

Self Care and Independence Milestones

Self-care includes dressing, eating, toileting, hygiene, and managing daily routines. OT helps build independence and reduce frustration.

Birth to 1 year

- Opens mouth for spoon
- Finger feeds self
- Holds bottle/cup with help
- Shows signs of toileting awareness
- Settles with a bedtime routine and sleeps overnight.
- Recognises feeding and bath time cues
- Adjusts slowly to schedule changes

1 to 2 years

- Finger feeds independently
- Helps with dressing (e.g. lifting arms)
- Drinks from open cup with supervision
- Participates in morning/bedtime routines
- Understands first-then structure
- Handles short transitions with support
- Zips and Unzips large zipper and removes shoes
- Anticipates toileting needs

2 to 3 years

- Removes socks and pants
- Uses a spoon and fork
- Begins toileting with support
- Anticipates routine steps (e.g. brushing teeth after meal)
- Begins dressing and undressing as part of routine
- Responds to visual schedules

3 to 4 years

- Eats independently
- Dresses with minimal help
- Toilets during the day with reminders
- Brushes their teeth with supervision
- Follows multiple-step routines with prompting
- Uses timers or stories to prepare for change
- Initiates parts of routines

4 to 5 years

- Fully day toilet trained
- Brushes teeth independently
- Dresses self, including fasteners
- Manages basic routines e.g. wake-up and packs bag with help
- Problem solves when routine is disrupted
- Transitions independently with notice

6+ years

- Toileting completely independently (including overnight)
- Independent with all hygiene routines
- Manages belongings and clothes
- Begins planning meals/snacks
- Follows daily schedule across home/school
- Can understand and tell the time
- Adjusts routine with flexibility
- Supports siblings or peers with routine steps

**Delays may relate to:
Intellectual Disability, DCD, Autism,
and/or sensory differences**

*This flyer is intended as a **general guide** to support understanding of developmental skills across age ranges. It is **not a diagnostic tool** and should not be used to make formal assessments or diagnoses.*

*Children develop at different rates, and variation is normal. However, **persistent challenges in one or more areas** may suggest an underlying difference or condition.*

