

## Promoting Personal Independence for Individuals with ASD

### What do Teachers Need to Know?

Providing opportunities for students with ASD to be as independent as possible will help to pave the way towards independence as they transition to adulthood. Consider the personal skills needed for independence: physical health, social health and community participation. Students with ASD often lag behind their peers in these areas. Providing strategies and practicing these skills while still in high school will help the student after graduation while at home, in postsecondary programs, and in the workplace.

### Areas of Instruction

**Physical health:** Keeping your body healthy through medication management, exercise and diet, and sleep.

**Emotional health:** Using coping strategies, medication, counseling, and support from others.

**Social health:** Meeting people, interacting effectively and appropriately, learning the difference between strangers, acquaintances, friends, and romantic partners, and managing behavior based on location, situation, and people involved.

**Community participation:** Choosing the right activity, identifying interests and motivators, finding others with similar interests and hobbies, keeping safe, identifying rules for the environment, understanding public behaviors (in restrooms, restaurants, sporting events, movie theaters), identifying the need for help, asking for help and finding it.

### Tips for Families

Teaching your family member with ASD independent living skills is important for his or her safety and overall quality of life. Independence can be the key to successful community participation and future employment. In working toward greater independence for their children, parents should remember:

- Start early
- Break tasks into smaller steps, if needed
- Provide multiple opportunities to practice
- Stick with it even when it gets tough

## Additional Information

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center-Lend-Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities:  
[kc.vanderbilt.edu/healthybodies](http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/healthybodies)

Healthy Body Toolkit  
[autismspeaks.org/wordpress-tags/health-body-tool-kit](http://autismspeaks.org/wordpress-tags/health-body-tool-kit)

Puberty and Autism Guide for Parents  
[autismspeaks.org/blog/2015/12/01/your-atnwork-making-puberty-and-adolescence-tool-kit](http://autismspeaks.org/blog/2015/12/01/your-atnwork-making-puberty-and-adolescence-tool-kit)

Puberty: A guide for Teenagers with ASD and their parents  
[autismsocietyoregon.org/files/9114/2230/9538/autism-spectrum-disorder.184122715.pdf](http://autismsocietyoregon.org/files/9114/2230/9538/autism-spectrum-disorder.184122715.pdf)

Learning for life and work  
[cea.org.uk/curriculum/sen\\_inclusion/curriculum\\_resources\\_across\\_sen/severe\\_learning\\_difficulties/learning\\_lif\\_2](http://cea.org.uk/curriculum/sen_inclusion/curriculum_resources_across_sen/severe_learning_difficulties/learning_lif_2)