

# ***IMPROVING SELFCARE AT HOME***



**A HANDY GUIDE FOR YOU TO  
USE WITH YOUR CHILD**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**Not being able  
to see the stars  
doesn't mean  
you can't reach  
for them!**

**-ANONYMOUS**

The Project Managers (PMs) Choi Hang San and Vong Man Hei would like to express our gratitude towards SVRC and Monash University for supporting this project. PMs strongly believe that “not being able to see the stars doesn't mean you can't reach for them!”

The images used in this handbook is provided by Canva



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# WHAT IS SELFCARE?



This Handbook is specifically for parents of children with low vision and legal blindness, as they are identified to be the most prevalent population in SVRC

It has been created to provide practical strategies that can be used to support your child in developing independence in self-care and community based activities. It describes what to do to assist your child to develop greater independence in self-care activities such as having a shower/bath, cleaning teeth, going to the toilet, getting dressed, feeding themselves.. and more. It will also assist you in learning ways to support your child learn how to prepare a meal, go shopping, do some housework as well as use transport out in the community



Currently, around 4,000 children were reported to have a VI in Australia (Next Sense, 2021), where most had reduced self-care engagement (Lewis & Iselin, 2002), leading to developmental delays and poorer health (Haertl, 2010). Thus, the handbook aims to address this, by encouraging and educating caregivers on self-care strategies to practise with their child at home. Ultimately, we aspire to increase engagement in self-care, thereby enhancing their skill acquisition, independence and overall development of children with visual impairment



# SECTION 1

## *GENERAL STRATEGIES*

1. Lighting
2. Organisation
3. Routine planning

# LIGHTING

If your child has *low vision or is legally blind*, it's helpful to first **check the lighting** in your closets and dressing areas:

1. Is the lighting bright enough for your child?
2. Is the lighting even and without deep shadows?
3. Does the position of the lighting help or hinder when you try to identify and select your clothing independently?



**NO DEEP SHADOWING!!**

## HOW TO AVOID GLARE ?

1. **Natural light** is clear and usually the easiest for a person with vision impairment to see by, thus remember to open your windows, and cut any bushes that obscure the natural light!
2. Use **curtains and blinds** on windows to control the level of illumination at different times of the day and to avoid glare.
3. Use non-reflective surfaces to eliminate glare from overhead lighting.
4. Use individual lighting to focus on a specific task.
5. Seat your child with his or her back to the window to reduce distractions and discomfort from the light.



# LIGHTING



## THINGS THAT YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF

- **Be aware of shadows.** They can be particularly confusing and give false information to your child in regards to depth perception.
- **Ensure stairs and corridors are well lit,** preferably with light switches at each end. Use sensor lights at external doors.
- Ask your child to **use night-lights/ bedside touch lamps** for night time trips to the bathroom.



## DIFFERENT TYPES OF LIGHTING THAT YOUR CHILD CAN USE

- **Natural light** is clear and usually the easiest for a person with vision impairment to see by.
- **Fluorescent lighting** produces a clear light which disseminates over a wide area. Different covers can be used for fluro-lights, depending on the light sensitivity of the individual. In some lamps, small fluorescent coils can replace traditional yellow bulbs.
- **Blue daylight globes** can also be used to replace the traditional yellow desk lamp bulbs. These blue globes emit a clearer, whiter light than their yellow counterparts.
- **Halogen bulbs** can be helpful for some children, particularly in desk and bedside lamps.
- Keep a **flashlight** in your child's nightstand drawer or near the closet to help them read labels or distinguish colours.

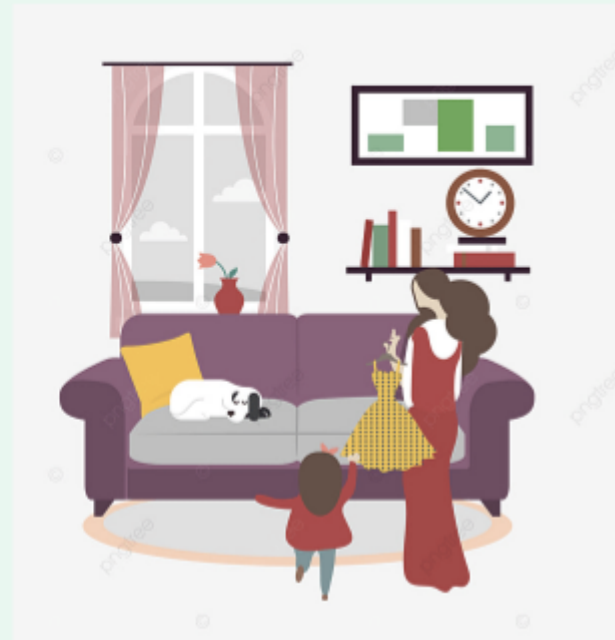
Discuss & select the type of light with your child, this helps to find the most suitable lighting for your child and adhere to their preference



# LIGHTING

## LIGHTING FOR YOUR CHILD TO SELECT THEIR OWN CLOTHES

- Allow them to take the clothing they have selected to the nearest window and see if the extra light can help them identify or differentiate colours.
- When the child wants to match colours, ask your child to hold his or her clothing items side-by-side under bright or natural light.



Always consider:

**BIGGER  
BRIGHTER  
BOLDER**

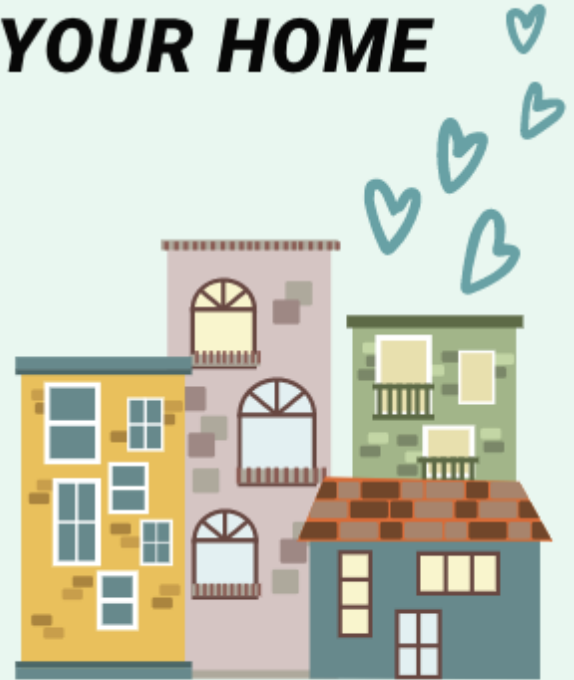
Good lighting allows your child to select their clothes and dress independently! YAY! Allow your child to participate in their selfcare activities as much as possible, so they can acquire new skills and become more independent!



# ORGANISATION

- Organise and ensure that your child places items **consistently in the same place**.
- Arrange the furniture with your child so that it is not placed haphazardly throughout the room and is consistently in the same location.
- **Reduce the amount of visual clutter** in the room. If there are open shelves, eliminate distractions by covering the shelf unit with a solid-coloured cloth.

