

Fostering Independence in your Preschooler

Preschool is a time when your "little tot" becomes a preschool "child". Like any other new skill, becoming an independent preschooler is a big step that can either happen easily, or with some difficulty. Some children make the transition to school with hesitance and tears, while others give you a wave and send you on your way, even before *you* may be ready!

Here at Macomber we try to help each child adjust at their own speed. As they achieve an acceptance of the changes school brings about, we begin to foster the acquisition of independence in self-help skills. You can help us with these skills at home too!

You've already seen one of the first independent skills we teach when your child arrives and "**signs-in**" by hanging up their name tag. Recently we also introduced a center management system in which your children carry pictures of themselves to sign-in at various centers during play. This will help them see when a center has too many children in it and helps them sustain play in one place.

This year we have introduced a new way of washing hands. You have seen the process daily upon arrival. The correct steps are:

- turn the water on with a paper towel in hand
- wet hands
- get soap
- make "bubbles" by rubbing hands all over including between fingers
- rinse
- shut water off using paper towel
- dry hands
- place paper towel in trash

Over the next few weeks we will be encouraging the children to put on their own jackets using the **jacket-flip** system. In the jacket-flip the children put the coat on the floor so that the collar is facing them. It looks upside down. They then stick their arms in the sleeves and flip the jacket over their heads. Voila their

jacket is on! We don't expect them to zip or button at 3, but the 4 year olds will be asked to try. You can help by sending your child with a jacket or sweater that opens in the front. Pull-overs are just too difficult at this age.

When the winter season arrives please consider allowing your child to wear **mittens** instead of gloves. Gloves tend to be time-consuming to put on and the difficulty of the process can really be discouraging to a preschooler trying to manage new skills.

Another skill we will work on is **picking up their own pants** in the bathroom. Belts and tights really make this task difficult. If your child has not yet mastered this skill you can help by letting them wear elastic-banded pants. Practicality is always best while they are here at school!

We use small cups at our bubbler when we stop for drinks. I know it's difficult for spills at home but it's time to get rid of those sippy-cups! You can do this by providing your child with a cup with a straw and by having your child sit at the table when they are having a drink. They will not have straws here so they will practice drinking straight from the cup so you may be able to start them with that if they are ready as well!

Next step: **hanging up their coats and backpacks!**

Together we will take your child to the next step as they become aware of what they can do on their own and become independent preschoolers! Thanks for your help!