

Ideas to help your child dress/undress

Getting Started

- Start involving your child with dressing at an early stage. It is important that your child from an early age is helping in getting dressed.
- Success is important; so begin with breaking the dressing activity into small, straightforward steps.
- Tackle one step at a time and give help where needed.
- Start with undressing as this is usually easier than dressing. Undressing before bed and helping to put on pyjamas is a good time to start.
- Pick a time to practise dressing that fits in with your family. There will be lots of time throughout the day to practise parts of dressing e.g. shoes off or coat on for going out.
- Which room will your child dress in? Think about less distractions and your child's privacy.
- Dress in the same way each time so that your child learns what to do.
- Keep instructions simple and short.
- As your child starts to get better ask questions such as "what do we start with?", or "what's next?"
- Make sure that your child is sitting comfortably, e.g. on the floor (where it is easier for them to reach their feet).

The Right Clothes

- Try to avoid fastenings, tight clothes and lots of layers. Instead use loose fitting clothing with elastic waist or Velcro fastening e.g. tracksuits, lightweight fleeces.
- Pyjamas tend to be a bit looser so may be easier to learn with or use clothes that are a size too big.

Next Steps

- Clothes can be placed in a pile or a line in the right order.
- Instead of always correcting a mistake, get your child to look (maybe in a mirror) and feel if all is correct, and sort out what needs to be done.
- Try not to watch all the time; your child may do more if you are not right next to them.
- Your child could get their own clothes out. You could use pictures of clothing on your child's drawers to help them to find things.
- Try using picture strips to help your child with the next steps. The Do2learn website has downloadable resources: <http://do2learn.com/picturecards/howtouse/remindertips.htm>

For some videos to support dressing skills, please see our YouTube channel:

If your child finds dressing hard, and you need advice to help them, please contact the Children and Young Peoples Occupational Therapy Service.

