

**Support Materials for Students with Significant Cognitive  
Disabilities**



**Special Education  
and Intervention Services**

## How Can I Help at Home?

### Tips and tricks to working at home with your child with a significant cognitive disability

We know that not having the daily structure of going to school and staying in a known routine can be frustrating to both your child and you as a parent or guardian. Below are some tips on what you can do to hopefully make things run a little smoother while we navigate through these unknown times learning at home. We have included a social story about COVID-19/The Coronavirus and also 3, News2You articles that can help explain what is going on right now to your child.

#### 1. Make a Schedule (See attachments with a 1 for examples)

A schedule is helpful because it lets you plan out your day as a parent and also lets your child know what to expect.

- Find out the schedule at school and make one similar. Is your child used to a break at 10:30? Eating at 11:42? Make the schedule mirror what they would do during a typical school day.
- Stay consistent. Try to wake up at the same time and do activities at the same time each day. It is okay to allow for some flexibility, but make sure to tell your child ahead of time about the change and remember to change it on his/her schedule.
- Timers are your friend. Use your phone, microwave or oven timer to set alarms throughout the day. There are also visual timers and alarms that you can use online (try <https://www.online-stopwatch.com/classroom-timers/>) that show as the time decreases that might be helpful. Use the timer to limit time working on a certain task or to let your child know when it is time to do something.

#### 2. Create Rules (See attachments with a 2 for examples)

As a family, sit down and create a small list of rules (3-5) that will be followed by learning time. If you have house rules you can use those, just make sure they can apply to when learning time is occurring. If you can, have visuals that represent what you are trying to say.

- Keep the number of rules small. Having too many will be overwhelming.
- Keep it simple. An example of rules in simple terms used in many classes is, "Safe hands. Listening ears. Quiet voice. Calm body and feet."
- When a behavior occurs, give an example immediately of the behavior you would rather see. An example would be instead of saying, "Don't hit your brother", try "Please use safe hands" and reference the visual rules.
- Review the rules each day at the start of learning time. Talk through the rules and physically model what they would look like. Stop and review the rules as needed.

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#### 3. Use a Token Economy System. (See attachments with a 3 for examples)

It can be hard to focus at home when there are so many other things to do! Token economy is just a fancy name for a rewards system. Even adults need something to work for (hint, hint your paycheck!), so it is no surprise that children do, too. Pick something and have them work for it!

- Make sure the reward or reinforcer is something that you can provide and that can be used for a reasonable amount of time. For example, if your child likes to play with matchbox cars, allow them to work for time to play with the cars. This time to play should not be unlimited, set a timer and let them know, “You have XX minutes to play with the cars before working again.”
- Give them the reward or reinforcer right away. Immediate reinforcement helps to keep your child motivated.
- Examples of a token economy:
  - Create a puzzle that is a picture of something your child will work for. This is easy to do. For example, if your child likes Dora the Explorer take a picture of Dora and cut it into 6 pieces. Each task completed earns them a puzzle piece. When the puzzle is complete, they can watch an episode of Dora.
  - Use a points system. Set a number you would like your child to reach for the day (make it something they would be able to realistically reach). For each time your child does something you requested give them a point.
  - First – Then Chart. Use a first-then chart as a motivator. First complete \_\_\_\_, then you can \_\_\_\_\_. (See attachment with a 3 for examples)

#### 4. Focus on reviewing concepts. (See choice boards marked 4 for examples)

It may not be possible for you to introduce new concepts to your child and that is ok! Take time to review concepts they have been taught so that they do not regress on those. A choice board with some basic samples is included. You can also make one with concepts that are specific to your child. It doesn't have to be fancy, just write it out on a piece of paper, or use the template we have provided. Work with your child to do one from each category each day to keep skills fresh in their minds.

#### 5. Take time to practice life skills (See choice board and attachments marked 5 for examples)

This is a wonderful time to focus on certain life skills being worked on in school into your home. Take time to teach your child life skills like doing laundry, cooking and cleaning. Our goal as special educators is to try to make your child as independent as possible and working on these life skills will help.

- Break larger tasks up into smaller parts. Start small and work up to completing the full task. If doing laundry from start to finish is too much, start with a task on sorting into darks and lights.

## How Can I Help at Home?



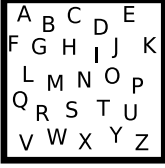


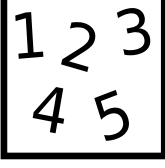
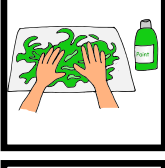
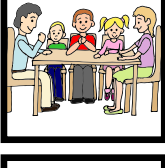


### Tips and tricks to working at home with your child with a significant cognitive disability

- Hygiene, hygiene, hygiene! Many of our students have difficulty completing hygiene tasks like washing face, hands or brushing teeth. Make this part of your daily routine using the step-by-step directions for those tasks that we have included!
- Still need to work on toilet training? When you can't leave the house, it's a perfect time to work on toilet training. Create a schedule, set timers, and stick to it!

