

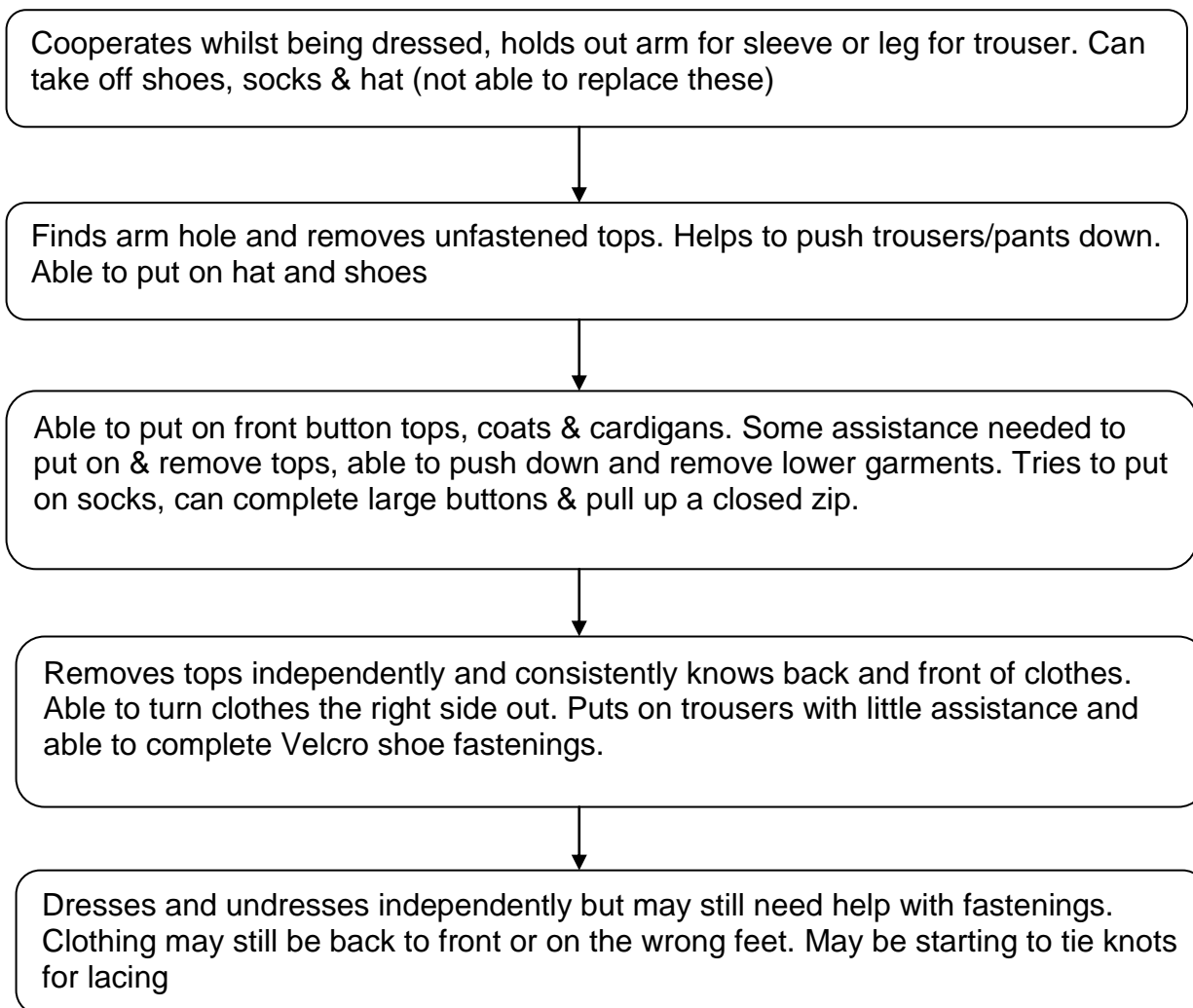


Developing dressing skills

Information leaflet for parents/carers

Dressing is a skill that is learnt gradually and usually happens in the order below. Dressing and undressing yourself is very much part of everyday life but it can be tricky and children learn at different rates. Children learn best when they are motivated and it is important that at every stage of developing skills the 'just right challenge' is provided. This sets the challenge of learning at a level that is right for them ensuring a sense of achievement and success.

