

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

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# Parent Education Daily Living Skills Guide

**Recommendations and Guidelines**

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## Cooking and Use of Kitchen Equipment & Appliances

### Introduction to Stovetop

#### Exploration

Familiarize yourself with the stove/oven being used before starting. Be sure all burners are turned off before beginning.

Invite your child/student/client to explore the exterior of the stove. If they are exploring tactually, encourage them to use both hands. This gives them a sense of proportion and special placement of the unit's components. As a starting point, using verbal cues, hand-over-hand, or modeling techniques (as appropriate) guide them through becoming acquainted with the unit's:

**Outside Dimensions:** width, depth, and height.

Have them explore the:

- **Burners:** point out their location and the difference in their size.
- **Dials:**
  - **Dial Locations** on stovetop (front, back, or side of unit).
  - **Burner Dials:** which burners they control. Note: on many stoves outside dials often operate front burners, while inside dials control back burners, but stoves vary.
  - **Oven Dials:** many stoves have one dial for setting the oven function (bake, broil, etc.) and another for setting the oven temperature.
  - **Clock Dials:** Unless the child/student/client has functional vision, you may choose to pass over this dial, as it is not critical to the stove's operation.
  - **Dial Functions:** how to turn dials on/off and set temperature (push down and turn clockwise, etc.) Point out that the dial will make a clicking sound when put into the "off" position. Again, use verbal cues, hand-over-hand, or demonstration, as appropriate to your situation.
    - **Marking Dials:** The rule of thumb is to "keep it simple." Too much marking can be tactually confusing. Mark those temperatures or functions that are most frequently used (e.g. 350°, medium,



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high, low etc.). High contrast/tactile marking pens purchased from specialty catalog work well for marking dials. Short Braille labels are another option (see reference section for supply ordering contact information).

- **Digital Controls:** Many ovens now have digital controls. These are generally set at a starting point of 350 degrees. If the digital control up/down buttons are accompanied by a beep, point out that each beep represents 5 degrees. By counting the beeps from the 350 degree starting point, you can set the control to the desired temperature.
- **Coils and Drip Pans:** how the coils plug into the stove and how drip pans fit underneath.

### Safety Tips

**Burner/Dial Correspondence:** Verify before use

- **Conventional Stovetop**
  - Locate burner. Place hand slightly above burner. Turn dial being checked to low. Heat from burner will verify correct burner/dial correspondence.
- **Smooth Stovetop**
  - Using countertop and/or stovetop edges as a reference point, place pan where you believe the burner is located. Turn corresponding burner to low. Place hand above the pan and move it above and around its outer edge. If you detect more heat coming from one edge than another, move the pan in the direction of the excess heat until heat is fairly equal on all sides.

### Pan Placement

- **Pan/Burner Size:** Match the size of the pan to be used to the corresponding burner size. Place pan on burner. One technique used to double check that the pan is centered is to run a wooden spoon around the outside of the burner, making sure the side of the pan lines up with the spoon handle as you do this. Once a burner is on, another method is to place your hand

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at pan height and feel if heat from the burner is escaping unequally from any side.

- **Pan Shape:** Pans/skillets with straight sides are often easier to work with and reduce the chance of spillage.
- **Handles:** Point pan or skillet handles over **interior** and/or **toward back** of stovetop, or over **countertop NOT being used**. A common way of finding the pan handle is to use the back of your hand to search for it.
- **Listen to Food Cooking:** Popping and snapping often indicates the temperature is too high.

### Activity

- Put water in pan, select appropriate burner size for pan. With burner off, place pan on burner, and verify pan is centered and safely positioned on burner. Turn on selected burner, heat to boiling. Listen. How do you know when water reaches a full boil?

## Introduction to the Oven

**Exploration:** Be sure that the oven is turned off and cold.

Start by instructing your child/student/client how to orient his/her body to the front and center of the oven door. You may do this in many different ways. Helpful hints: Use countertop corners, stovetop edges, and the oven door handle as points of reference for body positioning. Once they are centered in front of the oven door, have them pull the door down to its fully open position (the open door will form a 90° angle with the front of the stove. Point this out, as appropriate.)

Invite your child/student/client to explore the interior of the oven. Using verbal cues, hand-over-hand, or modeling techniques (as needed) guide him/her through becoming acquainted with the oven's:

- **Racks:** size, shape, how they can be removed and adjusted for desired height from oven top.
- **Elements:** location and shape.
- **Interior Oven Dimensions:** point out how much usable space there is to work with according to rack placement.
- **Interior Oven Light:** point out this feature, as totally blind individuals might otherwise not know it is there.

