

Date:



## Rules of thumb for helping your child learn

- Show your child a new skill up to three times.
- If he doesn't do it successfully after three tries, stop and try another approach.
- Once he seems to do the new skill, help him practice it up to four times.
- If he can't do it successfully, try doing something else or try another approach.

These rules keep the child feeling successful. If he can't do what we are asking, maybe we aren't teaching it right or the task isn't right.

Also, once he learns a skill and can do it successfully, move on to more complex and challenging ones. Practicing the same old thing over and over isn't much fun!

## Dear Parents:

Your child should now be using his good hand control in more places. We want him to be able to use his good hand self-regulation more and more in everyday settings.

### How to prompt and remind your child

Sometimes your child will forget to use his good hand self-regulation. If he does something that shows he forgot, stop him and ask: "What do you need to tell your hands?" DO NOT just tell him what to do. Remember, we want him to remind himself and not just rely on you. Prompt him to tell his hands what to do. You can model it for him by saying to his hands: "Hands, you need to \_\_\_\_." - for example, "Hands, you need to wait." Then tell him you know he can control his own hands—next time, he'll remember.

Catching your child before he does something is a really good opportunity for teaching. If he is about to try something, like grab a toy from another child, jump in as quickly as possible. Ask him: "What do you need to tell your hands?" Prompt the child to tell his hands: "Hands, you need to be \_\_\_\_." DO NOT just tell him what to do. We want him to think for himself and not just wait for adults to fix things up.

Catch him using self-regulation! Try to praise him more often than reminding him. Comment whenever you see him controlling his hands, especially in situations that are more challenging for him.

### Self-advocacy

One important skill we want your child to learn is self-advocacy. All that means is that he can help himself and support himself in daily situations. For example, he can move himself away from another child so he isn't bugged by his being too close.

Right now, we will focus only on his hands. As he progresses, we will include other body parts as well as thinking and emotions.

If you see your child struggling to do something with his hands, try your best not to help him right away. It'll be hard to just watch but wait at least 30 seconds before jumping in. First, ask him, "What could you do to help yourself?" - remember, we're trying to help him advocate for himself. If he isn't sure what to do, make a few suggestions and then have him try one out. Don't just tell him what to do.

If he helps himself or asks for help, comment "Look at how you helped your hands. You really know how to help yourself do things." Asking for help is okay so long as he tries to do things by himself first.

Let other people involved with your child know about the expectations for him to advocate for himself. Ask them not to 'rescue' him in daily situations. Let him try things for himself and see if he can figure out ways to do it. Ask them for feedback on how well he does. Also, make sure they praise him for anything he tries on his own. If he forgets, ask them to remind him of what he should do.

Take your child to locations where he can practice his self-regulation. You can use the places that we outlined in the chart sent home. Take the chart we made up along so you can point things out to him. The chart will also help you remember the things that used to be difficult for him. After children learn self-regulation, it's really easy to forget about how things used to be.



## Helping your child improve hand self-regulation

Catch him using self-regulation!

Try to praise him more often than reminding him. Praise can be just a comment about what you see. For example, you could say, "You really told your hands to be gentle and soft. That was great!"

Comment whenever you see him controlling his hands, especially in situations where he could have done something else.

Try to remember how he used to react in different situations. Be alert in a positive way! Look for things he is doing now but used to have trouble with. Praise him for the things he is doing differently now that he is learning self-regulation.