## YOUR HOME



## SELECTION & ADAPTATION OF MATERIALS

- Ensure that your child is using **contrasting colours** for all activities.
  - People with low vision often cannot distinguish colours, but can detect visual contrast.
  - Also, when choosing a colour scheme, use **solid colours** rather than patterns (e.g. avoid flowery or checkered tablecloths) to make sure that the colours you use provide adequate contrast for your child.
- Use items that are not visually stimulating with **coloured tape** to provide more contrast.
- Outline materials with a **contrasting colour**.

Organise and adapt the environment with your child, to facilitate independence & adhere to their preference!

Use **visual and tactual symbols** or signs along the child's route to provide cues for orientation and mobility purposes. This could also be done by special labelling strategies listed below.

# ORGANISATION

## SPECIAL LABELLING TOOLS

### *Loc Dots*



Image Source: Vision Australia

Clear raised dots to mark index cards, appliances, computers and keyboards. They cannot be used directly on the clothing item.

### *Touch Dots*



Image Source: Vision Australia

Black, white, red, yellow and orange raised foam dots with adhesive backing to mark index cards, appliances, computers and keyboards. They cannot be used directly on the clothing item.

### *Touch To See Labels*

Braille and tactile adhesive labels to mark index cards, medication and food. Each reusable label contains a raised letter or number with corresponding braille. They cannot be used directly on the clothing item.



Image Source: VisionAware



Image Source: MaxiAids

### *VOXCOM III Voice Labelling System*

Record audio talk labels and messages by depressing a button and inserting a card into the unit. The card attaches to canned goods, medication, clothing, food and household items.

# ORGANISATION

## APPS FOR ORGANISING



Image Source: Seeing AI

### SEEING AI

An app that helps people with vision impairment to identify items through gaining access to the camera on their phones. It includes a colour detection function.



**Reminder:** Let your child select the strategies they want to use, to increase their motivation in engaging self-care.

Image Source:  
be my eyes



### be my eyes

An app that helps people with a vision impairment to recognise objects and cope with everyday situations with the assistance of a sighted volunteer, via sending photos or videos and live chat.





# ***THE CLOSET*** *The Closet*

Click [HERE](#) for a handout of this guide for your child! The handout summarises all the steps so you could add voice-over for your child

# HOW CAN YOUR CHILD ORGANISE THEIR CLOSET?



## GENERAL STRATEGIES

1. **Allow your child to group similar clothing together.**  
For example, place all pants in one part of the closet and all shirts in another.
2. **Allow your child to place a matching outfit together**  
on one hanger (shirt and pants, skirt and top, shorts and t-shirt).
3. **Allow your child to use plastic Ziploc bags** to separate socks and underwear.
  - Try to establish a place for each item.
  - **Remind your child to always keep items in the same place every time** and return all items to their designated place when you finish using them.



Plastic ziploc bag

## REMINDER

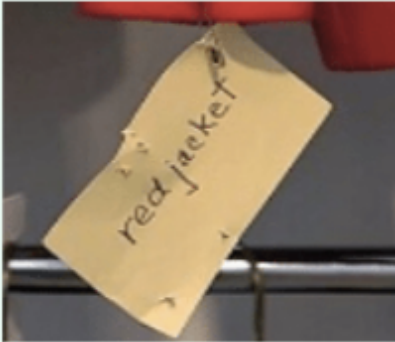
Ensure enough lighting for your child to match colours, for instance, allow them to take the clothing they have selected to the nearest window



# THE CLOSET

## SIMPLE LABELLING METHOD

### First Method: Make large print



Source: Making Life More Livable: Simple Adaptations for Living at Home after Vision Loss, Third Edition, by Maureen A. Duffy, M.S., CVRT

Make large print labels with your child. Use a white unruled 3"x5" file card and a rubber band. Mark the label with a black wide-tip marker, laundry marker, or foam alphabet letters. Stick it on the hanger with the clothing item.

### Second Method: Safety Pin

- Develop a **safety pin coding system** with your child to determine colour;
  - for example, **blue** = one safety pin & **red** = 2 safety pins.
  - Use small "no rust" laundry pins.
  - Place the pins in an inconspicuous location, e.g. inside a pocket, where they will not be visible or rub on your neck, arm or leg.
  - Use no pins on whatever colour you have the most of, in order to save time and resources.
  - Use safety pins to label clothes that go together; for example, all clothes with one safety pin are pastels, all with two pins are jewel tones



*Please note: If you use a label that is applied directly to the clothing item, make sure that the label does not rub on your neck, back, waist, or any other part of your body.*

# THE CLOSET

## SIMPLE LABELLING METHOD

### *Third method*

Use Iron-on patches in various sizes and shapes



Image Source: Shutterstock

### *Fourth Method*

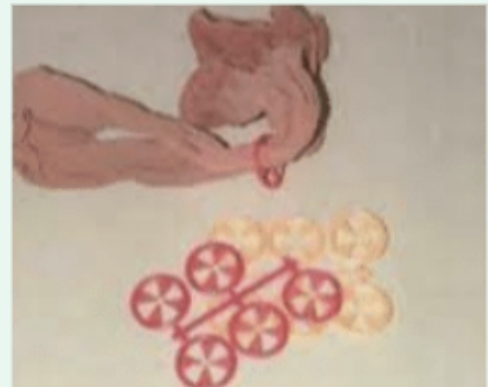
Use buttons/ French knots



Image Source: Sublime Stitching

### *Fifth Method: Sock tuckers*

Small plastic "sock tuckers" or "sock locks" (pictured at right) can help your child sort their socks and hosiery. You can also use them to keep matching socks together during laundering.



Source: Making Life More Livable: Simple Adaptations for Living at Home after Vision Loss, Third Edition, by Maureen A. Duffy, M.S., CVRT

Here is an assortment of clothing organised and labelled with everyday and specialty items.

Remember to always select the strategies together with your child, so that they can choose the best strategies to suit them, which facilitate their independence



# THE CLOSET

## SPECIALTY LABELLING PRODUCTS



### *Hi-Mark Tactile Pen*

A three-dimensional plastic liquid that makes raised lines, dots, and shapes to identify clothing, canned goods, frozen foods and mark the settings on appliances.

Image Source: Vision Aware

### *Spot 'n Line Pen*

A three-dimensional plastic liquid that makes raised lines, dots and shapes to identify clothing, canned goods, frozen foods and mark the settings on appliances.



Image Source: Vision Aware



Image Source: Vision Aware

### *Pen Friend 2*

An electronic colour identifier and voice labelling system that allows users to record, and re-record, information on to self-adhesive labels. The device will speak the colour aloud when you hold onto it against the garment.

# ***THE CLOSET***

## ***SPECIALTY LABELLING PRODUCTS***



Image Source: Vision Aware

### ***Talking Colour Identifier with Light Probe***

This electronic device detects approximately 100 colours. The device will speak the colour aloud when you hold it against the garment.



Seeing AI

Image Source: Seeing AI

### ***Seeing AI***

Please refer to page 11.