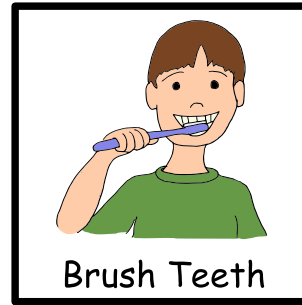
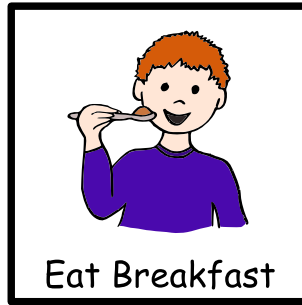
Finally, give yourself some leeway and grace. If you are not a teacher on a day-to-day basis, no one is expecting you to be now. You know what is best for your child and what will help them get through these unique times easiest. If there are days when life will not allow time for structured learning, that is ok! Just try again the next day. To further help we are listing some online resources to support you at home:

- <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html> Themed books and videos, with corresponding writing and drawing activities. Free!
- [www.storyonline.net](http://www.storyonline.net) This free site has hundreds of books being read aloud. Videos can be streamed through YouTube.
- [www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/wwslist.html](http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/wwslist.html) Adapted books!! This link will take you to a site where you can download any book that is already adapted. It includes pictures with the words as well. Scroll down and click download next to any book you or your student select
- [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com) Sign up for a 14-day free trial. This site lets you download books and reading passages at all levels. Activities are included!
- <http://www.missmaggie.org/> Maggie's Earth Adventures offers a free weekly activity packet about the world and its many ecosystems.
- <http://www.nourishinteractive.com/> This is a free website that offers interactive activities and videos about health and nutrition
- [www.ABCmouse.com](http://www.ABCmouse.com) is offering free access. Contact your school for the access code to use it for free.
- [www.roomrecess.com](http://www.roomrecess.com) This free site offers over 140 interactive, educational games.
- <https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/category/kids-crafts/5-minute-crafts-kids/> This site offers ideas for 5-minute crafts to do with your child using things from around your home.

# Daily Routine

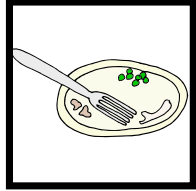
-  morning routine
-  reading
-  letter activity
-  arts and crafts\_play
-  mealtime
-  numbers
-  sensory activity\_play
-  dinner
-  play
-  bedtime routine

# Morning Schedule



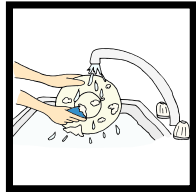
# Evening Schedule

1.



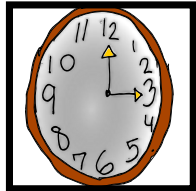
Finish Dinner

2.



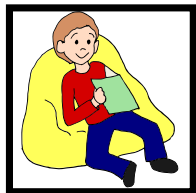
Wash Dishes

3.



time to relax

4.



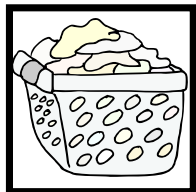
read /relax

5.



Bathe

6.



Laundry in hamper

7.



Check for a Clean Room

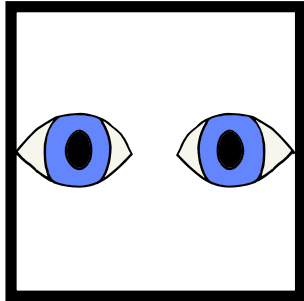
8.



Go to bed

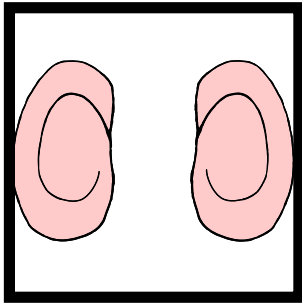
# Classroom Rules

1.



Looking Eyes

2.



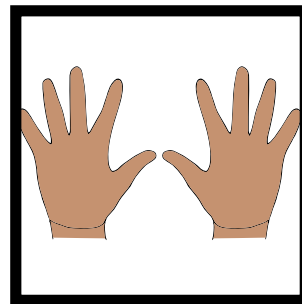
Listening Ears

3.



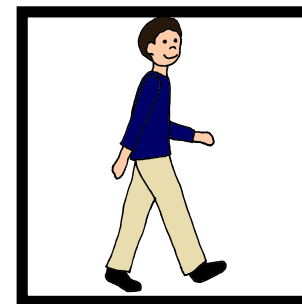
Quiet Mouth

4.



Helping Hands

5.