Dressing stages



It is important to recognise the stage your child may be developing at as they may be doing some, all or very little of the above skills. Knowing what stage your child has achieved can help you to set appropriate targets ensuring your child experiences success, encouraging motivation and most importantly participation in the dressing task



Pre-dressing skills

Play is really important in helping children learn the skills they need to dress. When dressing, your child will need enough hand strength to help grip and move clothes and fastenings. Children also need a good understanding of how their body works together and how it moves.

Pre-dressing games and activities we suggest include but are not limited to:-

Level 1

- Button boards, play cubes, cloth button or popper books.
- Find your tail – tuck a toy or fabric tail into the back of your waistband and find it and pull it out.
- Posting and threading games.
- Playing with a hula hoop, stepping in and out, pull up and down, lifting over head.
- Magnetic games and pull apart toys – lego, stickle bricks
- Simon Says and games that name parts of the body.

Level 2

- Action songs like heads, shoulders, knees and toes and wheels on the bus
- Roly-poly and jumping games
- Hide and seek.
- Wooden shoe - a shoe shaped piece of card or wood with holes in can be used to practise lacing and tying shoes.

Level 3

- Dressing up in a variety of clothes and costumes and playing pretend games.
- Dressing and undressing dolls and teddies.

Setting the Environment for dressing

- Spend time getting everything you need together before you start. Putting things in the order you are going to need them will help. Children will need help with this at first.
- Sitting down will make getting dressed easier so try a small chair or on the floor leaning against the wall or your bed. It is advised that feet, hips and ankles are at a 90 degree position if sat on a seat
- Children need to be able to focus on getting dressed. So where possible make sure the TV is off, the toys are put away and you have enough space.
- When learning to get dressed it helps if you can do it in the same way and in the same place each time. Pick a place that is private and your child feels comfortable.
- Look in a big mirror to check how you look after getting dressed.

Skills and strategies

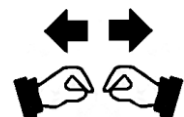
Practicing without time pressures i.e. at weekends and holiday is less stressful, give your child time to learn each new skill and don't rush them on to the next step before they are ready.



- Getting undressed is easier than getting dressed
- Start with looser clothes with no tricky fastenings, bigger buttons and chunky zips are easier.
- If your child gets in a muddle with putting clothes on the right way round, look for a label at the back or a picture on the front.
- Try socks with different coloured heels and toes and that are a size bigger – this makes it much easier to put them on!
- Putting pictures on drawers and cupboards will help your child to find things more easily.
- Always praise your child for having a go, as well as when they succeed.
- When talking about dressing use the same language each time and be sure your instructions are short and clear.
- Lay your child's clothes on the bed in the right order with the backs facing up to help them get started.
- Tell your child it's ok to ask for help if they need it & practice makes perfect.

Buttons

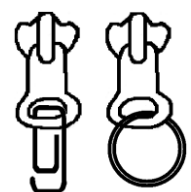
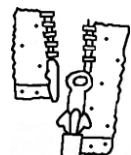
- Begin practicing on bigger buttons and looser button holes first, before trying smaller buttons.
- Start with buttons that the child can see - leave trouser buttoning until last.
- Sit or stand in a stable position
- Hold a button with your thumb and index finger of one hand, while your other hand holds the matching buttonhole.
- Use one hand to push the hole over the button and the other hand to push the button through the hole.
- The hand that pushed the button can swap to pull the button.
- Keep pulling from both sides until the button pops out.



Tip: to help your child locate the correct button to its hole, mark them with coloured thread.

Zips

- Start by doing 'closed end' zips, encouraging your child to use two hands.
- Zip larger zips first.
- Sit or stand in a stable position
- Pull the zip down to the bottom of the garment.
- Bring both sides of the garment together.
- Hold the tag with one hand and put the other side of the zip into the slot, making sure it is firmly placed.
- Hold the garment bottom with one hand and pull the tag up to the top of the garment



Tip: enlarge the zip tag using a paperclip or key-ring to make it easier to hold.