**be my  
eyes**

Image Source: Be my eyes

### ***BE MY EYES***

Please refer to page 11



# **BATHROOM**

*Bathroom*

Click [HERE](#) for a handout of this guide for your child! The hand out lists out all the steps and is able to be voice-overed

# HOW CAN YOUR CHILD ORGANISE HIS/HER BATHROOM?



## GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Ask your child to keep frequently used items in the same place at all times. Label them with labelling items such as loc dots.
- Whenever possible, ask your child to use plastic rather than glass containers.
- Ensure **colour contrast** for all activities undertaken in the bathroom
  - Buy towels, washcloths, and bath mats that contrast sharply with the bathtub and tiles.
  - If necessary, replace a white toilet seat with a darker, contrasting seat.
  - Also use **solid colours** rather than patterns and make sure that the colours you use provide adequate contrast.
- Many people with low vision cannot distinguish colours per se, but can often detect visual contrast.
- For safety, remember to always close doors. An open door is hard to see and can be a hazard. Even a low door, if a child bends down, they can bump their head.



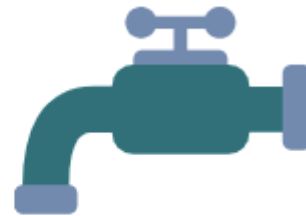
An example of a colour contrasting bathroom

# BATHROOM



## BATH/SHOWER AREA

- Ask your child to put a **non-skid mat, friction tape** on the bottom of the bathtub each time or the floor of the shower. Choose colours with your child that contrast with the surface.
- Ask your child to use soaps and shampoos in **pump dispensers** to prevent spillage, or hang a **shower caddy** in the shower to hold your soap and shampoo.
- Allow your child to use different numbers of **rubber bands** to distinguish bottles of shampoo, conditioner and body wash.
  - For instance, 1 rubber band = shampoo, 2 rubber bands = conditioner and 3 rubber bands = body wash
- Ensure **additional lighting** installed over the tub and shower.
- **Select labelling tools** with your child, such as loc dots, to identify the **hot and cold water sides of the tap**.
  - For instance, 2 loc docs = hot water, and 1 loc doc = cold water. This allows your child to be able to rotate tap to get the temperature he or she wants.
- In the shower, allow your child to use a **hand-held shower head** so he or she can test the water temperature on their hands.



## SINK AREA



- Choose a colour with your child that contrasts the sink for your face towel, toothbrush and cups
- Again, choose the suitable labelling tool with your child, such as loc dots, to identify the hot and cold water sides of the faucets.



# ***KITCHEN*** *Kitchen*

Click [HERE](#) for a handout of this guide for your child! The hand out lists out all the steps and is able to be voice-overed

# HOW CAN YOUR CHILD ORGANISE THE KITCHEN?

## THE WORK AREA



- 1** Firstly, try to simplify the work space with your child. Remove or store away items that they would not frequently to get rid of clutter. Use placemats to contrast with table and dishes on mat.
- 2** Secondly, keep items like pots, pans and stirring spoons close to the work area or near the oven where they will be used. You and your child could use cup hooks or adhesive hooks to hang pot holders, utensils, and other frequently used items within easy reach.
- 3** Thirdly, organise heavy items like coffee makers that you use on a daily basis in an easy-to-reach space on the countertop.

### **4** Fourthly, **ask and assist your child to label the Gas stove**

- Label the control knobs with loc doc, in a good contrasting colour with the stove

- 1 doc for low
- 2 docs for medium
- 3 docs for high



Image Source:  
Shutterstock

- If you are using an induction stove
  - The flat surface of the stove could be challenging because it is flat, ask and assist your child to put tactile mark/ bumps with puff paint for the control panel, for instance, write L for Low, and H for High,

### **Fifthly, label the microwave**

- 5** You could try to use spot n line pen to label your microwave or any labelling system you prefer
  - Write D for defrost
  - P for power
  - C for clear
  - Put Dots for the numeric pad,
  - Try to just label the button that your child usually works with, as you do not want to label too much and overwhelm him or her.



# THE KITCHEN

## CABINET & DRAWERS

- Label the cupboard and drawers with your child with **large print words/ with braille/ other labelling system**
  - Adhere labels as soon as possible when purchasing items from the store.
- **Place the picture of the cupboard content** on the inside of the cupboard door and drawer.
- Remind your child to consistently store the same items in the same places.
- Inside the cupboard, ask your child to **put trays/ baskets that are labelled clearly** to help him or her to easily locate the items. Only put 2-3 items in each compartment.
- For safety, remember to always close the cabinet. An open door is hard to see and can be a hazard.



## PLATE & CUPS



Source: Amazon

Ask your child to try to use **divided plates or trays**, as it make them easier to see the different foods.



Source: Rehabmart

You can try to use **Scooper plates and bowls**, which can help you more confidently in scooping food onto utensils without pushing it off the plate.



Source: Ebay

Allow your child to use **brightly coloured dishes** which can also make it easier to see not only the dishes themselves but also the food on them. They will assist your child in meal preparation.



# THE KITCHEN

## ORGANISATION OF PLATE & TRAY

Source: Eotsy



Put the tray on the table, using it as the central point, so your child could systematically put other utensils/ equipment, where they can always be located

## TALKING ALARM & APPLICATION

- There are talking appliances that can clearly read out timing, operational settings, and other options so that your child can navigate things like temperature, colour, volume measurement, and even different food labels, for example, a talking microwave.
- Your child can also use the app “be my eye”, to connect with sighted volunteers to help them to read the food labels or the instructions of the machines.



A product from Vision Australia

*Reminder*

Remember to let your child choose where they place equipment & ingredients, as long as the same routine is followed each time. This ensures safety & builds confidence



# ***ROUTINE SETTING***

*Routine setting*

# ROUTINE SETTING

It is imperative for your child to practise the acquired self-care skills consistently. Thus, try to incorporate self-care practice into your family routine. For example, do the household chores with your child together.

Use a calendar and timetable to plan the routine with your child, e.g. when to cook together, organise their bedroom and do their household chores.



## SUITABLE CALENDARS FOR YOUR CHILD



Source: Paths to Literacy

### **Tactile calendar**

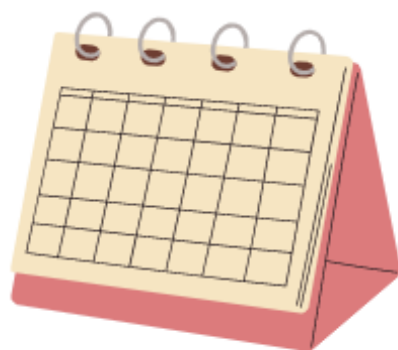
A tactile calendar can be helpful and engaging for children who are learning braille code or for children who would benefit from added tactile information.



# SUITABLE CALENDARS FOR YOUR CHILD

## PRINT CALENDAR

- Large print calendar
- Use an 21.6cm by 27.9cm weekly calendar and a bold line pen that does not bleed through might work best.



## ELECTRONIC CALENDAR



- If your child has a computer or a smartphone of their own, use an electronic calendar
- With screen enlargement or screen reading technology, the issue of reading the words and numbers on a print calendar is eliminated.
- You and your child can create your own calendar in Microsoft Excel or Word.
- The VO Calendar is an accessible one for iPhone users because it works well with VoiceOver command.

