

Parents' independence pack

The Learning Disabilities Team

Introduction

You have been referred into our Learning Disabilities Nurse Clinics for Support around Independence Skills. When we talk about 'Independence skills' this can range from support and advice around developing new skills, personal hygiene skills, health needs, 14+ GP health Check, Inoculations, access to dental services, continence, puberty, sexual health etc. There are many ways that we can support your child/young person with increasing their independence skills, and giving them some control in their lives, including backward chaining, visual resources, timelines, social stories etc.

Within this Independence Pack we have included:

- Information around visuals
- Health passport to care

We will send you an appointment in the post where we will meet with yourself to complete an assessment to help us to gather appropriate information about your child. We do not need to see your child at this point. Once we have completed the assessment we usually like to visit the child at home/within school. We will then develop an intervention plan with you, often using visuals. We fully understand some of the difficulties and daily struggles our families go through, and therefore will ensure that is made as person centred as possible to meet the needs of the young person and their families.

If you have any further questions or require any further information please do not hesitate to give us a call on **0330 024 5321**.

We look forward to meeting with you and your child in the near future.

Supporting our young people with independence skills

Visuals (or pictures), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs), symbols etc are a great tool to use to support your child with their communication as being able to visualise along with the use of speech can support your child's understanding.

Visual communication aids can also be good for giving your child more time to be able to process what is being requested of them. Spoken word or hand gestures can come and go but with using pictures they remain in focus giving visual feedback.

Visuals can also be put into a sequence or routines, they can be broken down to enable a person to learn a skill, or into a story to support and develop understanding around a specific area. Visuals remain the same and allow for identical rehearsal and consistent memory pathways to be created. This can be particularly helpful for parents as it enables you to communicate what you are explaining clearly and consistently. With this rehearsal and memory of sequenced activities comes learning and understanding and ultimately increased confidence and self-esteem. Visuals should be used alongside other forms of communication such as speech, signing and tactile experiences. We can use visuals aids in numerous ways to support communication, some of these include:-

Object of reference

An 'object of reference' is, as the name implies, an object which has a particular meaning associated with it. For example, a fork may be the object of reference for dinner. The object is closely associated with and comes to represent another object, an activity, a person or an event. These objects give the child information about what is going to happen if they are used consistently. They are often used in schools now to represent curriculum activities, or personal care routines, but they can be used at home in the same way.



The important thing is that the same objects and methods are used. The objects should have relevance for that pupil, for example, an orange arm band to represent swimming is not suitable if s/he uses a completely different flotation aid. Objects should be chosen sensitively, particularly with reference to personal care, a nappy would not be the best choice to indicate changing time, so perhaps a sponge bag could be used instead.

Now and next board

A now and next board is used to help the child visually see what the present task is and what is to follow. The now and next board is also used as a reward chart, for example: if the present task is completed the next option can be a treat.



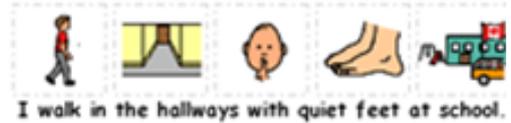
Social stories

Social stories and comic strip conversations are ways to help people with autism develop greater social understanding. Social stories were created by Carol Gray in 1991 to help teach social skills to people with autism. They are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why.

Task analysis and chaining

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), additional needs/learning disabilities may not learn some skills in the same way as their peers. It is sometimes necessary to break down a complex skill into smaller steps in order to meet the learning needs of the child. A task analysis does not need to be used for every skill but can be useful when attempting to teach a complex skill or to see with which step a child may be having difficulty (e.g. getting dressed and tooth brushing). The number of steps involved in a task analysis will depend on the child's ability. Some children may require many steps while others only a few (Alberto & Troutman, 2003). Forward and Backward Chaining - The skill to be learned is broken down into the smallest units for easy learning. For example, a child learning to brush teeth independently may start with learning to unscrew the toothpaste cap. Once the child has learned this, the next step may be squeezing the tube, and so on.

