




# Growing Together

A practical guide for parents and caregivers, supporting your child with small, consistent steps every single day. Because the biggest changes often begin with the smallest ones. 

EVERYDAY STRATEGIES

FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS



# What's Inside

This guide covers seven key areas of everyday support. Each section gives you clear, practical strategies you can start using today, no special training required.

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## CHAPTER 1

# Communication: The Power of Clarity



Clear communication reduces frustration and helps your child understand exactly what is expected. When instructions are simple and consistent, your child feels more confident responding and you both feel less stressed.

### One Step at a Time

Use short, clear instructions. Break requests into single steps rather than chaining several together.

### The 10-Second Rule

Give 5–10 seconds of wait time after speaking. Children need processing time. Resist the urge to repeat yourself.

### Be Visual

Use gestures, pointing, and visual aids alongside your words to reinforce meaning.

- 🕒 **Try this:** Instead of "Go get your shoes and put them on," try: *"Get shoes"* → Wait → *"Wear shoes."*



# Learning & Engagement: Motivation is Key

Children learn best when they are having fun and feel successful. Motivation isn't something your child either has or doesn't, it's something you can actively create through the way you structure learning moments.

## Quick Strategies

- **Short Bursts:** Keep tasks between 5–10 minutes
- **The Sandwich Method:** Mix easy tasks with one slightly challenging one
- **Follow the Leader:** Use what your child already loves to teach new skills
- **Instant Rewards:** Praise or reward immediately after a correct response

## Why It Works

Short, successful experiences build confidence. When a child feels capable, they become more willing to try again. The "sandwich method" keeps frustration low while still stretching their skills gently.

- ✔ **Example:** If your child loves bubbles, use them as a reward. Ask: *"Say more"* or *"Look at me,"* then blow bubbles immediately!



# Behavior Management: Teaching Through Reaction

Your reaction is a mirror. It teaches your child which behaviors "work" to get what they need. Staying calm and consistent is one of the most powerful tools you have.

## Stay Neutral

Keep your voice and body language calm, even when behavior is challenging. A big reaction can reinforce the very behavior you want to reduce.

## Praise the Good

Catch them being good and highlight it instantly. Positive attention for desired behavior is far more effective than correcting unwanted behavior.

## Give Alternatives

Tell them what *to do* instead of just saying "No." Children need a clear path forward, not just a stop sign.

## Understand the "Why"

Ask yourself: Is this for attention, to escape a task, or a sensory need? Understanding the function of behavior helps you respond more effectively.

- ✔ **Example:** If a child throws a toy, say *"Keep it down,"* guide their hands to place it gently, and praise them the moment it's done.



# Daily Living Skills: Building Independence

Mastering daily tasks builds confidence and self-reliance. Every small task your child completes on their own is a brick in the foundation of their independence.

## 1 Task Analysis

Break big chores into tiny, manageable steps. What seems simple to us may feel overwhelming to a child. Write out each micro-step if you need to.

## 2 The "Fading" Help

Provide full support initially, then slowly reduce your physical guidance. The goal is to work yourself out of a job — one step at a time.

## 3 Daily Practice

Consistency turns a "task" into a "habit." Repetition in the same context, at the same time, builds automaticity and confidence.

✔ **Example — Putting on a T-shirt:** Step 1: Put head in → Step 2: Right arm → Step 3: Left arm. Celebrate each step before moving to the next.

# Routines & Transitions: Creating Predictability

Knowing what comes next reduces anxiety and prevents meltdowns during changes. Predictability gives children a sense of safety and when children feel safe, they are more open to learning and connecting.



## Visual Schedules

Use pictures to show the day's plan. A visual schedule reduces the need for constant verbal reminders.



## The Countdown

Give a 2-minute warning before ending an activity. Transitions are easier when they're expected, not sudden.



## Fixed Order

Keep morning and bedtime routines exactly the same every day. Consistency builds security.



✔ **Example:** Before turning off the TV, show two fingers and say *"Two minutes more,"* then count down to *"TV off."*



## CHAPTER 6

# Parent Approach: The Mindset of Growth



Your perspective determines the atmosphere of your home. The way you view progress and setbacks, shapes how your child experiences learning and growth every day.



### Celebrate the "Inch"

Small achievements are big wins. One extra minute of sitting, one moment of eye contact, these are meaningful steps forward.



### No Comparisons

Every child has their own unique timeline. Your child's journey belongs to them alone. Any comparison steals joy and clouds progress.



### Pause and Wait

Resist the urge to do everything for them. Give them the space to try, even when it's hard to watch. Struggle is part of learning.

# Routines & Transitions: Creating Predictability

Confidence grows when a child realizes, *"I can do this myself."* Independence isn't something that happens all at once, it's built through hundreds of small moments where you choose to step back instead of step in.



## Offer Choices

Let them choose between two shirts or two snacks. Even small choices build a sense of control and agency that carries into bigger moments.



## Allow Mistakes

Learning happens in the "messy" middle. A spilled cup or a backward shirt is not failure, it's practice. Resist the urge to fix it immediately.



## Least Help Needed

Only intervene when absolutely necessary. Ask yourself: *"Can they do this without me?"* If yes, let them. Your restraint is their opportunity.



# A Note for You

Progress may feel slow, but it is always happening. Small, consistent steps lead to massive changes over time.

You are your child's biggest advocate and their greatest support system. On the hard days, look back at how far you've both come: the extra minute of sitting, the new word, the moment of eye contact. That is progress. That is growth.

## You Are Enough

You don't need to be perfect. You need to be present, consistent, and kind to your child and to yourself.

## Keep Going

Every day you show up and try is a day your child feels safe, loved, and supported. That is everything. 