

Preparing for Periods

Supporting children with disabilities through menstruation

Periods are a normal part of growing up, but they can bring new sensations, routines, emotions, and support needs.

For children with disabilities, a little preparation can make a big difference.

Based on guidance from Simons Searchlight's

Navigating Menstruation: Support for Caregivers of Individuals with Disabilities.



1 PREPARE BEFORE THE FIRST PERIOD



Talk about it early

Use clear, concrete language. Explain what a period is, what your child may notice, and what they can do when it happens.



Practice before it's needed

Let your child see, touch, open, and practice using different menstrual products. Consider trying period underwear or pads before their first period.



Use visuals

A simple visual sequence can make an unfamiliar routine more predictable:



Notice blood



Get supplies



Change



Clean up



Wash hands



Ask for help if needed



Consider sensory + mobility needs

Think about texture, smell, pressure, changing frequency, fine motor skills, toileting abilities, and how easily your child can put on or remove a product.

2 BUILD A PERIOD KIT

Keep one at home, school, and/or in your child's bag.



Preferred menstrual products



Extra underwear



Change of clothes



Wipes or clean-up supplies



Bag for soiled clothing/products



Comfort or sensory item



Any approved pain-management supplies

3 TRACK WHAT YOU NOTICE

The menstrual cycle can affect more than bleeding. Consider tracking:



Period



Pain



Sleep



Mood



Behavior



Energy



Sensory needs



Seizures, if applicable

Patterns can help you better understand your child's body and give healthcare providers useful information.



4 BUILD INDEPENDENCE TOGETHER

Independence doesn't have to mean doing everything alone.



Break menstrual care into small steps.



Identify what your child can do independently, what they can learn with practice, and where they may continue to need support.



The goal is understanding their body, building skills, communicating needs, and having access to trusted adults who can help.