



Center Goal 3

Allow children to be as independent as possible while remaining developmentally appropriate.

We create many opportunities for children to be independent. Levels of independence vary based on age and development. For example, all children work to get themselves ready for outside independently. Toddlers practice “flipping their coats” while preschool students practice learning to zipper. In each classroom, the students are encouraged to choose their own toys and contribute to clean up, with varying amounts of input from their teachers.

- Teaching Independence
- Areas to Encourage Independence
- Goal: Fully Potty Trained- parent handout
- Helpful Hints: Let's Eat- parent handout

Teaching Independence

All children have natural temperaments. They can be determined, shy, outgoing or hesitant. As educators, we try to work with all these temperaments to help children feel confident in themselves. Creating opportunities for individual growth is important. Encouraging student independence, while still accepting a child's natural temperament, is an area of education we strive toward as teachers at K-Prep.

There are many areas to independence. We can be independent in physical development, academic learning, individual emotional needs, and/or social interaction. As teachers of young children, we can encourage physical independence in both large and fine motor areas. This may be through practicing putting on shoes or clothing, hanging up coats on hooks or walking and running at appropriate times.

Emotional independence can be encouraged at young ages to offer support when crying, but allowing moments to calm down without continual teacher interaction. Emotional independence is developed as students grow in their emotions, as they feel safe and confident in their surroundings and the adults in their life are also confident in their abilities to handle emotions.

Social independence is created through teaching and modeling for children how to develop friendships and solve conflicts. This is more than lecturing children on being good. Modeling social independence is often done by specifically teaching students what “using your words” looks like and what it means to be a “good friend.” Like emotional independence, children grow into their social interactions and understanding the stages of development in young children is helpful when encouraging growth.

Learning happens every day. It happens naturally, accidentally and intentionally. As educators, we want to make sure we are aware of our teaching, our intentional moments of education and our accidental words and actions that also share a message. Becoming self-aware of our own temperament, our own areas of natural independence and our personal areas of growth can help us to better educate the young children in our care.

Areas to Encourage Independence

I am...	I can...	What K-Prep does to encourage independence and growth...
3-6 months old	Roll Echo a sound Be soothed by swaddling	Talk to, snuggle and love
6-9 months old	Sit up Repeat sounds Play peek-a-boo Respond to my name Begin to eat baby food Take 2-3 regular naps	Introduce baby food (with parent approval) Talk to and play with Encourage regular naps Give opportunities to sit up
9-12 months old	Crawl Hold and drink from a sippy cup Say my first word Begin to eat solid foods Take 2 longer regular naps	Assist in moving toward toys Introduce sippy cup of water (with parent approval) Introduce solid food (with parent approval) Work to lengthen naps by patting back to sleep
12-15 months old	Walk Scribble with a crayon Respond to 'no' Enjoy books and dancing Eat all solid foods without bottles Take 1 long afternoon nap Follow a classroom schedule Use a pacifier at naptime only	Hold hands to walk Allow opportunities to do art Read to and dance with Begin to remove bottles (with parent approval) Offer 1 afternoon nap and work to lengthen
15-18 months old	Say 8+ words Follow simple one-step directions Play next to others Fill and dump with toys Stretch nap to 2 hours in length	Talk to regularly in conversation Offer toys and bins Foster play with friends Work to lengthen nap by patting back to sleep
18-24 months old	Say 2-3 word sentences Begin to run and ride toys Have temper tantrums & say "no" Try to do things on my own Feed myself with a spoon Sit at table for meal/activities	Talk to regularly in conversation Offer riding toys Allow for temper tantrums in a safe space away from group Offer spoons to eat with Allow child to try things on own
24-30 months old	Flip my coat Say please and thank you Refer to myself by name Use 20-50 words Jump, throw, and kick Stay focused on an activity when properly engaged Walk in line to go outside Begin to identify animals, shapes, colors Show interest in friends begin to potty train	Show child 'the flip' Encourage saying please and thank you Call child by name and talk to often Allow lots of physical activity Encourage staying focused on activities Keep activities fun and entertaining

30-36 months old	<p>Initiate my own play look for routines Use appropriate social behavior Potty train Dress and undress myself Drink from a cup without a lid Know my first and last name Identify animals, colors and shapes Speak so 2/3 is understandable</p>	<p>Provide routines in the classroom Model and teach appropriate social behavior Begin to potty train (with parent approval) Encourage dressing and undressing self with dress-up Repeat first and last name regularly Speak to often in conversation Teach animal names, colors and shapes regularly</p>
3+ years old	<p>Run Speak in short understandable sentences Cut and glue with little assistance Sit correctly at the table Draw and trace with little assistance Pretend play Share and cooperate with others Dress, eat and use the toilet independently Hold attention during an activity Follow multi-step directions Spell and identify letters in name Begin to identify letters and numbers Show interest in being a leader</p>	<p>Allow lots of outside time for running Speak to often in conversation Offer scissors and glue with detailed instruction and modeling Expect sitting straight at the table with feet on floor Practice drawing and tracing with assistance Offer imaginative play Allow opportunities to play/share with others Encourage dressing, eating and toileting independently Encourage staying focused on activities Keep activities fun and entertaining Practice name spelling regularly Practice letters and numbers regularly Give special 'jobs' to children</p>
4+ years old	<p>Identify numbers, letter sounds and familiar words Write letters and own name Count with 1 to 1 correspondence Complete simple puzzle Learn my birthday, address and parents names Play cooperatively with peers Clean up on own Draw and picture and explain Use imagination</p>	<p>Practice letters, sounds numbers, and reading regularly Practice spelling, reading and writing own name regularly Practice counting objects regularly Offer puzzles Introduce birthday, address and family names Offer opportunities to play/share with others Expect cleaning up after play Allow opportunities to draw</p>

