We all want our kids to be as independent as possible so they are prepared for a happy, productive life on their own. To do this, we need to start early with encouraging them to take an active part in maintaining the family’s needs and being able to entertain themselves also. You may not always be there to 'provide entertainment.'

Everyone wants to feel loved and needed, even if there are complaints about chores. Everyone should have chores and expectations that make them feel like valued members of the group. Expectations will depend on the age of the child and abilities. Life Skills Inventory provides activities in many different areas that all children will need. Everyday Learning offers suggestions from an OT. Learning for a Purpose offers suggestions and additional supports to teach some activities. The activities that your child already knows how to do they should be expected to do. As you introduce new activities you will have to spend some time teaching. You may have to provide visual supports.

Twinkl has a variety of visuals to help with different steps like sorting and loading the machine. You may also have to put an arrow on the controls so your child knows which setting to use for which type of laundry. If you have any questions, email me at peggy.wolf@dsact.org. For vacuuming, put baking soda down and create a pattern that the child can follow until it is a habit. That way the whole carpet is vacuumed.

You can never start too early with teaching skills. For some, it will take time to master these. The skill may grow in steps. Provide a chart of expectations for the day. If some things are only weekly, then add those on the appropriate day. Allow your child the freedom to select the order in which they would like to perform the task if possible. You can eventually remind him during the day to look and see if everything is completed. There will have to be a way to show when a task is complete. At first, take any approximation of correct.

In addition, kids need to be able to entertain themselves. Do they know what to do with unstructured time? This can be difficult depending on the age and ability of the child. Again, you will need to teach these activities at first, but if it is something the child enjoys, he can eventually entertain himself.

Outside activities:
- Water plants (use a watering can if you need to limit how much water to use)
- Give the birds food/water
- Pull weeds
- Hunt for worms, bugs
- Play with the dog
- Sidewalk chalk (if they aren’t creative, draw for them, let them trace or color in)
● Bubbles
● Backyard scavenger hunt (provide pictures of what they should find: leaves, grass, rocks, twigs, birds, flowers, butterflies, a hose, clouds)
● Ice Block Treasure Hunt would be perfect to engage in outside.
● Running through the sprinkler
● Kicking a ball

**Inside:**
● Legos (create a pattern for them to follow, or sort by color or size, provide a yardstick and they put together enough to equal a yard)
● Color
● Puzzles
● Sensory bags (filled with different textures and items for exploration)
● Shaving cream on a table: write letters, just make a mess, no particular goal
● Water on a chalkboard: plain water on a black chalkboard can be fun
● Playdough: visual with rolling it out, making a ball, using some of the bought tools so you can 'make ' spaghetti
● Ice cubes in a bowl with a spoon and a cup. Move cubes from one location to another
● Bubble Wrap can be fun to pop and a great fine motor skill
● Play with boxes...especially if they are big enough to get into. If you have more than one, then there can be multiple rooms for the 'house'
● Create patterns with beads or pasta. This can be strung or glued. You start the pattern and then they just keep repeating it. Encourage them to go as far as they can
● Dance! Turn on some music or music videos to follow along
● Hide small items in beans, rice, sand or dirt to 'find'
● Ocean in a Bottle can be entertaining
● Ooze is great fun. Try it if you haven’t before
● Glitter Jars will keep kids entertained and calmed down
● Color a card for a gift
● Call (Facetime) with grandparents or friends
● Scavenger hunt in the house (provide a visual of items to find in the house). They can either pick items up and put them all in one spot or check off when an item is found
● Put bubble bath in the sink and allow them to 'hunt' for items in the sink
● Slime recipes can provide fun
● Look at books

If you have any questions or you would like other activities, just let me know.

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