

'Tidy Up Time': An Everyday Occupation to Support Learning,



Development and Life Skills



Brought to you by the NCSE Occupational Therapy Team

The focus of this occupational therapy series is on everyday home occupations that support children's learning, development and wellbeing. By encouraging your child to participate with you in these activities, opportunities for learning can occur as there is great learning potential to be found in everyday occupations.

Teaching your child to take on responsibilities and engage in household chores like cleaning their bedroom area has a wealth of benefits that will support your child's overall development. Depending on your child's age and level of ability, you can make this activity as simple or as challenging as you feel. The most important thing is to make it exciting and meaningful! By engaging your child and family in cleaning, the following skills can be developed:

Independence and Responsibility

There is a sense of achievement and responsibility in keeping your own area clean and tidy.

Organisational Skills

Sorting clothes and toys, planning a task, follow a sequence.

Exploring the senses

Exploration through using water, scented sprays, soaps, the feel of utensils such as a sponge and a brush.

Gross Motor Skills

Balancing whilst hoovering, brushing, bending down to pick something off the floor.

Fine Motor Skills

Squeezing sponges and cloths, putting pillow cases on and off, holding utensils such as a duster.

Applying Learning to Life Skills

Reading instructions, language skills, writing lists, task completion.

Fun ways to clean



Music: Cleaning is always more fun with the right music. If you're cleaning with others, have a dance off while you clean! If you're by yourself, practice your moves.



Hoops: Whether you're throwing away rubbish or putting clothes in the wash, why not make a game of basketball out of anything that isn't breakable!



Breaks: It's OK to take breaks after finishing a big task. Use your break time to play a quick game, get a snack or get some fresh air. Make sure to check your list and mark it off.



Socks: Spray wood or vinyl floors with a cleaning solution, put on a pair of clean, fluffy socks and start sliding! Your socks will clean up the dirt while you have fun. You may want to use a pair of socks that are close to retirement, as they'll get extremely dirty in the process!



Hidden Gems: Hide a few prizes or small tokens/treats in the messy room. Your child can find them while they clean.

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Helpful Tips!



- Get your child involved in every process. Ask them questions to help with problem solving. For example:
 - What is needed to be cleaned in this area?
 - How will we clean the mess?
 - What cleaning tools will we need?
 - How will we know that the space is clean?
 - How will it look/feel once it is tidy?
- It is important to note that often children require a lot of help when starting off and choosing the correct level of task for your child is also key to ensure success.
- A checklist is another handy tool to define clearly what it means to have a clean room/area. Make the checklist together with pictures for younger children and simple words for older. This will help with the planning and organisation of the task, it also provides a sense of achievement once an item is completed. Chore ideas could include cleaning up toys, dusting, cleaning windows, laundry and hoovering.

Clean Up Song:
Twinkle, twinkle little star,
Time to clean up where you are.
Put the toys back in their place.
Keep a smile upon your face.
Twinkle, twinkle little star,
Time to clean up where you are.

1. Make your bed.
2. Put dirty clothes in hamper.
3. Hang up clothes.
4. Put toys and books away.
5. Hoover your floor
6. Now you're done!

References and for more ideas please see:

<https://www.mollymaid.com/cleaning-tips/kids-rooms/>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNF_BV7e7mA
<https://www.toolstogrowot.com/>