



Use this list to help yourself know when to **step back**:

1. You're **stepping back** so your child can step forward and become as independent as possible. Keep your child's future in mind. Even though helping can feel right, and be more efficient, be aware that too much assistance is short-sighted. Sometimes less is more, less is better.
2. Clock how long it actually takes for your child to start zippers, pick up dropped items, spread condiments on bread, etc. What's a few more seconds in the grander scheme?
3. Sit on your hands for a whole task while you practice giving verbal instead of touch cues. Hands off the hands! If you do need touch cues, use hand-under-hand instead of hand-over-hand. This gives your child much more choice and the feeling of self-accomplishment and self-worth.
4. Allow your child to make mistakes. It's part of the human learning experience.
5. Teaching independence is hard work! Acknowledge your own needs and take time for yourself.
6. Sit or stand a little further away. If you have been within arm's reach, go just within earshot. If you have been within earshot, go across the room or to the next room.
7. Pat yourself and your child on the back every time you see your child doing something independently.
8. Catch yourself before you correct your child's schoolwork. Don't cover for your child. School is about their skills...not yours.
9. Teach your child to decline unnecessary assistance. An example phrase might be, "Thanks but please let me try it by myself." Role play this together.
10. Collaborate with other adults to help you to break the habit of helping too much, including speaking for your child. Agree that they can remind you to **step back**.
11. Keep open lines of communication with your child's teachers. Let them know you are their partner in equipping your child's independence. Let them know the tasks your child can do on their own at home and your expectations of continuing these independent tasks at school. Ask what your child is doing independently in the class and do the same at home.