Walking in the Hallway



Washing hands

	Water on
	Hands wet
	Rub hands with soap
	Rinse
	Water off
	Dry



Timeline/visual schedules

Many individuals with additional needs/learning disabilities benefit from visual schedules in written and/or picture form because they have trouble processing verbally delivered information, initiating activities, staying focused, completing every step within a task, and shifting focus between one activity and the next. Visual schedules can increase independence and also reduce anxiety for many individuals with a learning disability. Visual schedules are often vital to the individual's performance in school, vocational, self-care, and leisure activities.



Visuals can be supportive with children who have numerous difficulties including, listening and attending, understanding and responding, processing sequenced information, following instructions and routines, anxiety and resistance to change, social isolation and shyness, and behaviour which challenges. Visuals are not seen as a replacement to spoken or written language, but instead, to be used in conjunction with and to aid communication.



This is my
Health passport



Photo	My name is:	
	Completed by:	
	Date:	

- If I have to go to hospital then this needs to go with me. It gives staff important information about me
- Nursing, therapeutic and medical staff please look at my passport before you do any interventions with me
- I may need support regarding consent and capacity.

Things you must know about me

Things that are important to me

My likes and dislikes

Things you must know about me



My name



Date of birth



Telephone no.



GP



Address

GP address



Next of kin

Relationship



Telephone no:



Key worker

Relationship



Telephone no:



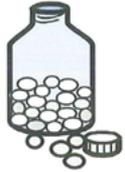
Religion

Religious requests

Things you must know about me



Allergies



Current medication and how I take it



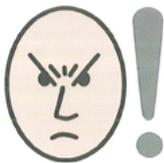
Previous medical conditions and brief medical history



Medical intervention



How I communicate



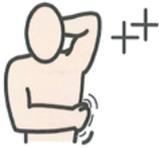
How I communicate



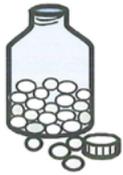
Eating (e.g. food cut up, choking, help with feeding) and **Drinking** (e.g. swallowing, small amounts, choking)

Things that are important to me

Personal Care (e.g. dressing, washing)



Keeping safe



Pain (i.e. how you know that I am in pain)



Level of Care and Support needed in hospital



My likes and dislikes

Things that I don't like and might upset me!



Things that I like and things that calm me down when I'm upset!
e.g. Favourite toys



This form should be completed before or on admission.

Please consider the following:

Allergies: Write known allergies e.g. Penicillin, peanuts, latex or other.

Current medication: List all regular and emergency medications being taken.

Medical conditions: List all known medical conditions e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, heart or breathing problems, or other.

Behaviour that may cause risk: Write down any behaviour that may be challenging or cause risk to self or others (if possible provide guidelines)

Eating and drinking: Write down if the child/young person had difficulties with eating and drinking (if guidelines have been written by community speech & language therapist, bring to hospital)

Communication: Write down any visual or hearing impairments, and bring along glasses and hearing aids to the hospital (clearly labelled). Write down expression and understanding e.g. vocalisation (grunts, noises, sounds), verbal/non verbal, makaton sign user, written/pictures/objects or reference, body language and physical behaviour (describe what certain movements/gestures mean).

Medical Interventions: Write down how to approach the child/young person when staff attempt to take blood, temperature, blood pressure, give injections and medications.

Eating and drinking: Write down any special diets (soft, gluten free, diabetic, low fat or high fibre diets). Specialised eating and drinking equipment (dysphagia mug, curved spoon, lipped plate, straw, slip plate mats). Write down if independent in eating and drinking, or requires extra support or close supervision, feeding regime and gastrostomy etc.

Personal care: Write down if support is required for personal care and if so, describe what is required (e.g. assistance with toileting, bathing, personal hygiene, dressing).

Keeping Safe: Write down and inform staff if there are any special measures to maintain safety e.g. bed rails – to prevent falling out of bed, behaviour support guidelines, type of supervision needed.

Things I don't like and might upset me: Please provide a brief description of things that might cause distress to me e.g. noisy wards, crowds and people standing near me, not preparing me for certain medical/care procedures (like injections)

Things I like and things that calm me down when I'm upset: Please provide a brief description of things that might calm me down e.g. listening to music, watching TV, looking at books, tell me what I will be doing or setting clear routines for me.