*Note: A braille calendar is harder for planning routine, as you and your child would not be able to jot notes on them, but they are handy for checking dates.*

# SECTION 2

## *TASK- SPECIFIC STRATEGIES*

This section will include

1. Goal Planning
2. Cooking
3. Housekeeping
4. Shopping



# GOAL PLANNING

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF GOAL PLANNING**



It is very important to have a goal before you start the self-care task with your child! A goal gives them motivation, and let's them know what it is they are trying to accomplish. So it is recommended for you to set up a goal with your child first before you start!. Here is a framework you can follow to do this!

## **GOAL-PLAN-DO-CHECK**

The Goal-Plan-Do-Check (GPDC) framework is an evidence-based template that utilises goal setting to promote skill acquisition. It can be integrated into daily life, used whenever your child is trying to complete a self-care task or learn new skills!

The template on the next page explains how you should use this model!

# GOAL-PLAN-DO-CHECK

## GOAL

- Come up with goals that are meaningful for you and your child, such as cooking pasta. It is important for your child to value the goal, as it can motivate them!

## PLAN

- Prepare all the things you need before you begin the task and keep them nearby so that they are easily accessible.
- Plan ahead! Write down the instructions needed for the task and go over them with your child. Let your child choose their own strategies and let them try it out!
- Break big goals down into small steps, to make the task easier and let your child experience small successes.
- Estimate how long the task will take so your child will not be rushed.

## DO

- This is the part where you execute the plan and DO the task!
- During this time, avoid distractions and make sure your child stays focused on the task.
- When your child seems to be unsure of what to do, try to prompt them to think of the next step, instead of directly giving them the answer!
- Always be aware of how your child is feeling, if your child seems to be overwhelmed, try to calm them down or take a break.

## CHECK

- Check with your child to see how well they've done and if they've achieved the goal! This is also the time for you to give them some encouragement and positive feedback!
- Prompt them to think what they can do differently next time to make the task even easier.





# ***COOKING***

*cooking*

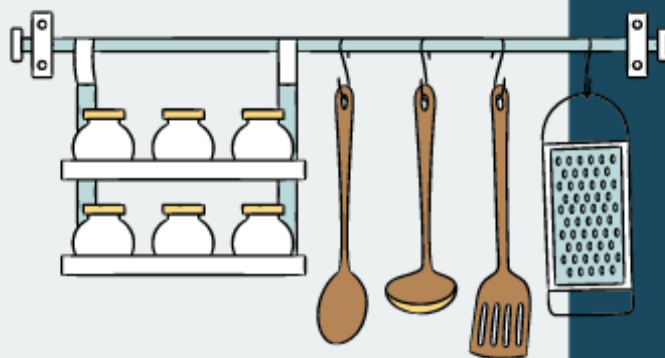


# COOKING



## Basic Kitchen Safety

Before you begin cooking, you must make sure the kitchen is safe for your child, here are some tips to do that!



- Keep any drawers and doors fully closed
- Keep container lids either fully on or fully off
- Teach your child to be systematic and tidy, putting things away as you go to avoid clutter and risk of accident
- Before using the stove, explain the relationship between hot plates and dials to your child. Allow them to feel the set up
- Keep damp cloth close at hand to allow hands to be wiped regularly
- Place a slip-proof mat under the chopping board to stabilise it
- Ensure the handles of the pots and pans are turned around, so you don't knock them over while you are cooking.
- Avoid wearing long, loose clothing while cooking. You can accidentally set your clothes on fire
- Always have a small bin or rubbish bag nearby to dispose the rubbish





## Cooking Recipe 1: Sandwich

REMEMBER  
TO ALWAYS  
START WITH  
THE GOAL!

### GOAL

To make a Peanut Butter & Jam Sandwich



### PLAN

You should ensure that all ingredients and equipment required to make a PB and J sandwich is available and gathered on the workbench before beginning

#### Ingredients:

2 Slices of bread  
A Jar of jam  
A Jar of peanut butter

#### Equipments:

2 knives or spoons  
A plate  
A toaster  
A pair of wooden tongs

Make sure the toaster is plugged in before starting. If it is not, guide your child to find the electricity outlet, let them hold the plug by the portion. Let them bring the plug up to the outlet, making sure that the prongs are in the exact position as the holes, then encourage them to push the plug into the outlet. Make sure that the outlet is turned OFF before putting the plug in and turn OFF when finished



Remember to use wooden tongs to take the bread out, and for the area to be clean and dry, to prevent getting an electrical shock!

Click [HERE](#) for a handout of this recipe for your child! The hand out lists out all the steps and is able to be voice-overed

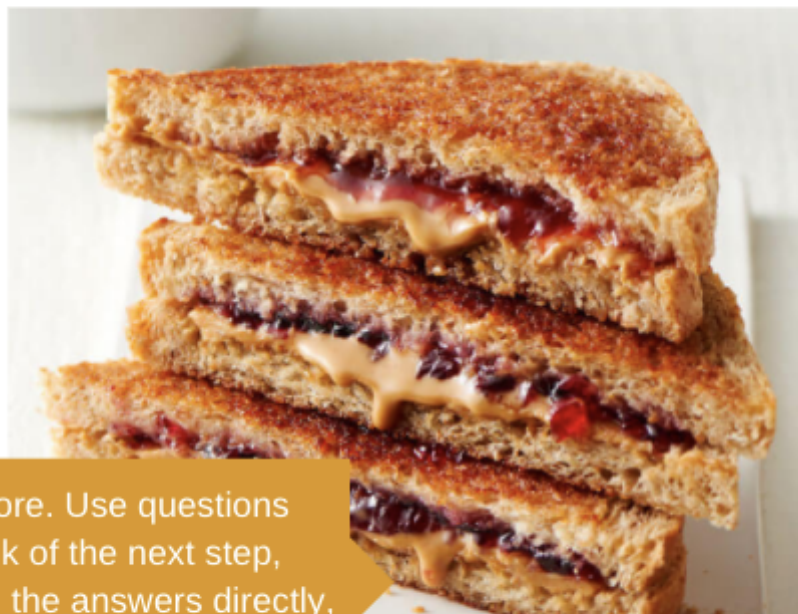
# COOKING WITH GPDC



## **DO:** **TIME TO START COOKING**


If your child is doing this for the first time, you can read out the instructions directly and give them more guidance!

If your child has done this before. Use questions instead to prompt them to think of the next step, instead of providing them with the answers directly, this will facilitate learning & independence!



Source: Land O'Lakes

- 1** Let your child take out two slices of bread, and put them on a plate next to the toaster
- 2** Let your child test out the width and height of the toaster, using the tongs to feel how deep the hole is, then let them drop the bread into the toaster
- 3** Let them turn on the toaster, then wait together to listen for the sound of the toaster ejecting the bread
- 4** Use the wooden tongs to tap on the top of the toaster until they find the bread
- 5** Let your child use the tongs or their hands to take out the bread and place it on the plate, be careful not to touch the toaster as it can be hot



Remember to remind them that the toaster is hot and to be careful!



- 7** Now its time to spread the jam! There are two ways you can teach your child to do this!

