

Setting Up Self-Care Stations for Your Toddler

By Leslie

In her article, Rachel outlined many wonderful ideas for implementing self care at home. Now I'll provide a few ideas for setting up the spaces in your home where your child can practice that independent self care.

In the bathroom:

If you have a small bathroom, the simplest way to achieve a self care station is to set items up on the existing vanity or countertop. You could also hang a low shelf beneath a mirror if you can't fit a table. Provide a stool so that your child can get on the toilet by him/herself and another so they can reach the sink. Remember that in Montessori, we set things up left to right and always in a tidy way. If everything has a place, it's easier for toddlers to keep spaces neat because they know where items belong. You could keep your child's hairbrush and hair accessories in a basket, their toothbrush and toothpaste in a cup, and a supply of small washcloths for them to use as hand towels in a basket. You could also add a nail brush, tissues, or lotion. Provide a mirror so they can see themselves! If you have more space, you could create a separate toddler-sized station. Here a few beautiful examples:



Use a low shelf, a crate, or small side table to create a bathroom station. This example includes a basket for dirty clothes, a tray with a hairbrush and comb, a basin for hand washing and tooth brushing, soap, a toothbrush holder, a pitcher and tub for transporting water independently, and a towel. (I'd suggest a smaller pitcher for a toddler and a few extra towels for potential spills!)

Photo credit:

<https://www.instagram.com/akara88/>



I love the book selection next to the potty. They used a simple plastic tub for the "sink". You could also use a large bowl. It doesn't have to be fancy to be effective. Including a mirror is a nice touch so a toddler can wipe their face, brush their hair, or wipe their nose and see how they did. You can also add a basket of underwear/pants if your child is still learning to use the toilet.

Photo credit:

<https://www.elternvommars.com/>

In the kitchen:

Rachel gave the great idea of setting up a bowl of dry cereal and a small pitcher of milk in the fridge for an independent breakfast and some food prep ideas. Another fun activity in the kitchen (if you're a toddler) is dish washing. A dish washing station is easy to set up and toddlers really love it. Again, you can just use a crate or small table, or even just set two plastic tubs on the floor with a towel underneath after dinner. Fill one with soapy water and one with clean water (or better yet, let your toddler fill them with a pitcher) and provide a sponge or small dish brush. Include a towel for drying or a drying rack. Of course, you'll probably have to wash the dishes when they're done, but it's the process that counts! [This table](#) from IKEA would make a great dish station.



A simple dish washing station with two tubs, a drying rack, soap, dishes, and a bucket for water. I'd probably use a pitcher for getting water because it would be easier to pour!

You can also set up a special prep area in the kitchen for your toddler. Again, using a small table (you could use the same table for dish washing and just switch out the materials), stock the station with a few snack choices, child sized utensils that are safe for toddler use, dishes, and towels for clean up.

Put snacks in individual serving containers if you are worried about spills (for example, a small container of cereal, a small block of cheese in a container, a few crackers in a container and a serving of nut butter in a container, or single bananas or oranges). You could also include a basin and pitcher on the kitchen station for hand washing or washing dishes there instead of having a separate dish washing station.



This is a fairly intricate example, but how beautiful!

Photo credit: *The Kavanaugh Report*.
[Click here for full article on this kitchen station](#)

In the bedroom:

A small dressing chair like [this one](#) can be very helpful for toddlers learning to dress themselves. It's often easiest for toddlers to sit down to put on socks, pants, and shoes. As Rachel mentioned, it's good to provide a few choices for clothing daily, but only a few. If you are battling with your child over outfits often, you don't have to store all their clothing in their room. Keep their seasonal clothing in your room or in a storage tub, then select a few options to put in their room each evening. You can do this for accessories and shoes as well. Toddlers don't always do well with an abundance of options.



I love this closet set up. Just a few options within the child's reach and a chair for dressing.

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howwemontessori.com