

# THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE IS NOT ALWAYS EASY. WE WANT YOU TO KNOW...

## For primary students, it is ok:

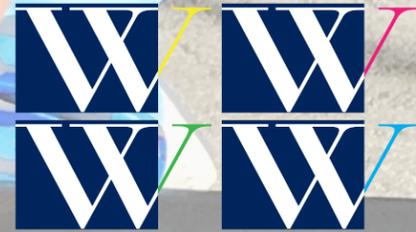
- if your child is not independent at times.
- if your child makes a mess. He can help clean it up.
- if your child complains a bit about doing what he has been asked to do; stand your ground!
- to be the parent and not a friend.
- if your child makes mistakes. Mistakes are an opportunity for learning and practicing feeling disappointment and frustration.
- if your child is crying or whining when he comes into class; just let him go and he will be fine. We will call you in the event that he does not settle down.
- if your child's clothing is not perfectly matched and hair is not perfectly combed. It shows that he has been given the opportunity to make his choice independently.
- if your child misspells words and writes letters and/or numbers backwards.
- if your child forgets his tote bag, lunch, etc., on occasion. The natural consequences that occur may keep it from happening in the future.
- if your child temporarily misplaces an item. Everything is somewhere.
- if you let your child try to solve his conflicts independently before intervening.
- if your child is brought to school in their PJs, after a particularly difficult time that morning and if they are not cooperating or managing their choices well.
- if your child is assertive about his needs or feelings - this shows valuable self-awareness.
- if your child thrives under repetition; he relishes the ability to master a skill and use it.

## For lower school students, it is ok:

- for you to have different expectations of your child than other parents have of theirs.
- for you to limit screen time during the school week and on weekends, and/or not have screen time until homework and chores are done.
- if your child does not share details of his day with you.
- for your child to eat whatever the teacher can find at school for lunch because lunch was forgotten at home or in the car.
- if your child feels some frustration at having to figure something out on his own.
- for your child to feel disappointed because he was told "no".
- for your child to complain about taking care of his belongings.
- for your child to go to bed early to keep from being too tired to get up on time the next morning.
- for your child to make two trips to move all of his belongings from one place to the next.
- for your child to spill.
- for your child to search for something that has been lost.
- for your child to complain about doing homework and using the dictionary.
- if your child's work looks like he did it and not his parent.
- for your child to forget his homework (occasionally).
- for your child to complain about having to dress appropriately for the weather.
- for your child to be upset with a friend and work to resolve the issue.

## For middle school students, it is ok:

- to voice their opinions.
- to make mistakes.
- to make their own choices about outside interests.
- to seek more privacy from parents.
- if their parents limit screen time and phone usage.



## INDEPENDENCE GUIDE

CUMULATIVE BENCHMARKS TO AID IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENCE IN YOUR CHILD



**"NEVER HELP A CHILD WITH A TASK AT WHICH HE FEELS HE CAN SUCCEED."**  
**MARIA MONTESSORI**

# In an organized environment...

## CARE FOR SELF

### *Toddlers can:*

- dress themselves including socks and shoes.
- engage themselves for brief periods of time.
- walk without being carried.
- carry their belongings.
- open and close simple containers.
- feed themselves and drink from an open cup.
- eat while sitting in a chair that they can get in and out of independently.
- go to the bathroom independently as long as their clothes are not a hindrance.
- entertain themselves without the TV, computer, tablet or smartphone.
- brush their teeth and hair and wash their hands.
- eat with utensils.

### *Additionally, primary students can:*

- help in making their lunch.
- put on their jacket and coat and begin to learn to manage tied shoes.
- remember their tote bag, jacket, lunch, etc.
- walk into class during carpool.
- pour their beverages and manage their lunches or snacks upon finishing eating.
- carry their plates to the kitchen after meals.

### *First and second graders can:*

- choose clothing for the day, get dressed, and be ready for breakfast.
- fill their water bottles.
- help choose nutritious foods for their lunches.
- remember to bring lunch, coat, water bottle, and backpack to and from school.
- walk in from carpool alone.
- carry their belongings.
- clean up spills and accidents.
- complete homework and turn it in when due.
- get into and out of their car seats or booster seats by themselves.

### *Third, fourth, and fifth graders can:*

- wake to an alarm clock, get dressed and prepare breakfast.
- plan and pack their lunches.
- be responsible for remembering homework and other papers that are due.
- wear weather-appropriate clothing, including remembering to wear or bring a jacket for outdoor recess.
- pick up after themselves.
- allot time, and manage projects until completion.

### *Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders can:*

- make decisions about their appearance.
- choose their own extra-curricular activities.
- stay alone at home for short periods of time.
- set long-term academic goals.
- use failure as a springboard for future learning.
- understand that learning comes with effort and struggle.

## CARE FOR ENVIRONMENT

### *Toddlers are learning to:*

- clean up and put their toys away in an orderly space where items have a place.
- help prepare meals i.e. wash vegetables.
- water plants.
- help with gardening.
- clean up spills.
- help wash the car.
- help sweep the floor.
- put some laundry away.
- be respectful of and gentle with living creatures.
- help with chores at home such as putting away dirty dishes or helping make their bed.

### *Additionally, primary students are learning to:*

- help set the table.
- sort silverware after it has been washed.
- sweep independently.
- straighten their room.
- sort clean socks, fold towels, etc.
- have responsibilities in keeping their home environment clean and tidy.
- help plant flowers, weed flower beds, water plants, etc.

### *First and second graders are learning to:*

- make their beds every day.
- fold laundry and put it away.
- feed and care for pets.
- put away toys, games, and books.
- set the table for meals.
- help to do the dishes.
- wipe the table.
- sweep and vacuum the floors.
- read a book to parents, siblings, and by themselves.

### *Third, fourth, and fifth graders are learning to:*

- pick up after themselves (they do it at school).
- clean their rooms and help out daily around the house.
- take out the trash.
- care for pets.
- put away groceries.
- help with yard work.

### *Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are learning to:*

- plan and cook a simple meal.
- wash and put away their laundry.
- manage small amounts of money.

## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

### *Toddlers are learning to:*

- let others finish a sentence before interrupting to ask a question.
- follow social expectations of eating/drinking in designated areas and times.
- learn to deal with frustrations without having a parent anticipate and solve problems for them.
- use words or signs rather than whine.
- resolve conflict without physical actions.

### *Additionally, primary students are learning to:*

- show respect for others.
- wait patiently without interrupting conversations.
- use table manners.
- understand not to take or use things that belong to others without asking for permission.
- solve problems with little or no interference from adults.
- feel empathy for others.
- accept or decline invitations to join peers.
- begin to use courteous language.

### *First and second graders are learning to:*

- say please, thank you, and other courteous phrases.
- help others with work.
- solve problems with friends and adults.
- ask an adult for help when needed.
- apologize and make amends.

### *Third, fourth, and fifth graders are learning to:*

- write thank you notes for gifts received.
- exhibit grace and courtesy.
- use conflict resolution skills with friends.
- help others problem solve.
- notice other people's feelings.

### *Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are learning to:*

- respect the dignity of others.
- speak up when they see unkind behavior.
- use technology responsibly.
- give back to their community.