**Practical Daily Living Skills–guidance for schools**

Practical Daily Living Skills are the skills that many people take for granted as having learnt somewhere along the way; possibly at school, possibly by watching others, possibly at home. For children with physical difficulties, the process of acquiring these skills may not be straightforward. For some, there may not be an expectation to learn certain skills. For some, physical difficulties can make acquiring the skills more challenging and take more time to accomplish.

It is essential that children and young people with physical difficulties are given opportunities to master the life skills that can be the gateway to living independently in the future.

**Here are examples of Practical Daily Living Skills:**

Eating and drinking including using a knife, fork and spoon (adaptive if needed)

Holding a pencil (adaptive if needed)

Personal hygiene and grooming: brushing hair, washing face and brushing teeth

Getting undressed and dressed including tying shoes laces

Folding and hanging clothes

Meal planning

Making a cup of tea

Preparing food: toast, sandwiches, fruit salad, cakes

Following a recipe

Washing up

Washing clothes

Using public transport including reading time tables

Using money and managing money

Going to the shops: buying ingredients and other shopping

Gardening

Sewing

Adhering to a medication schedule

Exercising

Using the phone including in an emergency

Practicing first aid and safety measures

Organizing all tools required and objects in a way that works

In addition to these practical skills, there are two essential skills that are particularly pertinent to children and young people with physical difficulties:

**Self-regulation** – knowing, understanding and communicating when necessary that they are tired and need to take a break.

**Resilience** - asking for help only when it is necessary, rather than waiting for help or expecting someone to do something for them

**The benefits of mastering Practical Daily Living Skills include:**

Greater potential for living independently in the future

Greater potential for obtaining and maintaining employment

Potential for more satisfying relationships

Greater confidence to manage a home and finances

Ability to live a healthier life

Proficiency to look after own personal needs without assistance

Fostering interests, hobbies

Assuming an adult role in the community

We recommend that you use the list above to find out how many of the practical skills the children and young people with physical difficulties you work with are able to master.

Next, work out an approach to mastering the remaining skills that will work for the individual. If the child has an Occupational Therapist supporting them, ask them for advice with this. You can also ask the advice of a Specialist Teacher from our team if we are involved. Speak to parents so that they are aware of your expectations and they can encourage their child to practice the necessary skills.