

## Dressing Skills

Your child needs to have good manipulation/dexterity skills, good grip, appropriate hand strength and good bimanual skills in order to dress themselves. See our 'Fine Motor Skills Programme' advice sheet for ways to encourage the development of their fine motor skills.

### Dressing Advice

1. Undressing is easier than dressing.
2. Breakdown tasks into simple steps.
3. Ensure clothes are not too tight.
4. Encourage regular routine. Do each task the same way each time. Break down steps.
5. Ensure stability so that your child feels safe. Find the best position, e.g. on the floor.
6. Talk about each step, e.g. 'put your left arm in', and 'pull up your trousers'.
7. Lay out clothes in the correct sequence.
8. Colour code back of garment to prevent things being put on back-to-front.

### Additional Activity Ideas

- Encourage dressing up – not too large.
- Use quoits/small hoops for practicing putting on and pulling up the arms and legs.
- Do the same with a tube of T-shirt material (cut sleeves off an old T-shirt). Try pulling up a tube of material as a false sleeve.
- Use large hoops, stepping into and pulling hoop over the head and in reverse.
- Clip clothes pegs on to clothing and ask child to remove them, especially around the waist and shoulders, to encourage rotational reaching.

### Fastenings

#### Buttons

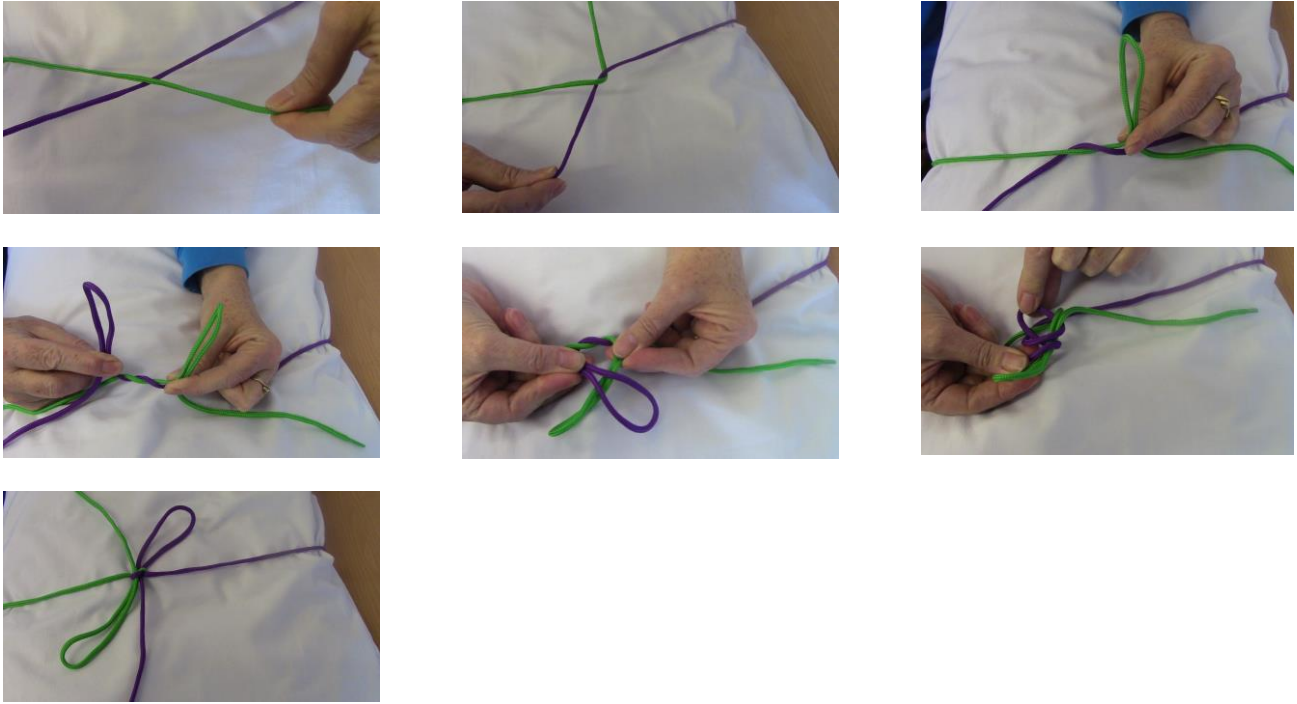
1. It is easier to undo buttons first; push the button into the hole halfway and remove button from buttonhole, then undo independently. Opposite for doing up buttons.
2. Flat, textured buttons are easier to grasp.
3. Try with large buttons first.
4. Progress from large to small buttons.
5. Replace button holes with Velcro and sew button on outside.
6. Practise activities that promote a pincer grip e.g. posting pennies into a money-box.

#### Zips

1. Encourage child to look at both ends of the zip and zipper – slide the zip into zipper all the way down to the bottom edge.
2. Grasp inserted zip and zipper together firmly and pull up zip with other hand.
3. Consider adding a keyring or novelty so your child has something larger and easier to grasp and pull.

#### Laces

1. Use two different coloured laces so your child can see what they are doing easily.
2. Tie the laces around a cushion or teddy and place on their lap so they can see easily.
3. Break the task down into stages – give demonstration, use verbal instructions to reinforce movements and directions, guide child's hands through the movements. Be patient.
4. Cross the laces over in an X shape and tie in a knot.
5. Form a loop on either side of the knot with each of the coloured laces.
6. Cross the loops over in an X shape and tie a knot.



7. Alternatively, try curly laces, elasticated laces or lace toggles.

## Contact details

### Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

Patient Experience  
University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust  
Longfleet Road  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH15 2JB

Telephone: 0300 019 8499

[www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk)

**We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499 or email [patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk) for advice.**

**If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email [patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk)**

---

Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: **Rebecca Shelton** Date: **February 2021** Version: **Five** Review date: **February 2024** Ref: **199/21**

t: 01202 665511 w: [www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk) : @UHD\_NHS : @UHTrust : @uhd\_nhs