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### Safety Tips:

**Oven Mitts, Etc.:** Although somewhat bulky, many people prefer using **extra long** oven mitts for placing and removing items from the oven rather than pot holders. There is also a fairly new product called “Ov-Gloves” which have individual fingers and are made of lighter material yet protect well.



**Item Removal from Oven:** Be sure child/student/client is positioned to front and center of the oven door. Pull oven door fully open. Use both hands to remove item. If stovetop is free of other pans, pull item straight out and up from oven onto stovetop. If the stovetop is in use, identify a clear countertop, cutting board, or other space for placing oven item before removing it from the oven.

### Activity

- Remove and replace oven rack.
- Place pan or cookie sheet in oven. Set oven to bake at 350 degrees. Safely remove pan or cookie sheet from oven and place on clear surface. Turn oven off.

### Oven Drawer

Show your child/student/client the location of the storage drawer underneath the oven door. Have them pull the drawer out and explore its interior. Discuss the various types of items people typically store in the drawer (pots, pans, cooked sheets, etc.)

## Introduction to the Toaster

Unplug the toaster.

Using verbal, hand-over-hand, or modeling techniques of instruction (as needed), and with toaster unplugged, have the child/student/client:

- Hold toaster in both hands to become familiar with its size, shape, and weight.
- Show them its front, back, temperature dial, and toasting lever.
- Show them how to position the dial/lever to set the toaster for light, medium, or dark toast, using terms like “right/left”, “midway,” or “clockwise”, as appropriate.
- Have them slide their hand in each slot to discover its dimensions and how it looks inside. Explain that the wires inside the toaster get hot and grill the bread.

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- Show them the slide-out crumb tray and how it is removed for cleaning.

### **Safety Tips:**

**Stuck Toast:** Point out that if toast becomes jammed inside, you should **ALWAYS UNPLUG** it before trying to remove the bread. Use wooden utensils to remove lodged toast.

**Toaster Hot on Outside:** Tell your child/student/client that many toasters become hot to the touch on the outside when in use. Keep items that can melt (bread wrappers, paper, etc.) or are flammable well away from toaster when being used. Note: Some “cool touch” toasters are now being manufactured.

**Cleaning Toaster:** Always unplug toaster and wait until it is cool before cleaning out crumb tray. Use damp cloth to clean outside of toaster. Never submerge toaster in water.

### **Activity**

- Set toaster to medium. Place toast in slot and start toasting. Time how long it takes for bread to toast.
- Remove crumb tray and clean.

## **Introduction to the Microwave**

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Using verbal, hand-over-hand, or modeling techniques of instruction (as needed), introduce the child/student/client to:

- **Dials & Buttons:**
  - Location & Function
  - Selection for Marking: Choose which buttons or dials are important to be marked for easy identification Remember, “keep it simple.” Not all buttons or dials need to be marked. Select those most frequently used for marking.
  - Operation: Button/dial sequence to select cooking time and key functions (start/stop, defrost/cook, high/low, etc.)
- **Door**
  - Dimensions.
  - Door operation: direction it opens & how to activate opening.

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- **Microwave Interior:**
  - Sides, back, and door interior for future cleaning and to learn about usable space
  - Location of interior light.
  - Center Tray (if included): how it can be removed for cleaning, and how to properly replace it.

### **Safety Tip:**

**Removing Food from Microwave:** Tell your child/student/client that the inside of the microwave will be cool when they remove items from it, but the food coming out will be hot. Teach them to have oven mitts, pot holders, or kitchen towels handy to safely remove food from the microwave.

### **Activity**

- Place a cup of water in microwave. Select one minute as the cooking time. Remove when cooking cycle is complete.
- Remove center tray and replace.

### **Helpful Hint:**

**Carrying Food:** Until a person becomes familiar with the concept of “level,” it is helpful to tell them to tilt their cup or dish “forward,” “backward,” to the “right” or to the “left” when giving verbal instructions on how to carry their food/drink to avoid spillage.

## **Introduction to Cutting and Slicing**

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### **Sandwich**

- Select a knife that is sharp and that is also longer than the bread.
- Place sandwich on cutting board and find the corners of the bread.
- Place thumb and forefinger on top and bottom corners of sandwich.
- For a diagonal cut, rest tip of knife gently against tip of forefinger and on top corner of sandwich. Angle knife handle over opposite bottom corner of sandwich. Grasp knife handle with thumb and fingers. For best control of the knife, place forefinger along top smooth edge of knife handle and blade. Using it as a guide, press knife down firmly and pull it toward you and bottom corner of sandwich. Avoid sawing motion when possible.
- For a straight cut, use forefinger to follow top edge of sandwich to approximate middle point. Rest knife gently against tip of forefinger and on top edge of sandwich. With thumb, follow bottom edge of sandwich to approximate middle point and rest knife handle against tip of thumb. Press knife down firmly and pull toward you

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and bottom of sandwich. Avoid sawing motion when possible.