Walking Feet



# Picture Cards



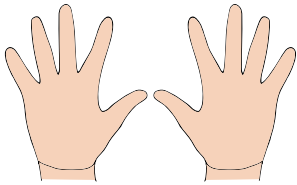
Looking Eyes



Listening Ears



Quiet Mouth



Helping Hands



Walking Feet

# Rules Inside



Looking Eyes



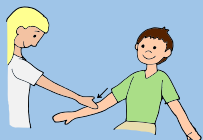
Listen



Hands to Self



Raise Hand



Gentle Touches

# Rules Inside



Looking Eyes



Listen



Hands to Self



Raise Hand



Gentle Touches

# Picture Cards



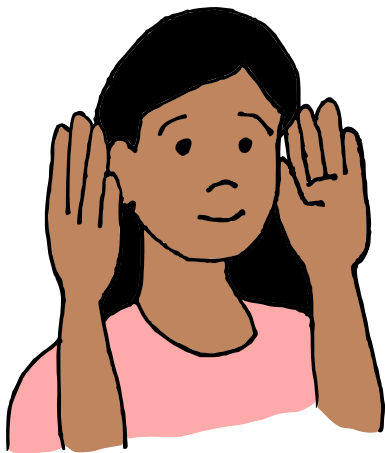
Walk



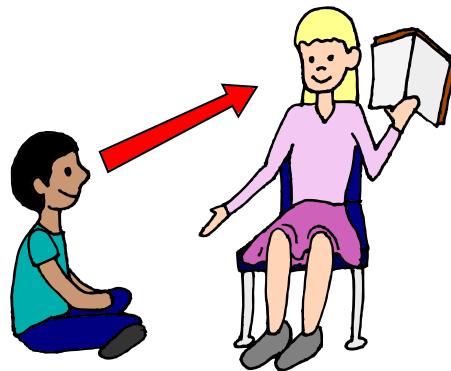
Quiet



quiet hands



listen

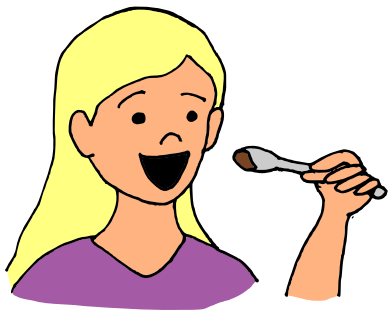


Look At The Teacher

# Mealtime Rules



Sit in your own space



Use your fork or spoon



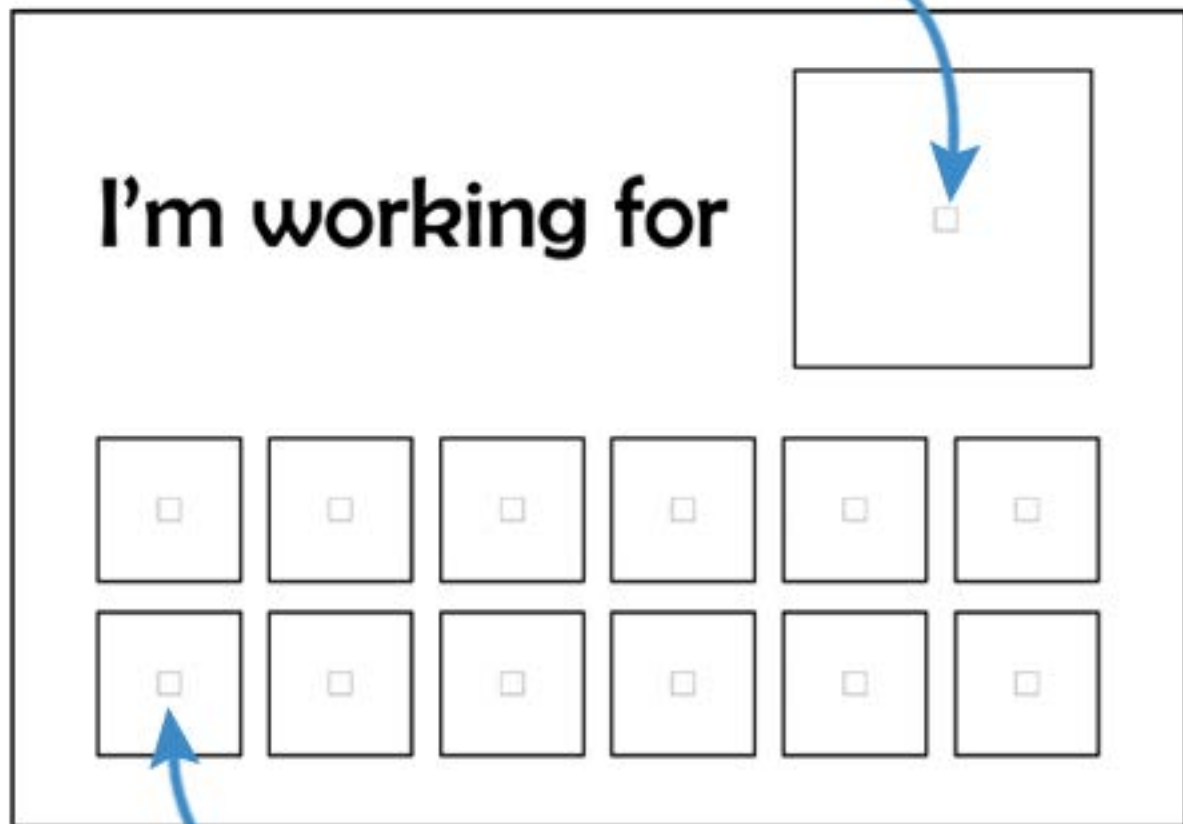
Wipe your mouth



Don't yell

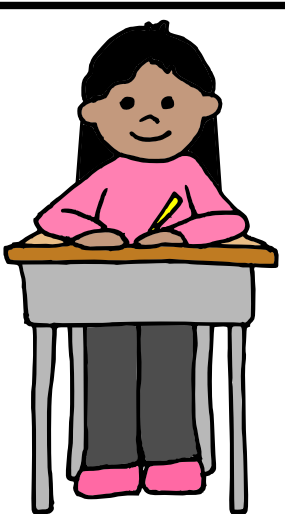
## One Example of a Token Economy

*A chosen reinforcer is placed here*



*Earned tokens are placed into these spaces*

# First



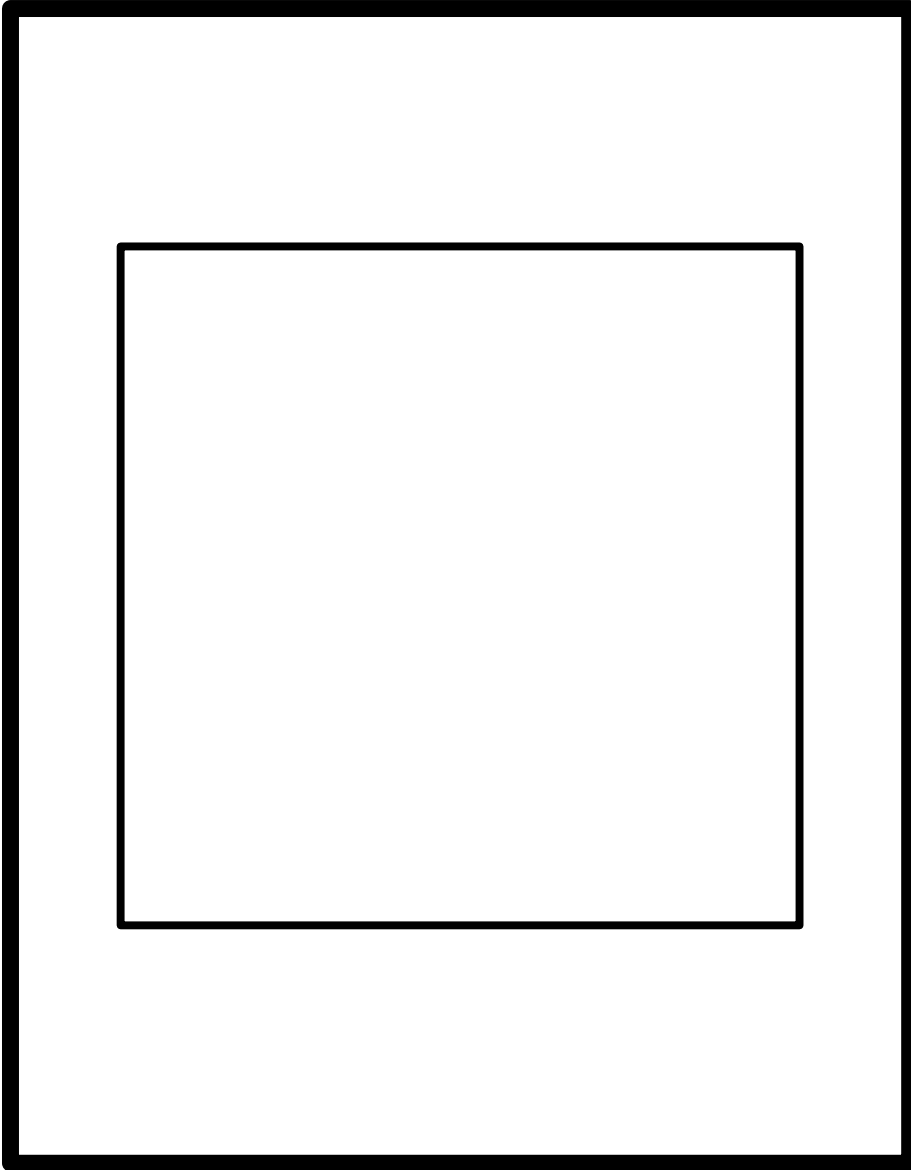
Work

# Then

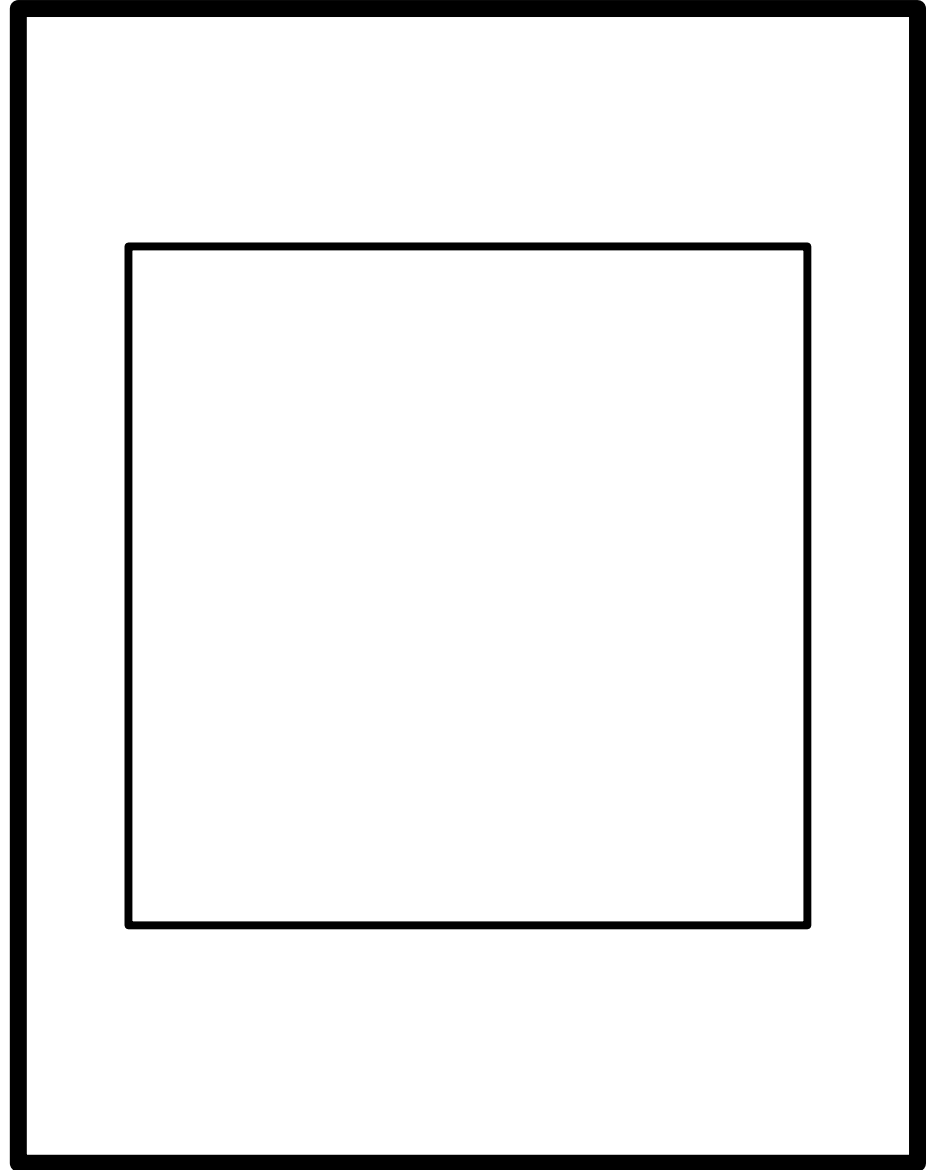


Break

# First



# Then





★

★

**Sticker Board**

★

★



★

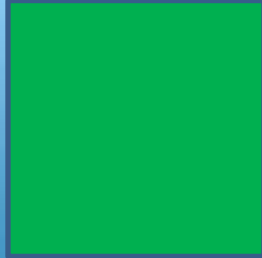
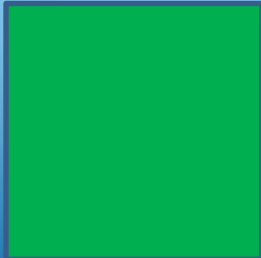
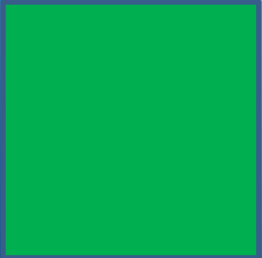
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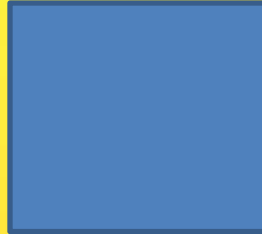
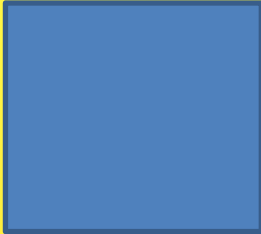
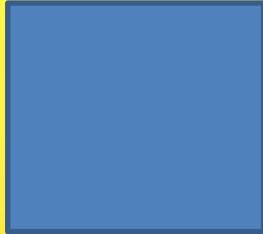
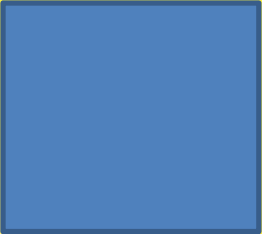
I am working for







I am working for



### Choice Board


- Use this as a guide for suggested activities for your child to complete. Most will have to be done with support. See if you can work on increasing independence in completion
- Students should choose at least **one** activity from each subject area column per day (Math, Reading, Writing, Science/Social and Specials)



Math	Reading	Writing	Science / Social	Specials
