

## Living Skills Activities for Visually Impaired Learners



Here are some suggestions for supporting your child in daily living tasks at home. Work at a level which is most appropriate for your child – they can be involved through sensory exploration and play, or by learning skills and becoming more independent.



### Cooking and Baking

- Cooking and baking are great multi-sensory activities.
- For some children, exploring the ingredients as a sensory experience is the most beneficial part of cooking and baking – what do the ingredients feel like, smell like, look like, taste like and even sound like! Spend lots of time exploring a little of each ingredient. Explore as the ingredients come together using all senses – e.g. explore dough, the difference between cooked and raw ingredients.
- Support your child to help with scooping and pouring.
- There are lots of items like talking scales and liquid level indicators which help visually impaired people in these tasks, but assuming most people don't have access to these at home, there are still ways to involve children in weighing and measuring.
- Use cups (American measuring system) and measuring spoons – encourage children to count the correct number of cups, scoops.
- Using conventional scales and measuring jugs – encourage children to scoop or pour until you say stop!
- Support your child to be involved in mixing, rolling, kneading, and pressing buttons on kitchen equipment like food mixers and blenders.
- Use your judgement – if you feel it is safe, support your child to be involved in chopping fruit, veg etc – putting your hand under your child's hand while you hold the knife is a safer way of helping them to experience this. Or you could give your child a plastic knife and cut very soft items, e.g. bananas, strawberries.
- And of course, have fun! 😊



### Kitchen cleaning tasks

- Washing dishes is a great sensory activity, and an opportunity for exploring water play – of course, you can always use plastic dishes rather than your best china!
- If your child is physically able, and you feel it is safe, they could learn to load the dishwasher – support them to feel the racks and the different sections learning what fits where – and always fill the cutlery holder on the worktop and put this in last with knives pointing downwards. Support them to feel where the tablet goes and put it in. Encourage use of listening skills – how do you know when the tablet compartment is closed properly, how do you know when the door is closed properly, what noise do you hear when the dishwasher starts, how do you know when it is finished?

- Give your child a cloth and let them wipe tables and worktops – it doesn't matter if they miss bits, it's all about the experience.
- Match kitchen items ready for putting away – feel the items and encourage recognition.
- Learn where the items go – you could stick or hang something on the appropriate cupboards and drawers to encourage independence. You could use real objects (e.g. a spoon on the outside of the cutlery drawer) or similar objects (e.g. a paper plate or toy plate). Lots of repetition will help your child to remember where items go.



### Clothing related activities

- Hand washing socks, dolls clothes etc – this could be a fun sensory water play activity in warm, soapy water – it is better just to use a bit of washing up liquid or bubble bath rather than washing powder or liquid in case of skin sensitivity.
- Using the washing machine – encourage your child to explore the machine. Where is the door, what does the drum feel like, where does the powder/ liquid go, where are the buttons? You could use different shaped raised stickers if you have any to distinguish between buttons. Support your child to put clothes in the machine, pour powder or liquid in the drawer and press the correct buttons. Use listening skills – how do you know when the door is closed, how do you know when the machine has started, how do you know when it is finished?
- Hanging up washing – using pegs helps develop hand strength and fine motor skills. If the real washing line is too high, you could set up a lower washing line, e.g. between two chairs, and allow your child to hang up small, light items.
- Sorting washing – pairing socks if your child has enough functional vision to see colours, or feeling different items of clothing and identifying, then matching with the same items. You could also encourage sorting clothes related to size e.g. dad's socks are bigger than my socks!



### Cleaning and tidying activities

- Give your child a cloth or duster and let them wipe furniture etc. Again, it's not about the finished task, it's about the experience.
- Support your child to organise their toys. You could have boxes with a toy attached to the front to signify the contents – e.g. a lego block, a doll, a toy car. Encourage your child to pick up a toy, explore and identify, and match to the appropriate box.

These are just a few ideas you can try. Whatever tasks you decide to try with your child, remember:

- Give them lots of time to explore using all their senses.
- Physically support where necessary, but encourage as much independence as possible.
- And most important of all, have fun! 😊