## SPOON

- Your child can use their left hand to stabilise the bread
- Let them dip the spoon into the jam jar with their other hand and scoop out the jam
- Pour the jam to the middle of the bread, using the back of the spoon, spread the jam by drawing circles on the bread, spreading outwards



## KNIFE

- Let your child dip the knife into the jar to scoop up some jam
- Let them pick up the bread with their left hand, with their fingers placed at the top of the bread and their thumb at the bottom
- Touch the knife to their fingers, then spread from fingers to thumb
- Three broad strips should cover the whole slice



Source: Furuoda

- 8** Using a new knife or spoon, let them use the same technique to spread the peanut butter on the other slice of bread
- 9** Combine the two pieces of bread by placing the sides with the spread together. Let them feel for the edges of the bread to make sure the bread forms a square. Now dig in!

## CHECK

Now, check with your child to see how well they think they did with the task! You can ask them:

- Did you spread the jam evenly on the bread?
- What was the hardest part to make the sandwich?
- Next time, what would you do differently when making the sandwich?

If your child has trouble spreading the jam evenly, prompt them gently, eg. have you covered the left side of the bread yet?

# COOKING WITH GPDC

## Cooking Recipe 2: Pasta

YOU CAN LET  
YOUR CHILD  
CHOOSE THEIR  
FAV TYPE OF  
PASTA

**GOAL**  
To cook pasta



### PLAN

Remember to make sure that all ingredients and equipment needed to make pasta is available and gathered on the workbench before starting

#### Ingredients:

- 2 servings of pasta
- 8 cherry tomatoes (you can adjust the amount to your liking)
- 2 Sausages
- Olive oil
- Shredded cheese
- Salt
- Tomato pasta sauce
- Herbs of your choice (chives, parsley or basil)

#### Equipment:

- A big pot
- A saucepan
- A colander
- A spatula
- A pair of tongs
- A cutting board
- A knife
- A clean bowl
- 2 plates
- Your stove
- liquid level indicator



When cooking, choose weighted pots or pans with flat bottoms to increase stability and safety when cooking

Click [HERE](#) for a handout of this recipe for your child! The hand out lists out all the steps and is able to be voice-overed

# COOKING WITH GPDC



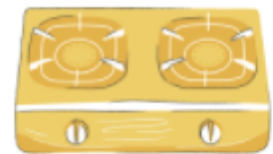
Before you start, check to see what type of stove you have!

## INDUCTION STOVE

- Help your child locate the cooktops, by marking them with tactile markers
- You can also help them measure the cooktop's distance from the edge of the stove with a utensil, eg. a wooden spoon, so your child can find the stovetop by themselves again using the measurements of the utensil

## GAS STOVE

- If you are using a gas stove, let your child have a feel of where the burners are placed, and practice putting an empty pot on top of the burner.
- Make sure the pots are placed in the centre, to prevent it from moving around



## DO: TIME TO START COOKING!

Remember to let your child try out the steps, instead of completing it for them, as this facilitates their learning! You can help by giving them tips or prompts instead!

- 1** Let your child fill up a plastic bottle/jug with cold water and then pour it into the pot halfway. Hook the liquid level indicator over the side of pot, which will beep when the liquid reaches the prongs. And then transfer it to the stove top
- 2** Add a small pinch of salt to the water
- 3** Let them put the pot on the centre of the burner, making sure that the pot is stable before turning the burner on. For gas stove users, you may need to press down on the switch when you turn, you should hear a tick sound and the fire lighting up after turning the stove on.



# COOKING WITH GPDC



4



Safety zone technique

Don't lower the arm past the midriff

To check if your stove has turned on, use the “**safety zone**” **technique** with your child. First, let them bend their arm so that their forearm is across their chest, with their fingers touching the opposite side of their shoulder. Next, extend their arm out in front of their body at shoulder height. Then, they should lower their arm slowly, passing it over the stovetop area, feeling for heat. Alternatively, your child can also use the height of the upper cupboards to guide them to test for heat from the stove at a safe distance

- 5 Tell your child to turn the stove to high heat and wait for the water to boil. You can use devices such as a **water boil alert** or a **ceramic pot minder** to help (which will rattle when the water boils). If you don't have these devices, you can also ask your child to listen for bubbling sounds, or feel for the vibrations in the handles of the pot, but be careful of the heat when touching the handles!



Water Boil Alert  
Source: Vision Australia Shop



Ceramic pot minder  
Source: Amazon

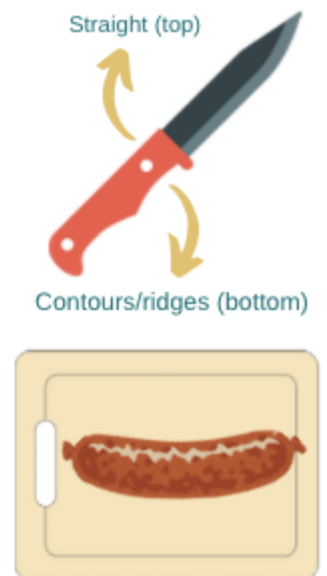
- 6 When the water reaches a boil, let your child add two servings of pasta into the pot. Do this by placing the pasta in a spatula, and lowering it into the boiling water. Repeat this until all the pasta is in the pot.
- 7 Check the amount of time needed to cook the pasta, which is located on the packaging of the pasta, and set up a timer according to the instructions. You can teach your child to use apps for this, for example, be my eyes or a magnifier, to check for the time to cook al dente. Stir the pasta during cooking
- 8 When the timer rings, use a fork or spoon to pick out a piece of pasta and have a taste to see if it is cooked. If you think the pasta is cooked, let your child turn off the stove and bring a big bowl next to the pot. Let your child wear a cooking mitten on one hand to hold the pot steady, and use a colander to drain, and transfer the pasta to the bowl.

## EXAMPLE PROMPTS

- When the water boils
- Do you hear the water bubbling?
  - What does that mean?
  - What should you do now?
- When scooping the pasta out
- There's still some pasta in the bowl, do you want to do one more scoop to get it?
  - Are you using the correct utensil to get the pasta out?

# COOKING WITH GPDC

**9** While waiting for the pasta to cook, you and your child can start cutting the sausage and tomatoes. Place the sausages on the chopping board, with the heads of the sausages facing the left and right side of the board. Pick up the knife from the handle and have a feel of the knife gently, holding only on the handle. You should find that one side of the handle is straight, while the other side contains ridges or contours. The straight part is the top while the part with the contours is the bottom, where your child should place their fingers. Now, let them pick up the knife with their dominant hand



**10** Tell your child to make a fist with their non-dominant hand and place it to the right end of the sausage. Slowly bring the knife to your hand, and have the blade rest gently beside your knuckles.

**11** Using their knuckles to guide them, cut the sausage in one motion, pulling the knife towards yourself. Tell your child to place the piece of sausage in a clean bowl, then move their non-dominant hand slightly to the left and repeat until the whole sausage is cut into small pieces

## Knuckle technique

### EXAMPLE PROMPTS

- Do you think the pieces are evenly cut? If not, why? What do you have to do to fix that?
- What do we do after we cut a piece out?
- Are you holding the knife correctly? How do you distinguish which part is the top or the bottom?

Alternatively, your child may also use "finger guards" or "safe knives" to cut the food safely. These could be purchased online, and are suitable for younger children!