Count as high as you can! Have your parent/guardian write it down. Try to count higher next time	Read a book at home with your family or caregiver. Who are the characters? What is the setting? What happened at the beginning, middle and end?	Tell Mom or Dad a sentence about your day and they will write it. If you can, trace or copy the sentence and draw a picture to go with it.	Check the daily weather report. What is the high/low temperature? Predict how much rain we will get today.	<b>PE</b> Make a dance/workout routine to one of your favorite songs. You can even post them on TikTok!
Sort your toys, books or video games. Sort by color, size, shape and/or category.	Read a story to a stuffed animal or pet. Read pictures, read the words or re-tell the story.	Copy or trace the alphabet or words that are familiar to you	Look at a map at home or online. Find where you live. Look for a place you'd like to visit!	<b>Art</b> Use only the primary colors to make an artwork.
Choose a board or card game to play with your family or caregiver. (not electronic)	If you have access at home, visit <a href="http://www.storylineonline.net">www.storylineonline.net</a> To listen to a story with your family or caregiver!	Make a card for someone in your family or community.	Help make a recipe or lunch with your family or caregiver.	<b>Music</b> Listen to a school appropriate song and draw a picture to describe what you hear.
Count things in your house! (Toys, stuffed animals, windows, stairs, cereal pieces in a bowl, etc.)	Have your parent/guardian make word cards for items around your house. Read the cards with them and then label the item in the house.	Practice writing/copying/tracing your first and last name, phone number, and address.	Visit a museum, zoo or aquarium online and take a tour. Just Google: free museum (or zoo, or aquarium) virtual tours and have fun!	<b>Media</b> Color a picture of your favorite book or television character.