GOAL: FULLY POTTY TRAINED

Definition: A child is fully potty trained when they are dry and wearing underwear at all awake times. They are also self-sufficient in the potty, including pulling pants up and down, wiping, flushing and washing hands.

When to start:

- between age 2 and 3
- language is developed enough to talk about the potty

How to start:

- Take your child to sit on potty at consistent times, about every 2 hours
- Wear comfortable, easy clothing. No onesies, snaps, buckles or overalls.
- When your child understands concept and has the *ability* to stay dry between potty trips, transition from diaper/pull-up to underwear. Every diaper/pull-up does not need to be dry to make the transition to underwear.
- Once in underwear, take more trips to the potty to help stay dry, about every 30 minutes.

Things to Remember:

- Often children become *interested* in the potty *before* they have the ability to be trained.
- Most children are fully potty-trained within a few months of starting and usually finished by the time they turn 3 years old.
- Children are more likely to stay dry in underwear than a diaper/pull-up.
- The first few days in underwear are usually frequented with many accidents. This is normal experimentation and to be expected.
- Children are usually able to control their bladder before their bowels.

Frequently Asked Questions

My child is interested in the bathroom but I don't know if they are ready for underwear. Should I use pull-ups?

Pull-ups can add more expense and work to potty training. They work great for extra night-time protection for a fully potty trained child. Pull-ups can help your child remain confident overnight because s/he can do the whole process without assistance. However, when potty training, transitioning your child from a diaper to a pull-up and then to underwear can be confusing and an unnecessary extra step. Changing a pull-up requires more time since all clothing and shoes must be removed. This can be frustrating for your child if s/he are trying to get back to playing and may deter your child from wanting to use the potty. Overall, Pull-ups are not necessary to successfully potty train.

Why doesn't my child tell me when they need to go potty?

When children are still in diapers or pull-ups, they are usually content to continue playing while wet just like they did before they began potty training. When your child is in underwear, they still need to be *sent* to the bathroom regularly. In order to rely on your child asking to go to the bathroom, s/he needs to be able to hold his/her bladder long enough to recognize the need to go, ask to go, and make it to the bathroom, all before having an accident. This skill will come in time, for now, in order to avoid accidents, continue sending your child regularly.

My child has been potty-training for a while, why do they now refuse to use the potty?

The novelty of going to the bathroom quickly becomes an interruption of playtime. Sticking to a consistent routine (approx every 2 hours) will help them learn to go at predictable times and be able to return to playing. One way to *avoid* this problem is to be aware of the potty training window of opportunity. If you take a long time to train, your child may become bored and remain content to stay in a diaper. .

My child will not go potty for a whole day. Is something wrong?

It is normal for your child to experiment with waiting to go for a long time. Drinking fluids throughout the day and encouraging a consistent routine of potty trips will help. Many children will hold a bowel movement for a long time or refuse to use the bathroom out of fear it will hurt. Altering your child's diet to help soften a bowel movement and allowing ample time to stay on the potty will help. If the problem persists or become severe, talk to your doctor.

Helpful Hints: Let's Eat!

Oh, how time flies! Your child is always growing and changing. It is important to support their development with the addition of new toys, new experiences, and new foods. Below is a guideline of when and what new foods can be introduced to your child.

	5-7 months	7-9 months	9-10 months	10-12 months	12-15 months
SNACKS		cheerios kix veg/fruit puffs	graham crackers vanilla wafers saltines Ritz	animal crackers gold fish	pretzels wheat thins
MEALS	baby cereal stage 1,2 dinners	stage 3 dinners	bread with jelly crackers with soup pancakes waffles lunch meat	grilled/cold cheese sandwich ravioli mac and cheese cheese pizza pasta/spaghetti pierrogies	hot dogs chicken nuggets baked chicken ground beef tuna
VEG/ FRUIT	stage 1,2,3 fruit stage 1,2,3 vegetable	canned carrots canned pears mashed potatoes mashed sweet potatoes creamed spinach applesauce	canned or very cooked vegetables cranberry sauce red beets cantaloupe watermelon kiwi banana honeydew sweet potatoes white potatoes	asparagus peas tomatoes Lima beans broccoli peaches	cucumbers apples

* *all foods cut as needed*