



# Junior Independence

As you grow up, it's time to start taking care of yourself. It's a big task, but it can be fun to get to know yourself and what you're capable of! These steps will start you on the road to riding solo, so you can feel confident on your own, show your family they can trust you, and get comfortable striding down your path to changing the world!

## Steps

1. Get transportation smart
2. Make your clothes look great
3. Break a bad habit
4. Help around the house
5. Show off your independence!

## Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll feel more confident doing things on my own—and know how to help others be confident in me.

### Step 1 Get transportation smart

It's fun to get around by yourself, but first you have to know how. Get more transportation savvy in one of these ways.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Get a bike ready to ride.** Ask a bike expert to help you go through all of the parts of the bike. Use the bike safety checklist at right.

For More FUN: Take a short bike trip. Speak to your family about whether you need to bring an adult along—and be sure to wear a helmet, and review the rules of the road before you go!

OR

**Help take care of a car.** With a parent or car-smart adult, go over all the lights and gauges on the dashboard and what they mean. Then look under the hood for a safety check. Follow the checklist at right and see if the car is ready for an adventure.

OR

**Use public transportation.** Figure out how you'd run an errand or get to the nearest shopping center using buses, trains, or subways. Map out which bus or train you'd take, how long it would take to get there, and how much it would cost. Then, with an adult, test out the route.



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For More FUN: Think of a place you've always wanted to visit, and plan how you might get there. Plane, train, or car? How much would it cost?

## Step 2 Make your clothes look great

Part of being independent is taking charge of your wardrobe.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Become a laundry expert.** To be fashionable, you need clothes to wear! Get familiar with the machines, how to get out stains, and how to wash and dry different kinds of fabrics (look on clothing tags for tips about each item). Then be your family's helper and do three or more loads for practice.

For More FUN: Create a family quiz and try to stump them all with your super laundry skills. Look on the next page for some quiz-question ideas.

OR

**Learn two basic sewing skills—and use them as a fashion designer.** The coolest clothes are totally original—and something you make yourself is always original. Ask an expert to help you learn to sew on a button, patch, or to do a basic hand stitch. Then use your new skills to decorate old jeans, a T-shirt, or a sweater.

For More FUN: Have a fashion show with friends to show off your designs.

OR

**Try on the role of clothes-organization guru.** Find a book or website with tips on organizing space, and use them to organize your closet (or the area where you keep your clothes). You might sort by color or length, make a shoe rack, use labeled clear plastic boxes or shoe boxes to hold different kinds of items (or accessories), decorate hangers . . . the ideas are endless.

For More FUN: Do some “design consulting” by helping a friend organize her clothes, and ask her to consult for you

## Step 3 Break a bad habit

Part of being more independent is practicing good habits. Work on changing one bad habit—

experts say it takes two weeks to create a new one to replace it. Choose a habit you have and want to work on from one of the categories, and follow the steps to change it.



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CHOICES – DO ONE:

**At school.** Habits like putting schoolwork off until the last minute, forgetting to study for a quiz, or being disorganized when bringing schoolwork to and from home.

OR

**At home.** Habits like forgetting to brush your teeth, not putting away your clothes, arguing with siblings, or eating too much junk food.

OR

**With your friends.** Habits like being bossy with your friends, talking too much about yourself, or interrupting when your friend is talking

### Step 4 Help around the house

A huge part of being independent is taking care of where you live. Plus, your home gives you a place to stay, so you should give it some attention. Pick one of the choices below, get an adult to help you, and give it a try.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Solve a pesky plumbing problem.** Watch how your toilet works by taking the lid off the tank and flushing. Learn how to fix a running toilet. Then have someone show you how to use a plunger if the toilet gets clogged.

For More FUN: Find the number of a good plumber to help with more complicated problems.

OR

**Clean to the beat.** With a group of friends, brainstorm all the tasks involved in cleaning a room (like dusting, vacuuming, and cleaning windows or mirrors). Figure out how long each task takes on average and what's the best order to do them. Then, put it all to music—make up or find a song that will help each task go by in a flash. Last, use your mix to clean a room together—your meeting place, a bedroom, or a family space.

For More FUN: Add some dance moves, too—maybe you can create a “dust bunny” jive?

OR



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**Hang something up.** Whether it's artwork, a poster, a framed portrait, or a shelf, independent girls should know how to hang fun stuff on the wall. Find out what type of fastener is best for the wall—putty, hook, double-sided tape, push pins or nail—and hang something.

(Hint: You'll need to know what the walls are made of.)

## Step 5 Show off your independence!

Now that you've been working on being more independent for a few weeks, you're ready to be responsible for yourself. Check with your family when choosing an activity—you may need to adjust a choice based on family rules.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

**Hang out with yourself.** Get your family's permission to stay at home for a little while when they are out. Before they leave, talk about who you should call in an emergency and rules of the house. You could use the quiet time to de-stress, watch a movie, or play your favorite music and make up an independence dance.

OR

**Run a family errand.** Part of being independent is letting others know they can depend on you. Show you're dependable by mastering an errand. You could make a grocery list, then have a parent drop you off to shop and pick you up when you're done—or ask them to spend time at a place close by while you do the errand.

OR

**Go out with a friend.** Go out to see a movie or eat a meal. If you aren't yet allowed to go alone, see if you might be allowed to sit by yourselves and order by yourselves. Then figure out what kind of money is needed to pay and tip, and how much change you should get

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Helping a friend hang her favorite poster
- Sharing in the family errands
- Riding my bike to save gas

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