35

Set Up, Clean Up

As a child grows and develops, opportunities for families to work together at home and in their communities is important. Using everyday opportunities to engage in learning is priority. These moments help determine what children can do in their current development while promoting self-help skills. Children have a drive to be independent and do things on their own. This is a healthy part of child development.

Be intentional by encouraging your child to help with setting the table and clean up early on. For example, allow your child to place napkins and utensils on the table for dinner. This task is perfect for children as early as age 2; some younger depending on the child. Also, encourage your child to begin clearing their own plates when they are old enough to carry them without dropping them. This a separate skill set that comes when the child's muscles begin to strengthen and develop.

Feel free to ask the child questions while setting the table or cleaning up. For example, "Which items go first?" Which items goes next?" How many forks do we need? Do not hesitate to incorporate a song or music while completing these tasks. Keeping it fun will keep your child engaged!

When children are involved in regular day-to-day tasks at an early age, they tend to be more independent and begin to understand what responsibility looks like. Remember, your child will be watching you and modeling your behavior. Therefore, be a great example and show them how to set up and clean up. Before you know it, your child will be initiating the tasks without your direction.

Learning on the Go!

At a restaurant and eating in? Perfect! Once your order is ready, allow your child to help you carry the tray (depending on age and ability) or some items to the table.

At the park for a family picnic? Allow your child to help spread the blanket and set the items out just like they would at home.

Share with us! We would love to see how you did with this activity. Use the hashtag *#grow2gether* so we can find it!

#grow2gether