

Dressing Skills

The following activities are useful in the preparation for dressing. They should be carried out with adult supervision.

Dressing 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', 'put your hand out of your pocket'. Games like 'Twister' and 'Hallabaloo'.

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 Kokey'



Simon says – 'clap behind your back', 'touch your head'...' touch your nose on your right knee'.. 'stand on one leg'. Use small hoops to pass over right leg and left arm and then pass it around your back.

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.

Preparation

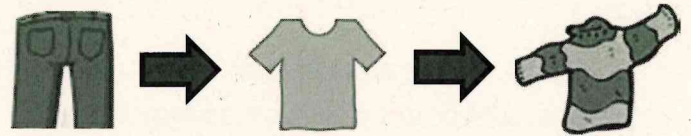


Sit supported on a chair with feet on the floor or sit on the floor with back against a wall. Make sure your child has plenty of space around them and no hazards to knock themselves on.

Dress in front of a mirror so your child can see how they are doing.

Practice dressing skills when you have plenty of undisturbed time to give to it and when there are no distractions around.

Praise every attempt made in dressing.



Provide picture cards of each stage of the dressing sequence. Ask your child to put them in order before they start dressing. Once engaged in dressing ask your child to turn each picture over when completed.

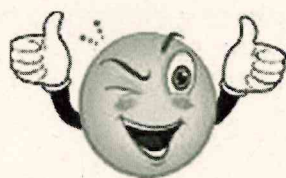
Agree a general sequence for dressing and undressing. i.e. undress everything top down and dress everything again top down (starting with underwear first then main clothes).

Choose clothes to be worn and check they are the right way round and not inside out. Lay them on the bed in top down order with back facing upwards.



Agree a pattern of dressing that suits your child best. i.e. for trousers either 'Sit- stand- sit method' where you sit to pull trousers over both legs up over the ankles and stand to pull up to the waist and then fasten or 'Sit-lap cross-stand- sit method' where you sit on the chair lift your leg up and cross it over your lap, put one trouser leg in and then do the same with the other leg. Once both trouser legs are up over the ankles stand to pull trousers to waist and fasten. Whatever approach chosen should be same for underwear, socks and shoes.

Be prepared to give a running commentary on each part of the dressing process, to help your child reinforce what they are doing and what they have done. 'You are putting your right arm right into your sleeve and I can see your hand coming out the other end. **Well done!**'



Practice

These ideas will help with practicing dressing skills. Start with undressing first. Praise every attempt made in (un) dressing.

Break the task down into its component parts and start by talking through and helping your child with the first stages of the task and then get them to complete the last part. As they master the last part of the task give them the second to last part of the task and eventually give them more and more of the task until they are doing the full sequence.

Follow a consistent sequence in all aspects of dressing and use pictures to reinforce this sequence.

- Same pattern for undressing and dressing, (top down direction).
- Same pattern for similar garments. Pull top over your head and then put your arms through and pull down over your tummy. Sit down put legs in each trouser leg until over ankle, stand up and pull up over bottom and fasten.
- Same pattern for turning clothes around the right way. Child lays the front of the tops face down on their laps and check the label is in the back, before putting on.
- Same pattern for correcting clothing that is inside out. Lay top on lap as you would if preparing to put it on. With one hand holding onto the bottom of the top, put your other arm up inside the top until you grab hold of the neck of the top. Pull the neck towards you, and it will turn the top the correct way round. To turn sleeves the correct way or trouser legs, from the arm pit or crutch of the trousers, reach down and grab the hand and foot end of the sleeve or trouser leg respectively and pull them back towards you.

Talk through the steps with clear simple commands.

Give praise throughout.

Adjustments

The following ideas could assist with developing your child's dressing skills however this list is not exhaustive. Please find purchasing information under resources.



Velcro fastenings where possible.

Where possible do up shirts and put on as jumpers.

Clothing without buttons, or fastenings that are loosely fitted and have back and front clearly identified.

Buy loose fitting with pictures on the front to make it easier to recognise front and back.

Ensure the back of the item of clothing is clearly marked. Where it is not, sew in a coloured label to each so it is easily identified by the child.