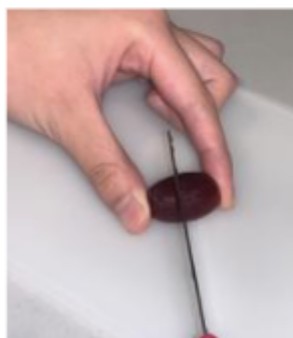
Picture Source: Ebay



# COOKING WITH GPDC



- 12** Next, let your child get the cherry tomatoes and place them on the cutting board. Place one on the middle of the board, with the side with the stem at the bottom. Make sure the tomato cannot roll away easily



- 13** Your child should use their non-dominant hand to hold onto the tomatoes. They should place their thumb on one side of the tomato, and their index finger on the opposite side, forming a bridge. Then, place the knife in the middle between the thumb and index finger and cut down with the tip of the knife. This is called the **bridge technique**, and will allow your tomatoes to be chopped in half

- 14** Place the chopped tomatoes into the same bowl with the sausages and continue to cut the other tomatoes with the **bridge technique** until everything is cut

**Prompt:**  
Remember what the safety zone technique is?



- 15** Now it is time to cook! Let your child place the pan on the stove securely, and switch it on to medium heat. Use the **“safety zone” technique** to check if the stove was switched on. If yes, drizzle some oil on the pan. Let your child lift up the pan slightly and shake it gently or in circular motions, to let the oil cover the whole pan

- 16** Next, pour in the bowl of chopped tomatoes and sausages, you should hear a sizzling sound, which means the food has touched the oil! Let your child use their non-dominant hand to grip the handle of the pan, and take the spatula with the other hand to stir the contents around. You can recommend them to use the rim of the pot to guide their stirring to cover the whole pan.

**Prompts:**  
Are you stirring the food in the middle of the pot?

Why do you think the food is sticking to the pan?

# COOKING WITH GPDC



- 17** Cook the contents for 1-2 minutes. When you can smell a savoury aroma from the pan, it means it's almost ready! You can now pour the cooked bowl of pasta into the pan.



- 18** Help your child scoop out 3-4 big spoonfuls of pasta sauce with a spoon and add to the pan. Using a bowl, fill it up with 1/3 cup of water (use a measuring cup marked with tactile marker to measure) and pour it into the pan. Stir the contents around for a minute to mix the food, then leave it to simmer for 3-4 minutes, you should be able to smell the delicious aroma of the pasta!

- 19** Turn off the stove, and put the shredded cheese into the pan. Let your child put as much cheese as they like, then top it off with the herbs of their choice. You can rip up the herbs and let your child smell them before sprinkling them into the pan, to let them recognise the smells of different herbs



- 20** Let your child mix up the cheese, herbs and pasta with the spatula. Now, you are ready to serve your food! Let them use the tongs to scoop up half of the pasta and place it onto a plate. Then scoop the remaining half onto another plate. Voila! The food is done and it is time to enjoy the food with your child!

## CHECK

- How did the pasta taste? Was it too watery? Was there too much sauce?
- Did you cut the tomatoes and sausages evenly? Was the bridge technique useful?
- Was it difficult to scoop out the pasta?
- What was the hardest step when making the pasta?
- Next time, what would you do differently when you make pasta again?



# ***HOUSEKEEPING***

*Housekeeping*



It is important for children of all ages to engage in housekeeping chores! Helping out with chores will make your child feel confident and increase their learning!

## Housekeeping 1: Washing Dishes

**YOU CAN DO  
THIS RIGHT  
AFTER COOKING  
WITH THEM!**

### **GOAL**

To wash dishes



### **PLAN**

- Before your child starts, make sure all the dishes they have to wash are placed beside the sink. Make sure there is no food left inside the bowls or plates. If there is, ask them to throw the food into the bin and use a paper towel to wipe it clean.
- Separate the knives and breakable items like glasses from the dishes. Remember to prepare all the things you need for the washing before you begin, you will need a sponge or a brush, detergent, and a dry towel to wipe the dishes if you are washing with your hands. If you are washing with the dishwasher, you will only need a dishwashing tablet
- Let your child decide how they want to wash the dishes, do they want to wash with their hands or with the dishwasher? The two ways will be outlined below!



Be careful of splashes! Always remind your child to roll up their sleeves before beginning!

Click [HERE](#) for a handout of the instructions for your child! The hand out lists out all the steps and is able to be voice-overed

# HOUSEKEEPING WITH GPDC



## DO: METHOD 1: WASHING WITH HANDS

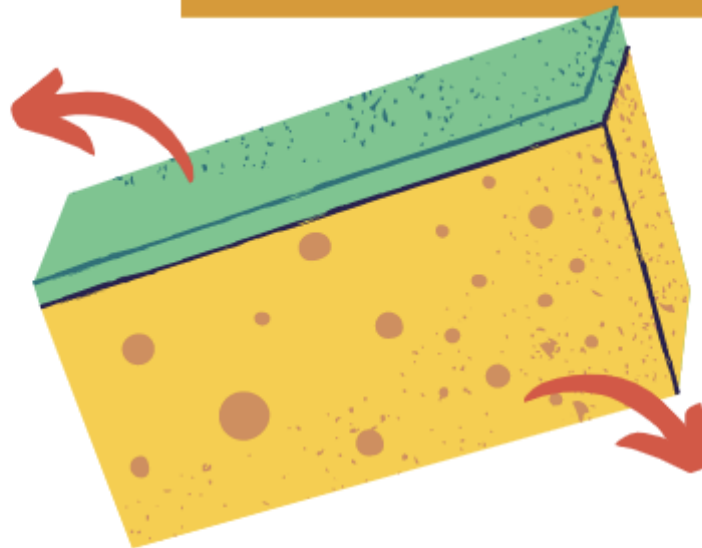
### REMEMBER!

If your child is doing this for the first time, you can read out the instructions directly and give them more guidance!

If your child has done this before. Use questions instead to prompt them to think of the next step, instead of providing them with the answers directly, this will facilitate their learning & independence

#### Rough Side

(You can also call it the STRONG side, or the YUCKY side!)



#### Soft side

(You can also call it the SPONGY side. or SOAPY side!)

#### Prompts:

Have a feel, do you think there is enough detergent?

- 1** Before your child starts, let them feel sponge. They should be able to feel that one side is soft and the other side is more rough. The rough side is the side to wipe off particularly grimy dishes, while the soft side is used to get the plates really clean
- 2** After they have distinguished the two different sides, run the sponge in the water so that it is slightly wet, then let them place it on their non-dominant hand with the rough side on top, and get the detergent with their dominant hand. Let them open the detergent by pulling the cap upwards. Pour a generous amount of detergent onto the rough side of the sponge. Let them feel with their fingers to make sure the detergent is on the sponge

# HOUSEKEEPING WITH GPDC



Employ a plumber re-set the hot water service so that the temperature cannot go above a certain level, as a safety measure.

