
Supporting Self-Care with the Backward Chaining Technique

INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the tip sheet, “Self-Care Backward Chaining Technique,” from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

Goals

- ◆ Discuss the benefits of teaching self-care skills using the backward chaining technique.
- ◆ Identify everyday activities and the backward chaining steps that can help build children’s self-care skills and self-confidence.
- ◆ Develop an action plan to support children’s self-care skills with the backward chaining technique.

Activity

- ◆ Read the tip sheet.
- ◆ Use the questions below to guide your reflection and action plan to support children’s self-care skills with backward chaining.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention from the tip sheet? What made that fact, excerpt, or example meaningful to you?

- ◆ Why are self-care skills important for all children to develop? What are some reasons that a child may develop self-care skills more quickly or slowly than others?

- ◆ Backward chaining is breaking down a task in small steps. Working backward from the goal, first you teach a child to complete the last step, and then the next-to-last step until the child complete all the steps independently.
 - How can the backward chaining technique help children who have difficulty learning new skills build self-care skills and self-confidence? Why is that important?

- ◆ Self-care tasks like dressing can be challenging for some children as they are still developing all the skills necessary to complete these tasks. Consider the “Steps for Putting on a T-shirt” listed on page 2 of the tip sheet.
 - In addition to self-care skills, what other important skills would a child need to put on a t-shirt independently?
 - Consider children in your care and their skills and abilities. Which children currently need more support with one or more of the skills needed to complete this task?
 - How could you use the backward chaining technique to support their individual needs?

- ◆ While this tip sheet focuses on dressing, which usually takes place at home, there are other self-care tasks that preschoolers’ complete in the classroom. Some children in your care may benefit from using backwards chaining technique.
 - Think of 1-2 self-care tasks that preschoolers need to complete while in your care (i.e., handwashing, cleaning up a spill, packing or unpacking backpack). Write out the steps for each task.
 - Determine who needs more support to complete the tasks independently. For each child who needs support, plan when and how you will use the backward chaining technique to help them learn and complete each step independently.
 - What additional support or resources do you need?
 - Consider how can you partner with families to use backward chaining at home.
 - Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support children’s self-care skills with backward chaining.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about self-care skills for preschoolers through the backward chaining technique.

- ◆ **Source:** Very Well Family
- ◆ **Article:** Backward Chaining for Children
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.verywellfamily.com/backward-chaining-3105608>
- ◆ **Description:** This article shares ways that families can support children to complete common tasks with backward chaining.

- ◆ **Source:** University of Central Florida Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS)
- ◆ **Tip Sheet:** Helping Your Child Develop Independence- Self-Care Skills
- ◆ **Link:** <https://tats.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2017/11/Adaptive-in-home-number-3-all-skills.pdf>
- ◆ **Description:** This tip sheet encourages families to support their child's self-care skills with helpful tips for using schedules, visuals, and activities.

- ◆ **Source:** Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- ◆ **Article:** Helping Your Child be More Self-Reliant: Backward Chaining
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.chop.edu/news/helping-your-child-be-more-self-reliant-backward-chaining>
- ◆ **Description:** This short article explains why teaching children with and without trisomy 21 to do the last step in a multi-step process can build self-confidence and skill retention.