

Mission: Life Skills Coach — Teaching Daily Living Skills

Materials Needed

- Post-it notes (different colors if possible)
- Large poster board or several sheets of paper
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- A smartphone or tablet (optional, for taking photos/video)
- A common household item (e.g., a laundry basket, a toaster, or a toothbrush)
- The "Task Breakdown" Worksheet (can be hand-drawn)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Olivia will be able to:

- **Define** "Daily Living Skills" and explain why they are important for independence.
- **Perform a "Task Analysis"** by breaking a complex chore into tiny, manageable steps.
- **Create a Visual Support** (like a checklist or photo-guide) to help a learner finish a task from start to finish.
- **Identify** two ways to offer positive encouragement during a teaching session.

1. Introduction: The Hook & The "Why"

The Scenario: Imagine you are a "Life Skills Coach." Your mission is to help a 14-year-old friend named Leo. Leo is on the autism spectrum. His brain is wired a bit differently—he is great at seeing details, but sometimes big tasks like "clean your room" feel like an overwhelming mountain of information. He doesn't know where to put his hands first!

Discussion Question: Have you ever tried to build a massive LEGO set without the instruction manual? How did it feel? (Wait for Olivia's response). Teaching daily living skills is like *writing* that instruction manual to help someone else succeed.

The Goal: Today, you will learn how to turn big, scary chores into a "Step-by-Step Success Map."

2. Body: Content and Practice

Part A: "I Do" - The Power of the Tiny Step (Modeling)

As the teacher, I will demonstrate how to break down a "simple" task. Let's look at **Brushing Teeth**. It sounds like one step, but it's actually many!

1. Pick up the toothbrush.
2. Turn on the cold water.
3. Wet the bristles.
4. Take the cap off the toothpaste.

5. Squeeze a pea-sized amount onto the brush.
6. (And so on...)

Key Concept: People with autism often benefit from *Visual Supports*. This means instead of just telling them what to do, we show them using pictures or lists so they don't have to remember everything at once.

Part B: "We Do" - The Post-It Challenge (Collaborative Practice)

Let's work together to coach Leo through **Setting the Table**. We are going to use Post-it notes to create a "Path to Success."

- **Step 1:** Brainstorm together. What items do we need? (Plates, forks, napkins, cups).
- **Step 2:** Olivia, you write one step on a Post-it, and I'll write the next.
- **Step 3:** Arrange them in order on the wall or table.
- **Check for Understanding:** If we skip the step "Walk to the kitchen," can Leo finish the job? No! We have to be very specific.

Part C: "You Do" - Create the Master Guide (Independent Application)

Your Mission: Choose one of the following tasks to create a "Master Guide" for Leo:

- Making a Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich
- Sorting a basket of laundry (Whites vs. Colors)
- Loading the Dishwasher (just the bottom rack)

Instructions:

1. **The Breakdown:** Write out at least 6 clear steps for your task.
2. **The Visual:** Draw a simple picture for each step (or take a photo of yourself doing the step).
3. **The "Coach's Tip":** At the bottom of your guide, write one encouraging phrase you would say to Leo if he gets stuck (e.g., "You've got the plate, now find the fork! You're doing great!").

3. Conclusion: Closure and Recap

Summary: Being a coach isn't about doing the work for someone; it's about giving them the tools to do it themselves. You learned that breaking things into tiny steps (Task Analysis) and using pictures (Visual Supports) makes life much easier for people whose brains process information differently.

Recap Quiz:

- What is a "Daily Living Skill"? (Example: Getting dressed, cooking).
- Why do we use pictures instead of just talking? (It stays there so the person can look back at it).
- What is one way to be a kind coach? (Giving specific praise).

Success Criteria

Olivia has succeeded if she:

- Created a guide with at least 5-6 logical steps.
- Included a visual (drawing or photo) for each step.

- Can explain why Leo might need a list instead of just being told "Clean up."

Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For a deeper challenge:** Have Olivia try to follow her own guide *without using her thumbs* or *without talking* to see how clear the instructions really are.
- **For a digital learner:** Instead of a poster, Olivia can use a tablet to create a "How-To" slideshow or a short video with a voiceover.
- **Sensory focus:** Discuss how Leo might feel about the smell of the dish soap or the loud noise of the vacuum, and add a "Coach's Tip" on how to handle those feelings.

Assessment

- **Formative:** During the "Post-it Challenge," observe if Olivia can identify the logical order of steps.
- **Summative:** Evaluate the "Master Guide." Is it clear enough that a stranger could follow it? Does it include positive reinforcement?