- 3 Squeeze the sponge one or two times to make sure the sponge is soapy, then take hold of a plate and use the rough side, start scrubbing it clean.
- 4 Your child can scrub it starting from the centre, then slowly drawing circles to the other edges, or you can start scrubbing from the top of the plate to the bottom. Try to remind them to cover the whole plate when they scrub. If there is food sticking to the plate, prompt them to press harder on the sponge to wipe it away. Afterwards, turn the sponge around and wipe the plate with the soft side, to ensure that the plate is clean. Then place the plate inside the sink
- 5 When washing utensils such as knives or forks, always remind your child to hold the handle only. Then, wrap the sponge around the pointy part of the utensil and scrub by moving up and down. Let them choose either the yucky side or the soapy side to scrub the utensils.
- 6 Repeat this until all their dishes are done, and there is a pile in the sink. Let them put away the sponge and prompt them to turn on the tap so that water can flow into the sink.



Circles or top to bottom



using plastic crockery that looks like Real china  
Source: Porta



## Example Prompts:

- How many dishes have you washed, do you think its time to rinse them now?
- What happens if you open the water too strongly? It'll splash all over you!

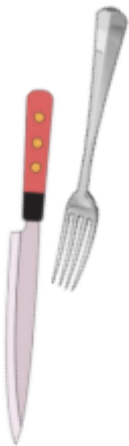
- 7 Rinse the dishes in the sink one by one. Make sure the dishes do not feel soapy after the rinse. Then place them on the counter beside the sink or into a dish rack if you have one, so that it will be dried.
- 8 After your child is done with all the dishes, they can use the dry tea-towel to wipe the dishes dry so your child won't feel like they're doing all the work!

# HOUSEKEEPING WITH GPDC

## DO: METHOD 2: WASHING WITH DISHWASHER

**1** Before you begin, let your child feel around the rack in the dishwasher. This will allow them to understand how big the space is, and its different layers.

**2** Then, your child can start loading the dishes inside the dishwasher, starting from the back to the front, putting the bigger cookware such as pots and pans to the lower rack, and the smaller cookware like bowls, plates and cups on the upper rack faced down, so that they can be washed and drained thoroughly



**3** There should also be a separate basket for utensils, remind your child to always load knives and forks point side down in the basket to prevent cuts

### Example Prompts:

- If your child starts loading from the front: Do we start loading here? What if we start loading from the back?
- Do the big pots go here? Or is there another place for them?
- What do you think is wrong with the knife here? What will happen if it is face up? Will it scratch you?

**4** Let them turn the spray arm or fan placed above the bottom rack to make sure it can move freely, if it cannot turn, you may need your child to reorganise the dishes



# HOUSEKEEPING WITH GPDC

## DO: METHOD 2: WASHING WITH DISHWASHER

- 5 After you have put everything inside, locate the detergent dispenser compartment on the door of the dishwasher. Slide the top of the detergent dispenser up and place the tablet inside. Slide the dispenser back down over the tablet and press down to ensure the tablet is secure inside
- 6 Help your child choose the correct setting to use for the dishwasher. Remember to explain the functions of the setting to them, and guide them to turn the button on by themselves, so they can remember where it is next time



### WARNING!

Try not to use dishwashing power. It is quite dangerous, a little in the mouth can burn. If your child use it, remember to warn your child that if they touch the dishwashing tablet or powder, not to lick their fingers. Alternatively, you can ask your child to use sealed dishwashing tablets, the type that don't need to be opened before they go in the dishwasher !

- 7 Lastly, let your child close the dishwasher fully, until there is a “pop” and cannot be easily opened. Let your child listen to the sounds of the water running inside the dishwasher to know for certain that the dishes are now washing!

### CHECK



- How did you find washing the dishes? Did you like it? Hate it?
- Was it difficult? Was the sponge too slippery, did you drop any plates or break anything?
- Did your clothes get wet?
- What was the hardest thing to do when you were trying to wash the dishes?
- Next time, what would you do differently when you wash dishes?



# HOUSEKEEPING WITH GPDC



It is important for children of all ages to engage in housekeeping chores! Helping out with chores will make your child feel confident and increase their learning

## Housekeeping 2: Make their bed

THIS IS A VERY GOOD HABIT TO ADD TO THEIR ROUTINE

### GOAL

To Make their bed

### PLAN

Making your bed may be annoying, but it is a simple and short task that will make your room look more tidier, so it is a good habit! You can set up a daily routine to make your bed, for example, making it everyday after you brush your teeth!



Click [HERE](#) for a handout of the instructions for your child! The hand out lists out all the steps and is able to be voice-overed

# HOUSEKEEPING WITH GPDC



## DO: MAKING THE BED WHEN THEY WAKE



- 1** Let your child pull up their sheets and blankets on one side of the bed, starting from the bottom upwards to the bed's headboard
- 2** Repeat this on the other side of the bed
- 3** Smooth the sheets and blankets/doona out
- 4** Fluff and smooth the pillows and prop them on the top of the bed, now its done!



## DO: CHANGING THE BED SHEETS AFTER WASHING

- 1** Let your child remove the bed sheet around the corners of the left side of the mattress, and then the right side, until you can pull it away from the mattress. After it is loose, help them bundle it up and let them place it in the laundry basket
- 2** Help your child take out the clean bed sheets and feel around it to find the four corners of the sheet, the corners should be slightly folded
- 3** In one of the corners, help your child find a tag attached to it, place the corner with the tag on the bottom left corner of the mattress, tag-side down, and wrap the sheet around the corner of the mattress. You can slip a small part of the sheets under the bed to secure it

# HOUSEKEEPING WITH GPDC



- 4 Pull the sheet towards the right side and, using another corner of the sheet, wrap it around the right corner of the mattress, do not pull too strongly or you will pull out the sheets from the left side!

## Example Prompts:

- What will happen if you pull the sheets too hard?
- Why do you think the 4 corners are folded? Where should you put them?



- 5 Let your child pull the sheets gently to the top of the bed, towards the headboard. Wrap the sheet around the left and right corners of the mattress
- 6 Smooth out the sheet to make sure the sheet is not bundled up. Your child can pull on the sheets gently on the side of the bed until they feel that there are no bundles, and slip any excess part of the sheets under the mattress.
- 7 To change the pillowcase, slip one hand into the case to hold onto the pillow and pull the pillowcase off with the other hand. Then place the dirty pillowcase in the laundry basket
- 8 Now, get the clean pillowcase, have your child hold the short end of the pillow under their chin, and pull the pillowcase upwards so that it wraps around the pillow
- 9 Stuff the whole pillow into the case, then hold the edges of the top of the pillowcase and shake the pillow until it is fully inside the pillowcase



## CHECK

- Was it easy? Will you try to make your bed everyday starting from now?
- What was the hardest thing?
- What would you do differently next time?



