



Living Skills: Tips for Parents of Children who have a VI or are blind

Produced by the Outreach Service for the Visually Impaired (OSVI)
Jordanstown School

Rule 1: HAVE A GO!!!

A step by step approach

Let your child do the **last** step of the activity **first** on their own, then the last two, then the last three (this is called reverse chaining). This means that the child is always **finishing** the activity by themselves even if you have helped with the first steps. Your child has a feeling of achievement and will be keen to try again.

For example: Making toast by reverse chaining

Week 1. Cut toast in half.

Week 2. Spread butter and cut toast in half.

Week 3. Lift toast out of toaster and spread butter and cut in half.



Provide opportunities to practise each step separately. As your child builds up confidence with each individual step they will have more success when the task is attempted as a whole.

Close contact

Let your child keep in close contact with the activity as this will make it more achievable. For example:



Use a small sponge to wash dishes. This is easier than using a brush as their fingers are in close contact with the dish.

Keep one hand on the edge of the bowl to help them locate the bowl when they are eating or stirring.

Simple instructions

Try to give short, simple instructions and allow the child to have time to process them. For example:

Say "Hold the spoon flat". As your child becomes more confident you may be able to vary the words; "hold the spoon level", "hold the spoon horizontally".



Opportunities for learning



Blind and visually impaired children miss out on a lot of incidental learning. Doing tasks together can provide opportunities to learn all sorts of concepts. For example:

A round bowl; a big spoon; four cups; half an apple

Practise slow rhythmic counting

This will be useful for pouring liquids. For example, count to 2 when adding washing up liquid or olive oil.



Using a knife to cut and slice



Practice cutting through Playdough with a plastic knife so your child learns good technique in a fun and safe way.

Hold the Playdough/food with one hand and touch the end with the knife then find the top of the food and move in about 1 cm before slicing down.

Move on to slicing soft foods or vegetables e.g. banana, melon, courgette, slice of bread using a butter knife. Keep food flat side down so it does not wobble around.

When your child is ready to use a sharp knife, choose one with a short blade and a thick handle for a firm grip. You can mark the handle to indicate the sharp side.

The 'bridge' technique is useful when slicing thicker foods.



The 'claw' technique will protect the tips of fingers.

Useful resources

 <p>Non slip chopping board - Lakeland, Amazon</p>	 <p>Dycem- brilliant non slip roll - RNIB shop, Amazon</p>	 <p>Tray to keep work area organised - IKEA and other shops</p>
 <p>Talking weighing scales - Amazon</p>	 <p>Digital weighing scales - Amazon</p>	 <p>OXO 'Good Grips' angled measuring jug -Lakeland</p>
 <p>Grater with container - IKEA</p>	 <p>'Sure grip' vegetable knife - Lakeland</p>	 <p>Talking jug - www.dlf-data.org.uk</p>