

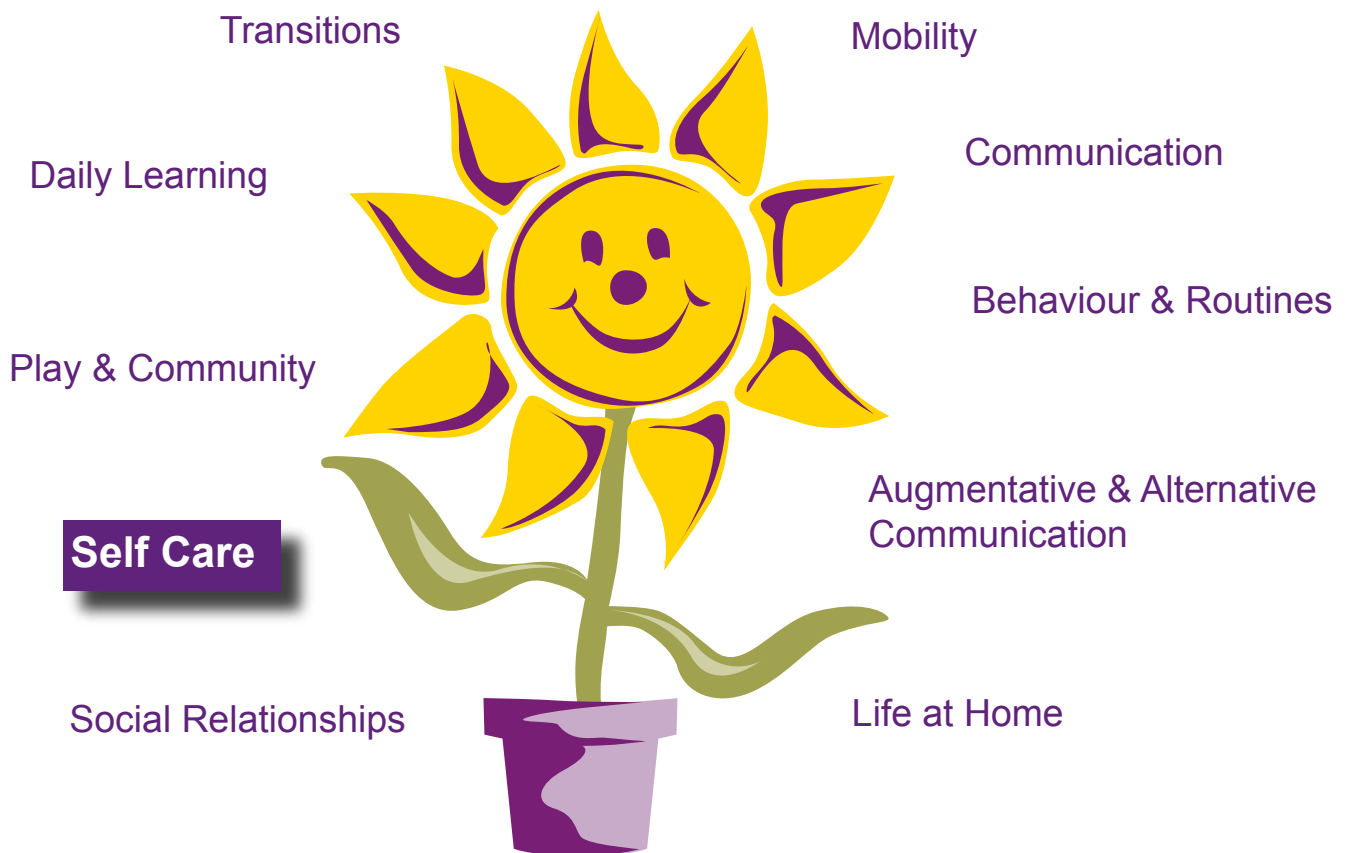
## Helping you set goals for your child

At Therapy Focus, we recognise and value your role as parents being the experts on your child and family.

Our Services are a support to help your child reach their potential and enhance their participation in the community. Educating and empowering you to help your child is

an important part of our holistic therapy services.

This brochure is a starting point for discussion about your child and your family. It offers ideas to create new activities your child is able to do with encouragement and support.



## The way we work

- We recognise that family is central to therapy. Families bring knowledge and expertise about their child to help identify the child's needs, develop goals and practice strategies.
- The family, therapy team and teaching staff work together to identify problems and share ideas. Each has a role to play in developing the child's skills.
- We use every opportunity in the family's and child's routine and environment to develop skills.
- Therapists work as a multidisciplinary collaborative team, sharing skills to meet the needs of the child.
- We recognise the child's strengths and how they can be developed to increase participation in the activities of life.

# SELF CARE

Self care skills are the personal activities we perform on a daily basis to look after ourselves. These include activities such as:

- Dressing
- Washing
- Teeth brushing
- Toileting or indicating the need for toilet
- Managing puberty
- Eating
- Drinking

Each activity involves a number of steps that require a variety of skills. Just as: brushing teeth and tying laces are necessary skills for your child to acquire, breaking down the tasks and organising them in a way your child can manage is a necessary skill for parents.

Breaking down self-care skills into smaller steps and supporting your child through each step will, in time, provide your child with greater independence as they do more for themselves.

