Independent Living Skills

So, You Want To Be More Independent?

It's great to want to do things on your own and take care of yourself. That is what independent living skills mean. And the more you **practice**, the better you will get. But it's also important to remember that all of us need help with some things. Some people are better at cooking, some are better at laundry, and some are better at solving problems. While you strive to be independent, never worry about having to ask for help! For some things, you may always need help, and that's okay.

What Are Some Important Independent Living Skills?

- ✓ **Personal Care:** Having good hygiene (showering, brushing your teeth, using deodorant), dressing, staying physically fit, not doing dangerous behaviors, and understanding your medication.
- ✓ **Laundry:** Sorting, washing, drying, and folding your clothes.
- ✓ **Getting to Places:** Learning how to drive, use public transportation, a taxi, or private transportation like Uber and Lyft.
- ✓ **Managing Money:** Using a bank account, having a budget, and paying bills on time.
- ✓ **Preparing Food:** Cooking, food safety, using the oven/stove, shopping, preparing nutritional meals.
- ✓ **Shopping:** Spending money that you have, knowing where you can buy certain things, and knowing when something is or isn't worth the money being charged.

Adapted from: https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/leaving-high-school/6-independent-living-skills-kids-need-before-moving-away-from-home

Other Tips for Being More Independent

- ✓ **Know yourself**. Learn about your disability and how it affects you. Let others know about your strengths, challenges, and the supports you may need.
- ✓ It's important to **speak up for yourself** at school, at home, and in the community.
- ✓ **Get involved** in your meeting**.** Attend your IEP and other meetings about you and share your goals. Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- ✓ **Learn everyday skills** like managing your time, cooking, cleaning, and hygiene.
- ✓ Stay as **healthy** as you can. Taking responsibility for your health, like taking your medication or making your appointments.
- ✓ Practice **problem-solving**. You don't know how to solve everything alone, but trying first can help you grow.
- ✓ Know how to handle an **emergency.**

Learning the skills listed on this factsheet is **important** to your growing independence. Not being able to do all of these (or other skills) does not mean you won't be able to live independently if that is what you want. It's possible that your disability will mean that you need **extra help.** As long as you can get this help, you can be independent and live the life that you choose.

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