### Hot Dog

- Lay hot dog on cutting board lengthwise, parallel to body.
- Gently grasp end of hot dog with thumb and forefinger.
- Slide forefinger along top edge of hot dog and thumb along bottom its bottom edge to desired slice width. Suggestion: you may use your first finger joint as a measuring guide for thick slices, or your finger thickness as a measurement for thinner slices.
- Once desired slice width is determined, use tip of forefinger resting on hot dog as your cutting guide, placing knife gently against tip of forefinger. Grasp knife handle with thumb and fingers. Place forefinger of hand holding the knife along top smooth edge of knife handle and blade.
- Press down firmly with knife and pull toward you. Repeat process until desired amount of hot dog is sliced
- Lengthwise Slicing:
  - For lengthwise slicing, measure for the middle of the hot dog by placing knife along (or parallel to) hot dog.
  - Using knife as a reference point, curl fingers over the top of and around the sides of the hot dog.
  - Adjust knife position (as needed) to where you feel it is midway along the top of the hot dog.
  - Stabilize knife by placing forefinger along the top of the smooth edge of its blade and handle.
  - Press firmly down with knife. Minor sawing motion may be required.

### Apple

- Select a sharp knife that is longer than the apple is wide.
- Place apple on cutting board, stem side up.
- **Cutting Apple in Half:**
  - With forefinger, find center of apple.
  - Rest pinkie edge of hand on cutting board and curve fingers around outer edge of apple. Grasp upper edge of apple with forefinger and bottom edge of apple with thumb to stabilize it.
  - Position knife gently against forefinger over center of

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apple.

- o Grasp knife handle with thumb and fingers. Position forefinger of hand, holding knife along top smooth edge of knife blade and handle. Using it as a guide, press knife down firmly, pulling it toward you. Back and forth sawing motion may be necessary.
- **Cutting Apple in Quarters**
  - o Place apple half face down on cutting board.
  - o Move middle finger along top edge and thumb along bottom edge of apple to approximate center point.
  - o Position knife gently against tip of middle finger and thumb and over center of apple.
  - o Press knife down firmly, pulling knife toward you. Back and forth sawing motion may be necessary.
- **Coring Apple**
  - o Set apple quarter on edge, curved side out.
  - o Rest pinkie edge of hand on cutting board and curve fingers around outer edge of apple. Grasp upper edge of apple with middle finger and bottom edge of apple with thumb to stabilize it.
  - o With opposite hand, feel inner edge of apple to find apple core.
  - o Move middle finger and thumb of hand holding apple to innermost edge of apple core.
  - o Rest knife gently against tips of middle finger and thumb on innermost edge of apple core.
  - o Press knife down firmly, pulling knife toward you. Back and forth sawing motion may be necessary.
    - Note: Apple corers are also an effective alternative to coring by hand.

### Potato

- Peeling a Potato.
  - o Hold potato in one hand positioned outward over sink. Grasp potato peeler in opposite hand.
  - o Starting at the end closest to your body, place potato peeler, blade down, onto potato. Using your forefinger as a guide along top of peeler, press down and move peeler along potato away from you to other end.
  - o Once motion is complete, come back to end of potato closest

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to you. Find the edge of the peeled strip and begin again. Rotate potato and repeat peeling motion until sides are complete. **Note:** Running cold water over potato remove starch and makes identifying peeled and unpeeled portions easier.

- o Once sides are peeled, hold potato upright on end.
- o Find edge where peeling remains.
- o Starting from unpeeled edge, peel up and over, rotating potato until end is peeled.

### Introduction to Pouring and Measuring

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#### **Pouring**

Using verbal, hand-over-hand, or modeling techniques of instruction (as needed), introduce the child/student/client to:

- Different types of glasses/cups of varying sizes, shapes, and materials (e.g. plastic, glass, ceramic, paper, Styrofoam.)
- Any unfamiliar vocabulary (e.g. handle, top, bottom, rim, brim.)
- Typical use and types of liquids each is made to hold (hot/cold drinks, coffee, tea, juice, water, milk etc.).

