

Tracks to Transition: Teaching Teens to do Laundry

Learning to do laundry is an important skill that can help a teen be more independent. To help learn this skill, it may be easier to teach several smaller tasks. Once each part of the skill is mastered, put them all together.

- Provide a place for dirty clothes to go after they are taken off.
- Practice sorting the clothes into two baskets, bright/dark colors and white/light colors
- Practice sorting clothes into different types, like towels, shirts, pants
- Next, learn to put a basket of clothes into the washing machine.
- Learn to measure the soap and add it to the machine.
- Turn the machine to a wash setting, close the door and turn it on.
- When the machine alarm rings, put the clean clothes into the dryer and turn it on.
- Take the clean clothes out of the dryer, fold them, and put them away.
Practice folding towels and washcloths first as they have an easy shape to fold. Next fold underwear and socks, then sweaters, jeans, pullover shirts and shorts, then practice hanging dresses, dress shirts, skirts, and jackets.
- Putting cloths away is the last step. Clearly indicate where items belong by using pictures or words depending on how the teen learns.
- Use a visual board to help support the teen in completing the entire sequence.

Repetition is important!

- Practicing each smaller task over and over to help the teen to memorize the information or skill.
- Practice the smaller steps in the same order every time.
- Some teens are visual learners so practicing skills and situations many times will give them confidence.