**At-Home Activities and Resources for Students who Receive Occupational and Physical Therapy**



**\*\*Please choose activities that are appropriate and safe for your individual child.\*\***

**SENSORY MOTOR ACTIVITIES:**

<p>Sensory play includes those activities that stimulate children's senses.</p> 	<p>Shaving cream play with hands or feet or walking/crawling on bubble wrap</p> <p>Soft music (spa CD)</p>	<p>Play "Row, row, row, your boat" while both sitting on the floor gently pushing and pulling each other</p>	<p>Climb on pillows, hide under them, jump and 'crash' into them.</p> <p>Obstacle course</p>	<p>Wall pushes with hands and feet.</p> <p>Jumping jacks</p>	<p>Visual "eye spy" game. Place rice or beans in a bin and add small items (dice, clothespins, domino and have your child pick it out.</p>
<p>Calming Activities:</p>	<p>Have child play/work while standing up for a short period of time.</p>	<p>Have child engage in yoga, mindfulness activities or belly breathing</p>	<p>Let child know of any changes to their normal routine before those changes occur.</p>	<p>Provide child with a quiet space. Include soothing music, and a comfortable chair or soft pillows to sit on. Use soft lighting. This is not a space to work but to relax.</p>	<p>Have your child carry a few books from one room to another as they can easily manage.</p> <p>Have child push/pull a laundry basket filled with clothes to another area in the house.</p>
<p>Energizing Activities:</p>	<p>Have your child perform jumping jacks or play hopscotch.</p>	<p>Use toys that make noise or light up.</p>	<p>Play and dance to fast-paced music.</p>	<p>Have child sip on ice water through a sport bottle</p>	<p>Take a movement break with fast paced movements such as jogging in place, marching etc.</p>

