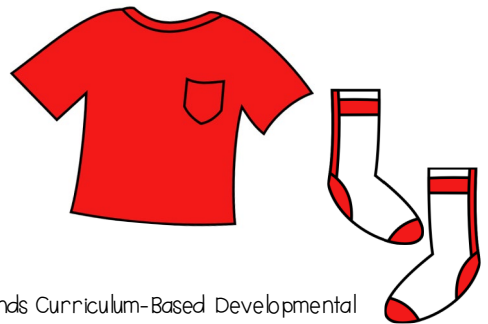


Tools to Grow at Home



Early Intervention

Dressing Tips: What to Expect & How to Help Your Child Learn



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Tools to Grow at Home

Dressing Tips:



What to Expect & How to Help Your Child Learn

WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHEN TO EXPECT IT:

- Learn the common age range that a child may be expected to perform certain dressing skills.
- This will help minimize frustration and the chance that you may expect too much or too little from your child.
- See the *Dressing Skills - What to Expect Next Chart* for information.

UNDRESSING IS EASIER THAN DRESSING:

- Expect your child to remove his/her hat, socks, pants, or shirt before he/she can put on these things.

LOOSE FITTING CLOTHES ARE EASIER:

- Try to use loose fitting clothing when practicing dressing.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING:

- Practice dressing when your schedule allows for extra time.
- Rushing your child will cause frustration and will most likely discourage success.
- Practice when your child is able to tolerate a challenge, avoid practicing when your child is tired, hungry, sad or ill.

EASY DOES IT:

- Use simple directions when describing what needs to happen.
- Encourage an understanding of vocabulary such as up, down, in, out, back, front and behind. These concepts are important when following directions during dressing activities.
- Use your own clothing to demonstrate on yourself.
- Provide physical help known as hand over hand assistance to gently guide your little one through the steps. Eliminate the hand over hand help as he/she gets better.



PRACTICE WITH TOYS:

- When selecting gifts, consider that there are many toys such as books, puzzles and stuffed animals that have fasteners (buttons, snaps, buckles, laces).
- Give your child a doll or teddy bear with infant clothing for dressing and undressing. Your child will have fun while practicing!



BACKWARD IS BETTER:

- The strategy known as “backward chaining” helps children achieve a complex task such as dressing in small manageable steps.
- The tricky thing is that you expect your child to accomplish the last step of the process first. Once he/she succeeds with that step, your child is expected to master the preceding step.
- Here is an example for learning to put on socks:
 - Step 1: Adult puts socks over the toes, heel and ankle, child pulls socks up the leg.
 - Step 2: Adult puts sock over the toes and heel, child pulls over the ankle and up the leg.
 - Step 3: Adult puts sock over the toes, child pulls sock over heel, ankle and leg.
 - Step 4: Child puts sock on independently.

START WITH THE WEAKER SIDE:

- If your child has a weaker arm or leg, begin dressing with that limb.
- In other words, expect your child to use his/her stronger hand to hold the shirt while pulling the shirt sleeve over the weaker hand and up the weaker arm.

KNOW YOUR PARTS:

- Use many opportunities to help your child learn their body parts.
- When learning to dress, he or she will benefit from knowing the difference between an ankle, knee, elbow and shoulder.

HAVE A SEAT:

- It may be very difficult for your child to keep his/her balance while completing many dressing tasks.
- Sitting on the floor may even be easier than sitting on a chair or a bed.

PRAISE YOUR CHILD:

- Focus on what your child did to be successful rather than on what he/she did not accomplish.
- Congratulate your child for trying their best.

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Dressing Tips:

LOWER BODY DRESSING

SHOES

- Slip-on or Velcro shoes are easier.
- Tips for putting shoes on the correct feet:



- Write child's name in two parts with a permanent marker on the inside of the tongue. For example, on the left shoe print "Na" and on the right shoe print "me". The child lines up the shoes correctly to spell "Na me" and places them on his/her corresponding feet.
- Take a sticker and cut it in half. Place the left half on the inside of the left shoe and the right side of the sticker on the right side of the shoe. The child lines up the shoes so that the stickers form the picture correctly.