# **SHOPPING**

*Shopping*

# SHOPPING WITH GPDC



## Grocery shopping



**GOAL**  
Grocery shopping



### PLAN

#### **1 To buy things on a shopping list from the store**

- Make a shopping list before you go grocery shopping, here are certain ways you can teach your child can making the shopping list, for instance:
  - Use a bold medium tip marker and bold lined paper for the list
  - Use Braille recorders/ other digital recorders
  - A smartphone, which offers a built-in voice recorder and other application, can make creating your shopping list easier
- Categorise the items on the list by different aisle sections in the supermarket, this could save time and frustration when you are at the store (i.e One section of dairy products, another section for fruit, etc.)
- Ask your child to be specific when creating their shopping list, instead of granola bars, write "Gluten-free strawberry granola bar", as your child might have someone help him/her with shopping (i.e store employee). Ask your child to even specify the brand. You can ask them to look up the supermarket website and make an online shopping list which has photos of the products that they can print out

Click [HERE](#) for a handout of this guide for your child! The hand out lists out all the steps and is able to be voice-overed



## PLAN

### 2 Plan which store your child is going and when

Try to plan ahead of time with your child

- For instance, consider shopping when the store is mainly empty. This can be helpful if your child is new to shopping, and help your child to gain confidence roaming around to get what is needed. An employee or clerk may also be able to assist your child more easily if the store is not busy
- Consider calling the store ahead of time to make arrangements and able to provide assistance to your child when it's time to shop

**Do a test run with your child to know the items they be able to find in each aisle.**

- Knowing what is on each aisle will ensure that your child gets the products you are looking for. While every store is different, many stores have their items placed in this order:
  - The frozen items are located on the side of the store in freezer cases
  - Cleaning items, such as tissues are usually located next to the freeze cases
  - The packaged baked goods aisle is usually located on the other side of the store, near the perishable foods
- Also, try to find where the customer service counter is located to get help if you think your child may need it

Some supermarkets such as Coles and Woolworth advertise that they offer in-store assistance. You can have a staff member assist you with selecting items within the store.





## PLAN

### 3 Explore the food on the shopping list

Find and let your child to feel the texture, weight and scent of the foods on your shopping list prior shopping. This allows them to remember details of the foods, thus, will be able to find these items when he/she is at the supermarket



### Preparing Cash 4

- If your child still have not learn their braille yet, develop a bill folding system with your child: It is a tactile method that allows your child to tell your different bills apart independently. For example:
  - Keep the \$5 bill flat and unfolded.
  - Fold the \$10 bill in half crosswise (with the short ends together).
  - Fold the \$20 bill in half lengthwise (with the long sides together).
  - Fold the \$100 bill like a \$20 bill lengthwise, and then in half again crosswise, like the \$10 bill
- **New Australian dollar notes have braille dots on them.**
- You can also allow your child to use Apps for identifying the bill, for instance, the app, Seeing AI, helps you to identify the note through accessing your phone's camera
- Instead of paying in cash, you can prepare a credit or debit card too

# SHOPPING WITH GPDC



## PLAN

### 5 Prepare a shopping bag

Ask your child to bring their own bags when shopping. Avoid using the cheap, plastic bags as they tear easily and products are able to drop without notice. Bring along with their own bags (earth bags) that are sturdy.



## DO: TIME TO START SHOPPING!

Remember to let your child try out the steps, instead of completing it for them, as this facilitates their learning! You can help by giving them tips or prompts instead!

- 1** As the items on your child's shopping list are grouped according to different aisle, ask them to go to each destined aisle to find your food in the following order:
  - a. Get packaged food first.
  - b. Try to get perishable foods including fish, meat, poultry, seafood, and dairy products second last. These foods have a high chance of spoiling on the ride home. Consuming these foods while they are spoiled can cause food poisoning.
  - c. Try to get frozen food at the end, so they will not defrost too quickly



# SHOPPING WITH GPDC



- 3 Go to the destined aisle and buy *packaged products* first.
- 4 Allow your child to identify packaged products on the shelf according to their sense of touch. Packaged goods will feel differently by their material such as plastic, cardboard or paper. Also, ask them to try to feel the size and weight of the items on shelf to ensure that it is the items on your list



## Example Prompts:

- Is this the same feeling as the item you have touched when you are at home exploring the shopping list?
- Your child could be overwhelmed by the huge amount of items on the shelf. Thus, initially you can select a few items to allow them to explore, then as they gradually improve, allow them to explore the items on the shelf directly

- 5 You can prompt your child to identify packaged good by using the app, Seeing AI or barcode screen reader to scan the barcode and access information about the product.

## Example Prompts:

- What technology can you use to find out what the product is?
- Your child might initially have difficulties in scanning the barcode. You can provide physical guidance, holding their hand and turn the object around to search for the barcode. Then as your child slowly master their skills, just provide verbal prompts, for instance, ask "what should you do in order for your camera to detect the barcode?"



- 6 If your child has low vision, you can prompt them to identify packaged goods by using a magnifier, to read the description on the package

- 7 After getting all the packaged goods, your child can go to buy the *perishable items*

# SHOPPING WITH GPDC



- 8 Allow your child to identify different perishable items by **the sense of touch**. Feel fruits and vegetables by touching them. Identify them by feeling the smooth, rough, or bumpy surface
- 9 Allow your child to identify different foods by **the sense of smell**. Allow your child to sniff different fruits or vegetables. For instance, smelling the sharp scent of mint or the fruity smell of strawberries.
- 10 Allow your child to put the perishable items in their own shopping bag instead of using the plastic bag provided in the supermarket, as it can be difficult for them to open the plastic bag and they can tear easily, causing products to drop without notice
- 11 Lastly, your child could go to the designated aisle to buy frozen food
  - a. Initially, you may need to provide some help to your child to find the designated aisle and fridge for your food on the list
  - b. Ask your child to open the fridge and search for the items he or she needs through feeling the package. For instance, your child can feel the box of frozen pizza, cups for ice cream, etc.
  - c. Allow your child to use a barcode scanner or magnifier to access the information on the package to ensure that he or she has selected the right product.

## CHECK OUT

- 12 Allow your child to check out at the register that has a cashier standing behind it, instead of going to the self-service area
- 13 When your child is checking out at the register, it is useful to have the cashier to tell your child again what each item is as it is scanned. This confirms your child that he or she is purchasing the correct items and may keep him or her from forgetting an item on their list.



Your child may use a coin-holder/ note-holder to carry their money!

Picture source: VisAbility's Online Shop

# SHOPPING WITH GPDC



**14** You can ask your child to pay with a credit/debit card too

**15** Ask you child to give his or her shopping bag to the cashier, they could assist your child in putting the items into their bags

## CHECK



- How did the shopping go?
- What did you like most about it? What was the trickiest bit?
- Was it difficult? Was it hard to identify the items?
- Did you buy all the items on your shopping lists?
- What was the hardest thing to do when you were shopping in the supermarket?
- Next time, what would you do differently when you go shopping next time?

# RESOURCES

## Additional resources you may find useful!

<https://vegehomecooking.com/pasta-for-kids/>

<https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/essential-skills/cooking/using-a-fl-at-top-stove/>

[https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/essential-skills/cooking/safe-cooking-techniques/?\\_ga=2.54161184.940751922.1648566093-1963812672.1647406471#Cutting\\_Chopping](https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/essential-skills/cooking/safe-cooking-techniques/?_ga=2.54161184.940751922.1648566093-1963812672.1647406471#Cutting_Chopping)

<https://www.wikihow.com/Cook-when-You%27re-Blind-or-Visually-Impaired>

<https://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/housekeeping-instruction.html>

<https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/home-modification/room-by-room/housecleaning-tips/>

<https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/home-modification/room-by-room/clean-to-the-touch/>