<b>VISUAL PERCEPTUAL ACTIVITIES:</b>					
<p>Visual perceptual skills enable a child to make sense of and interpret what they are seeing.</p> 	<p>Hidden pictures games in books such as "Where's Waldo".</p>	<p>Picture drawing: Practice completing partially drawn pictures.</p>	<p>Dot-to-dot worksheets or puzzles.</p>	<p>Playing games such as Memory.</p>	<p>Identify objects by touch: Place plastic letters into a bag, and have the child identify the letter by "feel" (eyes closed). Then copy the letter onto paper.</p>
<p><b>Tips to promote concentration when doing schoolwork:</b></p> 	<p>Choose a quiet location in the home where your child has a table and chair and good lighting.</p>	<p>Allow your child to take short movement breaks.</p>	<p>Make a check list of assignments and check them off as they are completed.</p>	<p>Break longer tasks into shorter steps.</p>	<p>Use the 20/20/20 rule during computer work: At least every 20 minutes look away from screen at something approximately 20 feet away for 20 seconds</p>
<p>Websites for on task/organization skills for middle and high school students:</p>	<p><b><u>Organization Strategies:</u></b>  <a href="https://www.oxfordlearning.com/organized-middle-school-students-parents/">https://www.oxfordlearning.com/organized-middle-school-students-parents/</a>  <a href="https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/teaching-organizational-skills/how-to-teach-your-middle-schooler-organization-skills">https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/teaching-organizational-skills/how-to-teach-your-middle-schooler-organization-skills</a>  <a href="https://www.wikihow.com/Be-Organized-in-Middle-School">https://www.wikihow.com/Be-Organized-in-Middle-School</a>  <a href="https://www.learningascent.com/middle-school-organizational-skills/">https://www.learningascent.com/middle-school-organizational-skills/</a></p> <p><b><u>On task skills:</u></b>  <a href="https://www.wikihow.com/Stay-on-Task-and-Be-Focused">https://www.wikihow.com/Stay-on-Task-and-Be-Focused</a>  <a href="https://www.additudemag.com/slideshows/how-to-stay-on-task/">https://www.additudemag.com/slideshows/how-to-stay-on-task/</a>  <a href="https://timemanagementninja.com/2017/07/10-tips-to-help-you-stay-on-one-task-until-its-done/">https://timemanagementninja.com/2017/07/10-tips-to-help-you-stay-on-one-task-until-its-done/</a></p> <p><b><u>Household Chores:</u></b>  <a href="https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/10/24/the-ten-benefits-of-chores-for-your-child-with-special-needs/">https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/10/24/the-ten-benefits-of-chores-for-your-child-with-special-needs/</a>  <a href="https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/responsibility-and-chores/part-i-benefits-of-chores/">https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/responsibility-and-chores/part-i-benefits-of-chores/</a>  <a href="https://www.verywellfamily.com/the-benefits-of-giving-kids-chores-620309">https://www.verywellfamily.com/the-benefits-of-giving-kids-chores-620309</a></p>				

GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES:					
<p>Gross motor activities involve using the large muscles of the body.</p> 	<p>Take a stroll in the backyard and gather rocks, sticks, and leaves. Compare sizes of objects and help your child sequence objects by size (smallest to biggest). Count the number of objects one by one.</p>	<p>While standing or seated in chair or wheelchair, have your child help you sort, match and fold clean laundry. This may include matching socks, folding towels and sorting folded clothes into piles by type of clothing.</p>	<p>In an open area, while standing or seated in chair or wheelchair, have your child toss a beach ball or light ball back and forth to each other. Or sit by your child and have him/her try to pass the ball back and forth while counting.</p>	<p>Create an obstacle course inside or outside that involves children moving in different locations and directions. Allow for enough space if the child utilizes a wheelchair or assistive device.</p>	<p>Create a fun game with your child by giving them a place to start and have them guess how many steps or propulsions (if in a wheelchair) they are away from you. As they move towards you, have them count their steps/propulsions aloud. Try different distances.</p>
<p>Advanced Gross Motor Activities:</p> 	<p>Have your child assist in doing chores including navigating around the table and setting or clearing the table. (Paper or plastic dinnerware may be a safer alternative).</p>	<p>While safely positioned, either sitting or standing (depending on your child's tolerance and balance) play a game of Simon says. Provide assistance as needed to ensure safety especially while reaching forward.</p>	<p>Increase the difficulty of the above activity by challenging your child a bit by increasing the pace of the game and play hot potato.</p>	<p>Hide objects throughout the home or back yard. Create a scavenger hunt and have your child safely navigate throughout area searching for listed objects.</p>	<p>Increase the difficulty of the above activity by playing the "egg" in spoon game. Have the child hold an "egg" (or ball or beanbag) in a spoon while walking towards you. If in a wheelchair, place a light object (ie. ball) on their lap and have him/her propel towards you without dropping the object</p>
<p>Additional Wheelchair Activity:</p>	<p>8 minute wheel chair workout: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ttPm8LSEk&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ttPm8LSEk&amp;feature=youtu.be</a></p>				

FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES:					
<p>Fine motor activities involve using the smaller muscles of the hand.</p> 	<p>Play finger games such as "itsy bitsy spider"</p> <p>Play Simon Says with finger movements such as wiggling your thumbs or touching your thumb to each fingertip</p>	<p>Use a large paintbrush to paint on a large sheet of paper. If desired, place paper on an easel or tape it to a wall to increase the use of different arm movements</p>	<p>Roll, pat, pinch playdough while making various creations</p>	<p>Pick up smaller cereal pieces one by one with thumb and index finger</p>	<p>Stack larger (2"-3") blocks to make a tower or a house or another creation</p>
<p>Advanced Fine Motor Activities:</p> 	<p>Play a board game with smaller pieces such as dice and/or pawns</p>	<p>Color a picture using short pieces of crayons (about 1 inch in length)</p>	<p>Hide smaller toys in a ball of playdough and have your child dig them out</p>	<p>Place coins into a slot cut into the lid of a coffee can. Challenge child to pick up 5 coins one by one and store in hand then release one by one into the slot without dropping any.</p>	<p>Build with manipulatives such as snap together type blocks</p>



**SCISSOR SKILLS:**

Cutting is a learned skill that requires practice.

**PRE-CUTTING****LEVEL:**

Tear paper into smaller pieces and use them to make a collage

Use large tongs to pick up cotton balls and release into a container

Use squirt bottles, turkey basters or other squeeze and squirt water toys with a cup of water outside

**BEGINNING CUTTING****LEVEL:**

Use Children's scissors

Assist child to place scissors on hand correctly and hold scissors with thumb up (handshake position)

Begin with snipping the edge of paper and use thicker paper like construction paper or cardstock

Adult use a hole punch to punch holes in thicker paper then have child cut by directing scissors from one hole to the next. This will give them a tactile cue when they reach each hole

**READY TO CUT****LEVEL:**

Begin with straight lines and use short, thick paper such as a 4"x 6" piece of construction paper or cardstock.

Encourage child to hold paper steady with other hand with thumb on top of paper and away from scissor blades.


Cut paper into strips and use them to create letters in name

**ADVANCED CUTTING****LEVEL:**

Practice cutting curved lines, shapes with corners and circles.

Encourage child to take their time, keep looking at where the scissors are cutting on the paper, and adjust hands to stay on the lines as needed.

Cut out various shapes and glue them on another piece of paper to make an object such as a house or a sailboat.

<b>HANDWRITING ACTIVITIES:</b>			
<p>Handwriting is a learned skill that requires practice.</p> 	<p><b><u>Pre-writing activities:</u></b> Practice making lines from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• top to bottom</li> <li>• left to right</li> <li>• practice making circles going in counterclockwise direction</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Beginning writing activities:</u></b> Practice forming letters using worksheets that provide directional arrows for letter strokes. Verbally describe these strokes as your child makes them (ex. Make a line going down, make a line going across, make a line going around, etc)</p> <p>*Provide supervision as needed to ensure safety.</p>	<p><b><u>Word, sentence and paragraph writing activities:</u></b> Have your child proofread their written assignments for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all my letters neat and easy to read?</li> <li>• Do my tall letters reach the top of the line (b,d,f,h,k,l)?</li> <li>• Do my hanging letters go below the line (g,j,p,q,y)?</li> <li>• Is there space between my words?</li> </ul> <p>*Provide supervision as needed to ensure safety.</p>
<p>Websites for handwriting practice:</p>	<p><a href="https://appytherapy.com/handwriting-heroes/">https://appytherapy.com/handwriting-heroes/</a>  <a href="https://www.themeasuredmom.com/free-handwriting-worksheets-for-preschool/">https://www.themeasuredmom.com/free-handwriting-worksheets-for-preschool/</a></p>		

# Chores



hang clothes



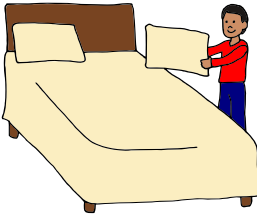
sweep the floor



iron



do laundry



make the bed



mow the lawn



pick up clothes



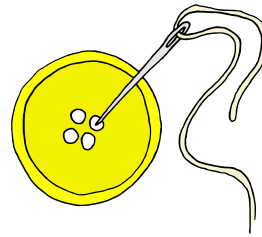
put away



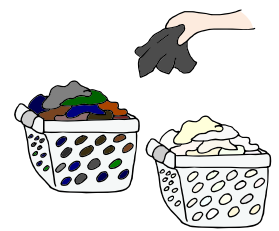
put dishes away



set the table



sew a button



sort the laundry



take out the garbage



scrub the toilet



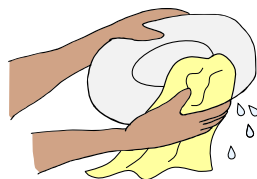
vacuum



wash clothes



wash dishes



dry dishes



water the plants



mop the floor

# Laundry



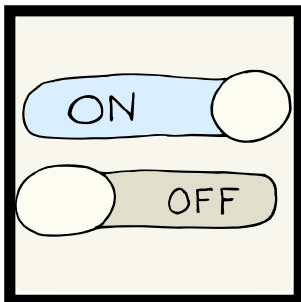
Sort Laundry



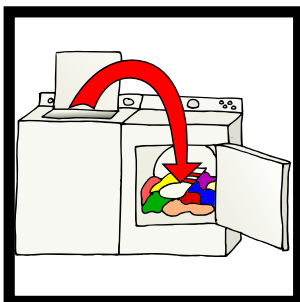
Clothes in washer



Laundry Soap



Turn on



Move Clothes to dryer

# Clean Room



Laundry in basket



Pick up



Make Bed



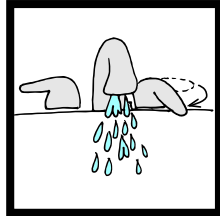
Vacuum



Smile

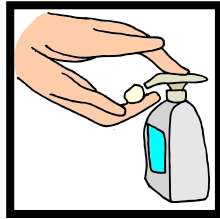
# Washing Hands Schedule

1.