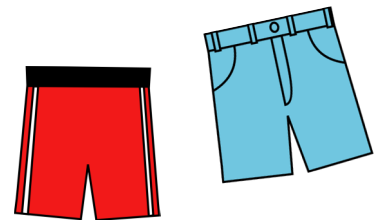
SOCKS

- Try to use socks that have a well shaped heel.



PANTS & SHORTS

- Shorts are easier than pants to start.
- Start with elastic waistbands, this is easier. Avoid buttons until your child is older.
- Explain that there is a hole for each leg.
- Use the backward chaining method. In this approach the child accomplishes the last step first. In other words, you will provide all the help until the final step when your child pulls his/her pants over their hips. Every time he/she masters a step continue to work backwards.



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Dressing Tips:

UPPER BODY DRESSING



SHIRT (OVER THE HEAD STYLE)

- Short sleeves are easier than long sleeves to start.
- Help by placing the shirt on your child's head. Expect him/her to try and pull it down to their neck.
- Hold the sleeve open to help your child aim for the holes.



SHIRT (OPEN FRONT)

- The "flip method" may be easier.
- Place the shirt with the tag side up.
- Your child should be positioned closest to the collar.
- Have him/her bend down and place both arms into both shirt sleeves.
- While pushing their arms through the sleeves, he/she should simultaneously raise their arms while "flipping" the shirt over the top of their head.



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Dressing Tips:

SNAPS & FASTENERS

ZIPPERS

- Look for large zippers that are easy to manage.
- You can attach a key ring or large paper clip to the zipper pull to make it easier to grasp.
- Unzipping- Start with teaching unzipping, that is easier. Non-separating zippers are easier to unzip than separating zippers.
 - The first step of unzipping will be pulling the zipper pull down toward the “box”.
 - The final step of unzipping to master is pulling apart a separating zipper.
 - Help your child to use his dominant hand to pull down on the zipper pull while simultaneously using his non-dominant hand to hold the fabric taut near the bottom of the zipper.
 - To master this step your child may initially need many demonstrations and hand over hand help.
- Zipping- Use the backward chaining method to teach this skill.
 - The first step to master is pulling the zipper up the final one-third of the way. In other words, the adult hooks the two parts of the zipper and pulls two-thirds of the way up. The child pulls up the remaining one-third.
 - The final step of zipping for the child to master is engaging the two sides of the zipper. Help your child use one hand to stabilize or stiffly hold the “box” side of the zipper. Help guide his/her hand to insert the “pin” side of the zipper into the “box”. This may take lots of practice and patience!

BUTTONS

- Start with larger buttons and button holes.
- This is a two handed job, show your child how to hold the button with one hand, push it through the hole, and then use the other hand to pull the button through the other side of the hole.
- Try to use the cue “Pinch” (referring to the button she is to grasp), “Poke” (referring to pushing the button through the hole), and “Pull” (referring to using the other hand to pull the button through the other side of the hole).

SNAPS

- Begin with unsnapping.
- Demonstrate how to pull the two sides of the material apart.
- When first learning to snap the adult should line up the centers.

Tools to Grow at Home

Dressing Skills What to Expect Next

Your child is developing dressing skills in this range. Remember each child is unique and will develop at his or her own rate. Use the guide as a tool to learn what step is next and how to help your child move to the next stage.

AGE	DRESSING SKILLS
12 - 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cooperates by holding arm out for sleeves & puts foot up for shoes ◆ Pushes arms through sleeves & legs through pants ◆ Begins to get undressed ◆ Pulls socks & shoes off ◆ Removes hat
24 - 30 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Gets undressed with help for fasteners & sequencing ◆ Helps pull up elastic waist pants ◆ Unbuttons one large button
30 - 36 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tries to put on socks ◆ Puts on front-button shirt (without buttoning)
3 - 4 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Gets dressed & undressed with minimal help (using no-tie shoes) ◆ Puts on shoes (may be incorrect feet) ◆ Puts on socks with minimal assistance at times ◆ Pulls down pants ◆ Unzips & zips non-separating zipper ◆ Zips down pants ◆ Buttons large buttons ◆ Snaps ◆ Unbuckles
4 - 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Buckles ◆ Connect two-part separating jacket zipper and zips up ◆ Puts on socks correctly ◆ Puts on shoes with minimal assistance ◆ Knows front versus back of clothing
5 - 7 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dresses without help or supervision ◆ Ties Shoes