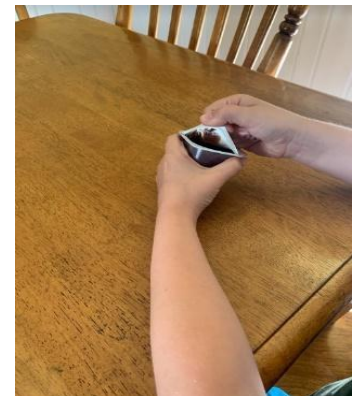


Eating

At school your child will be eating during snack and lunch time.

Here are some questions to consider. Does your child:

- open/close their own lunch box?
- open/close containers, Ziploc® bags, packages?
- peel their own banana or orange?
- open and drink from their water bottle?
- use a fork and spoon, when needed?
- wipe their face after eating, if required?
- tidy up after eating?



Here are some tips to practice with your child before they start school:

- Pack your child's lunch as you would if they were going to school. Have them **practice opening/closing their lunch box** and containers at home or during an outing! Fun tip: try having your child open the banana from the bottom end 😊
- After eating, have your child **put empty wrappers in the garbage and empty containers back in their lunch box**.
- **Practice opening or use child safe scissors** to open bags of crackers, cookies or other packaged food.
- Teach your child to **check in a mirror** after eating to see if they need to wipe their face. **Send a napkin/wipe** in your child's lunchbox for them to wipe their face, when needed.

Kindergarten is a wonderful place to continue to learn and grow. Thanks for supporting your child in getting ready for Kindergarten!

References:

1. Toilet learning (2018). Retrieved from: https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/behavior-and-development/toilet_learning
2. Parent Health Education Resource Working Group. Loving Care: 1 to 3 Years. [Halifax]: Nova Scotia Health Authority, 2020, pp. 76-83.