#### **Activity 1**

Have child/student/client:

- Hold and explore the shapes, dimensions, and weight of each glass/cup.
- Place glass/cup of his/her choice on a cookie sheet or in a pan.
- Curl fingers around front side of glass/cup and thumb around the side closest to body.
- Rest forefinger over rim/lip and slightly bend at first finger joint so fingertip dips just below the rim on the inside of the glass/cup.
- Using free hand, pick up a partially filled water pitcher or container and place its spout against the side of the glass/cup closest to the pitcher and slowly pour liquid into the glass/cup until client feels water touch his/her fingertip bent over the rim.
- Place pitcher on table to the side of the cookie sheet or pan.

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### Activity 2

- Pour (or have child/student/client pour) liquid into a glass/cup and listen for how the sound changes as the liquid progressively approaches the top.

**Measuring:** Here are some hints and techniques to help your child/student/client with measuring dry and liquid ingredients.

**Nesting:** Keeping measuring cups and spoons nested together, one nesting inside the other, helps with learning about the different measures, how they relate to one another, and how to tell them apart from each other.

**Marking:** The general guideline is “keep it simple.” Mark only the most commonly used measures.

**Plastic:** Notches can be made in plastic measuring cup and spoon handles to indicate their different quantities. The general guideline for marking is as follows:

- 4 notches –  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup or teaspoon
- 3 notches –  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup
- 2 notches –  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or teaspoon
- No notches – 1 cup or teaspoon

Note: the difference in size between a teaspoon and tablespoon is significant so no marking is usually used to distinguish one from the other.

**Metal:** Metal cup and spoon measures can be marked by hammering a nail against the back side of their handles to form bumps or dents. The same marking pattern described above is used.

**Measuring Liquids:** Bending metal handles upright to a 90° angle can allow the child/student/client to “dip” into liquids rather than pour them. This technique is especially helpful when working with oils, which are very hard to feel. Transferring oils to wide-mouth containers also makes dipping easier.

**Reducing Cleanup and Spillage:** Placing a cookie sheet or pan underneath measuring cups and spoons will contain spillage and lessen cleanup time.

## Orientation and Mobility

### Introduction to Sighted Guide



“Sighted Guide” is a specific technique used to provide safe travel assistance to a blind or visually impaired person within different environments and under varying conditions when such assistance is desired.

#### Offering and Providing Sighted Guide

If you see someone you think might like assistance, approach and ask if they would like to have “sighted guide.” If so, here is the basic technique:

- Stand beside the person and place the back of your hand against their lower arm. This will let them know where your guiding arm is.
- The person will then take their hand and follow your arm up to just above the elbow, placing their thumb on the outside and their fingers on the inside of your arm
  - o Note: a small child may need to grasp your finger or wrist instead.
- This position places them about a half step behind you. You are ready to proceed.
- The blind person will be able to feel the movement of her guide’s body to the left or right, up or down, as she walks a half step behind and beside you.



**Going Up and Down Stairs:** The idea is to be as subtle and natural as possible. As you approach stairs, stop for a moment at the landing and give the verbal cue that you’ll be going up or down, and whether the railing is to their left or right (if there is one). Hesitate again when you have reached the next level or landing.



**Narrow Passages:** Place your guiding arm behind you. This gives the cue that the person being guided is to move behind you to safely navigate through narrow areas.

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**Doorways:** As you approach, give the verbal cue that you are going to go through a doorway. Also indicate whether the door opens to the left or the right and toward or away from you. This will allow the person being guided to assist with holding the door open as the two of you pass through, or to switch sides as needed. The verbal cue will sound something like, “we are going through a door that opens away from us on the right side.”

**Seating:** Enable the guided person to locate and examine the seat/chair and independently seat himself. Explain if you are approaching the front or back of the seat/chair while either placing guided person’s hand on seat/chair back or person’s leg comes into contact with front of seat/chair.

## Supplies and Materials Reference

### Appliance Marking Supplies

Spot 'N Line Pens (black, white, orange) available from:

MaxiAids  
1-800-522-6294  
[www.maxiaids.com](http://www.maxiaids.com)  
42 Executive Blvd.  
Farmingdale, NY 11735

Hi Marks Pens (orange) available from:

LS&S Products  
[www.lssproducts.com](http://www.lssproducts.com)  
P.O. Box 673  
Northbrook, IL 60065

Braillabels (Adhesive Braille Labeling Sheets) available from:

American Thermoform Corporation  
1-800-331-3676  
[www.americanthermoform.com](http://www.americanthermoform.com)  
1758 Brackett St.  
La Verne, CA 91750