Water On

2.



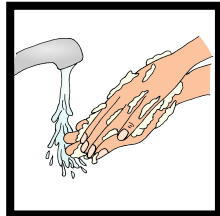
Get Soap

3.



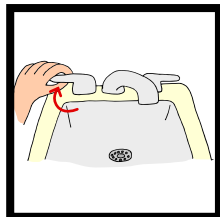
Scrub Hands

4.



Rinse Hands

5.



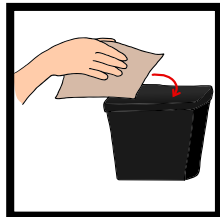
Water Off

6.

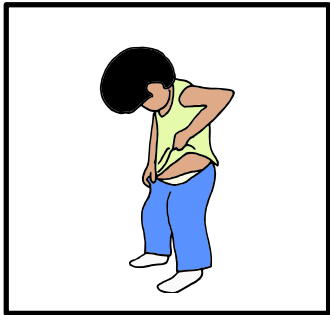
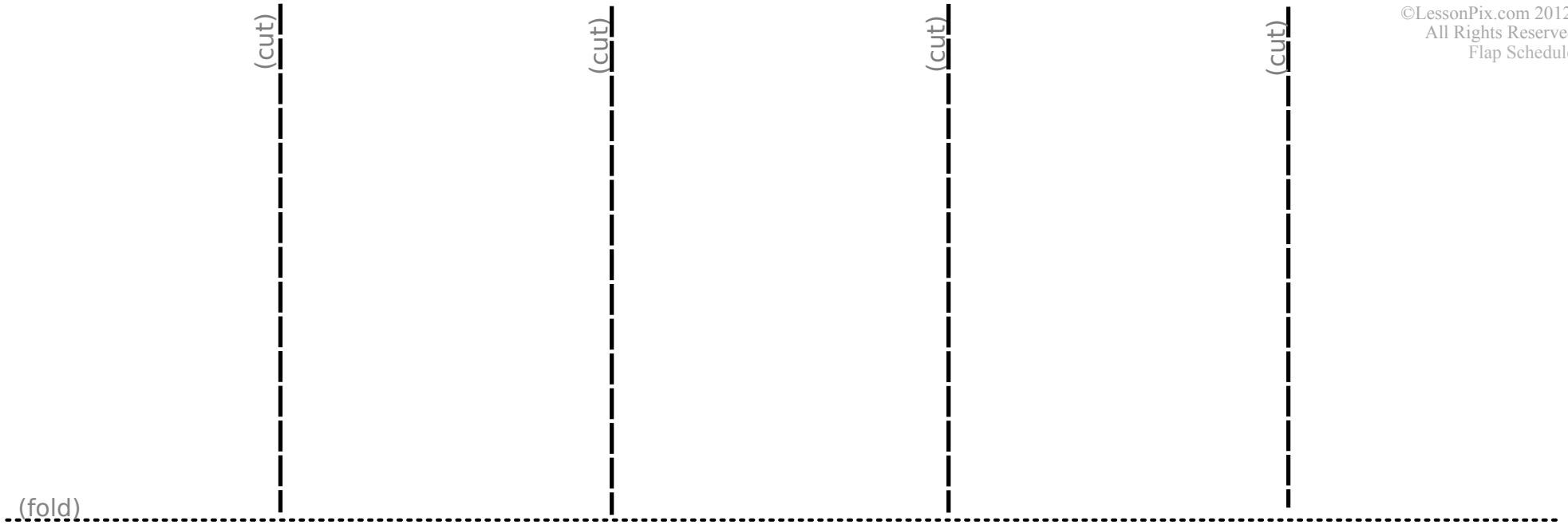


Dry Hands

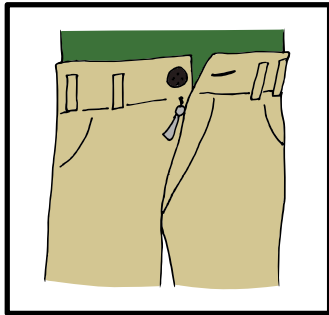
7.



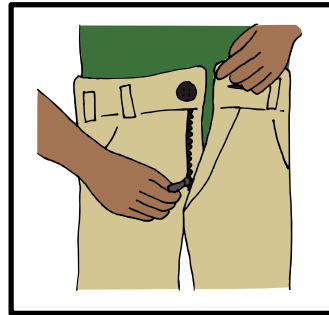
Paper In Trash Can



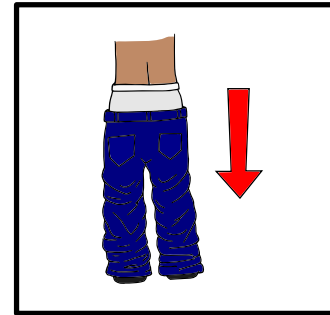
**Pull Up Shirt**



**Unbutton**



**Unzip**



**Pants Down**



**Sit on Toilet**

# Undress Steps