
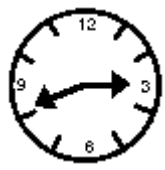




Top Tips for Dressing

Before carrying out any of the activity suggestions below, always prepare your child by discussing the strategies beforehand and let them take the lead as much as possible. Choose the ones that you feel are most appropriate for your child. The lists of activities are not prescriptive and you can vary them. Use a little and often approach to ensure your child has fun with these activities.

  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calm quiet environment is best when trying to learn new skills. Avoid any noise or distractions such as other children in the room, television or computers if possible. • Ensure the child is sitting in a stable position e.g. on the floor where it is easier for them to reach their feet or on a chair or firm bed with their feet supported. If sitting balance is poor try sitting against a wall. You can sit next to, in front of or directly behind the child and guide them through each step of the activity. • Allow extra time for the child to learn new skills and techniques, move at the child's pace, and give lots of praise for practising even if the task is not completed successfully. • Undressing is usually easier than dressing so undressing before bed and helping put pyjamas on is often a good way to start as you may have more time at night than in the morning. • It can be helpful to dress/undress in front of the mirror to provide visual clues and check all is correct before going out. • Try not to watch the child all of the time they may do more if left alone. • The backward chaining technique can be useful when learning to dress: the adult begins the task with the child doing only the last step. Gradually the adult does less as the child is able to do more of the task themselves. This way the child always gets the reward of finishing the task. • Start by practising with larger, flat buttons then progress to smaller ones. Encourage your child to help fasten your buttons then move onto fastening their own. • Attach a key ring or curtain ring to a zip to aid grip.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your child gets muddled with the order they put the clothes on lay the clothes out flat in the order. You could make up a visual sheet to help them remember the order. • Roll up clothing to create more grip i.e. roll up the bottom edge of the t-shirt before putting on. • To help ensure clothes are put on the right way round use clothes with pictures or logos on the front. • Socks can be tricky, sport/tubular socks are easier than those with a heel or socks with coloured heels and toes also make it easier to work out the correct way round the sock goes. Prompt the child to use their “magic thumbs” to pull the socks on by isolating their thumbs to get them under the sock to pull up. • To help the child identify which shoe goes on which foot use an indelible marker to put a mark on the inside border of each shoe. The child can then place these two marks together to ensure that they are putting their shoes on the correct foot. • Practise tying the shoe on a table initially and when they master this, move on to a foot as this requires balance too. If the first knot tends to be slack, try wrapping the lace round twice rather than once. • Flat laces are easier to tie than round laces. Ensure the laces are long enough to comfortably tie a bow. Practise with two different coloured laces to make following shoelace tying instructions easier.