



Dressing Myself

General Hints and Tips

- Do not practice when time is short, start at weekends/when things are a bit more relaxed
- If it is really difficult, break the process down to concentrating on one garment at a time and only moving on when the child has mastered this (see backwards and forward chaining advice sheet on how to break down the task)
- Start with minimal fastenings, oversized and loose fitting clothes
- Sitting on the floor, or on a chair, where they can rest their feet on the floor whilst getting dressed removes the need for balance and may therefore help
- Reward and praise your child for even small successes
- Involve your child in the undressing and dressing process as early as possible
- It is much easier for your child to learn how to undress before dressing. Therefore, practice taking clothes off first
- Children learn in different ways so you might need to vary your approach. There are a number of ways in which you can help:
 - Physically assist your child (use the hand-over-hand technique, guide your child's hand down to their sock, let them grasp the sock, then put your hand over theirs while you pull the sock off)
 - Show your child – do the task alongside your child
 - Tell your child – talk your child through each step of the process
 - You can use each of these ways individually or any combination depending on what suits your child. Please be aware that some children cannot look and listen at the same time, so limit the amount of information you give
- If your child is struggling, it can be tempting to take over - don't! Give your child time to work it out for themselves and give loads of encouragement. If necessary, talk them through what to do and only step in if they get really stuck
- Instead of automatically correcting a mistake (e.g. twisted collar or button incorrectly matched) why not encourage your child to look in the mirror and get them to find out what's wrong. You may need to ask them some questions to help them work it out
- Take your time and be consistent. Establish a routine to avoid confusion, so that the activity becomes predictable. Learning a new skill takes time, so persevere with giving support until you feel that your child is making progress
- Once you have found a technique that works, communicate this with adults that work with your child
- Practice, practice, practice! Give your child opportunities for practice every day



Pre-dressing Activities and Games

- Dressings up toys – On a small scale, practice the order of dressing and learning how to get the clothes the right way round and how to turn them inside out
- Body Awareness games – Ask your child to point to different parts of their body and use concepts such as front, back, left and right, in, out, over and under e.g. 'point to your left knee', 'take your hand out of your pocket'. Games like 'Twister' and 'Hullabaloo'
- Songs – 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes', 'One finger one thumb keep moving', 'The ankle bones connected to the leg bone, the leg bones connected to the ...' and 'Hokey Cokey'
- Simon says – 'Clap behind your back', 'touch your head'...' touch your nose on your right knee', 'stand on one leg'
- Musical dressing up – When the music stops, put on a loose fitting top, trousers, shoes, socks or coat that are in the dressing up box
- Dressing up – Have a box of old loose fitting clothes or dressing up clothes. Make an obstacle course and as the last challenge ask your child to rummage in the box and dress up like a 'princess', 'pirate', 'mummy' etc.
- Dressing up puzzles and dressing sequence puzzles – Any puzzle where you put the person together and then add the clothes, and any puzzle where you put the sequence of dressing in order