## Taking advantage of the daily routine

Because we have to wash ourselves, eat and drink, and get dressed in the morning most self care activities can be planned to fit into a daily routine.

Here is an example of a child's daily schedule with the types of self care activities that would easily fit into each routine:

**Breakfast:** Eating and sensory activities.  
Getting ready for school: washing, teeth brushing, hair care, dressing activities.

**Lunch:** Eating, drinking and toileting activities.

**Bath time:** Hygiene, washing, and dressing activities.

**Bedtime:** Washing, teeth brushing and dressing activities.

## Strategies to assist in your child's self care skills

- **Use Every Opportunity** by allowing your child to participate whenever possible throughout their normal routine. This allows them to improve their skills through participation in everyday activities.
- **Practice** doing a small piece of an activity each day. Children find it easier to learn new skills in smaller sections.
- **Be Consistent** with the words and signs used to instruct your child, and try to keep instructions short and simple.
- Ensure that there is enough **Time** available for your child to participate in self care activities without feeling rushed.
- Allow your child to **Observe** other family members performing everyday self care skills. Modelling appropriate behaviours is a fantastic way to develop skills.
- **Use Encouragement** to let your child know they are doing a great job. This will help them to keep motivated and boost their self-esteem.
- **Being Patient and Calm** is important when teaching your child new skills.
- **Use Small Steps** by breaking the activity down into small, manageable steps, which can be learnt one at a time.

### Example

Cole is an 8 year old boy with Down Syndrome who has difficulty putting on his school trousers. Cole's mother reports that Cole does attempt to dress himself but gets frustrated when he gets his trousers tangled. As Cole is unsteady on his feet, dressing whilst standing is difficult.

### Goal

After six months, Cole can successfully put on trousers with step by step verbal prompting.

### Strategies

- Start with shorts which are easier to manipulate
- Practice the task while seated to help maintain balance
- Use Backward Chaining.

First the dressing task is broken down into small manageable steps:

1. Pick up shorts by waistband
2. Lower shorts and lift up left leg
3. Put left leg into short hole
4. Lift up right leg
5. Put right leg into short hole
6. Pull shorts up to knees
7. Stand and pull shorts to waist

Then Cole is supported to complete steps one to five whilst encouraged to complete the final step independently. Over time, Cole is encouraged to complete the steps until verbal prompting is no longer required.

### Outcome

After 6 months Cole is able to put trousers independently.



### Resources to help your child's Self Care skills

#### 'Caring for Carers: Helping Your Child Develop Social Skills' (Therapy Focus resource):

A toolbox of tips for those who care for a child with a disability. It can also assist teachers, educational support staff, families, other carers and therapists.

#### Visual Supports:

Visual supports or visual prompts can be used to remind your child how to complete a series of steps. The visual support may be a photo, a series of pictures like the example on the left, illustrated stories or picture symbols representing an instruction.

#### Aids and Equipment:

There are a range of aids and equipment that may improve your child's independence with self care activities, including bath or shower chairs, dressing stick, tooth brush adaptations and modified eating and drinking equipment.

### Useful/Helpful Services

#### Continence Advisory Service (PMH service)

Provides services and support to children and youth experiencing difficulties with continence.

Ph: (08) 9386 9777

1800 330 066 (National Continence Helpline)

[www.pmh.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.pmh.health.wa.gov.au)

#### RUCSN (Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs)

A resource for children with disabilities and their families. Services include a library, resources and training.

Address: 144 Railway Parade, West Leederville, 6007

Ph: (08) 9478 9500

[www.rucsn.org.au](http://www.rucsn.org.au)

**SECCA (Sexuality, Education, Counselling & Consulting Agency)**

SECCA is a not for profit organisation designed to support people with disabilities, learn about human relationships, sexuality and sexual health across the lifespan.

Address: City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi St, West Perth, 6005

Ph: (08) 9420 7226

Fax: (08) 9420 7229

[www.secca.org.au](http://www.secca.org.au)

**ILC (The Independent Living Centre)**

A not for profit service that provides expert advice on equipment, access and resources for people with disabilities and their families.

Address: The Niche, 11 Aberdare Rd, Nedlands, 6009

Ph: 1300 885 886 (free call)

[www.ilc.com.au](http://www.ilc.com.au)

**Tricky Toileting Solutions**

Provides toilet training and management services for people with disabilities.

Address: 11 Dockrell Rise, Marangaroo, 6064

Ph: (08) 9247 1193



**Glossary of Terms**

**Body Awareness:** allows us to know what our body consists of, the names or parts and how to control them.

**Crossing the Midline:** the ability to reach across from one side of the body to the other.

**Fine Motor Control:** the ability to perform small, precise movements quickly and smoothly.

**Motor Planning:** is the ability to plan the position and movement of the parts of the body to produce a desired movement.

**Postural Control:** the ability to hold the body in a stable position to allow for movement.

**Proprioception:** gives us an awareness of our body position. It uses information from our muscles, tendons and joints to let us know about body position and the force of our movements. We depend on this information to plan our movements.

**Sequencing:** the ability to complete one activity or task before another activity or task.

**Spatial Relations:** the ability to see the position of objects in relation to ones self and in relation to each other.

