

DRESSING AND FASTENERS

Typical milestones for dressing and fasteners:

- 1 Year Old** – Cooperates with dressing, removes socks and shoes, holds out arm for sleeve
- 2 Years Old** – Removes coat, removes shoes if untied, helps push pants down
- 2 ½ Years Old** – Pushes down elastic waist pants, attempts to put on socks, unbuttons one large button
- 3 Years Old** – Unbuttons clothing, buttons 1 inch buttons, puts on shoes (may be wrong feet), puts on/takes off t-shirt with help, zips and unzips a zipper (does not yet engage the zipper)
- 4 Years Old** – Takes off t-shirt by self, uses buckles and engages zippers, knows front and back of clothing
- 5 Years Old** – Dresses and undresses independently
- 6 Years Old** – Buttons back buttons; ties shoes

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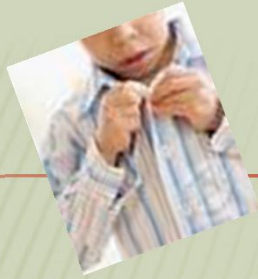
If either dressing or fasteners are a new skill, consider using a visual schedule. Each of the steps can be broken down with a “mini schedule”; for example, *Putting on socks*.



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL DRESSING

- ❖ Teach small chunks until independent and then chain them together.
- ❖ Practice on clothing that is not being worn by the child; i.e., learn fasteners when clothes are laying on a table or hanging over the back of a chair or when being worn by someone else.
- ❖ Never try to teach a skill if you are in a hurry. Bath time and bed time are often more successful.
- ❖ Try to eliminate distractions.
- ❖ Developmentally, undressing comes before dressing.
- ❖ When your child is ready to start practicing, use clothing that is loose and fasteners that are oversized.
- ❖ Be patient. Offer lots for praise for trying!





FASTENERS

Buttoning



In order to master the concept of passing the button through the hole, you can start with something like a paperclip. Using thumb and index finger, have your child pass the paperclip through the buttonhole and pull through with the opposite hand. Once he/she has that motion, practice using large buttons on parent's clothing, then loose fitting clothing on self, and then progress to small buttons being worn by your child.

Engaging a Zipper

To engage a separating zipper (such as a jacket/coat), tell a story! Show them the "mouse" (the part that you insert into the zipper pull) that needs to run into the "mouse house" (the bottom part with the zipper pull). Your child needs to hold onto the "mouse in his house" (hold firmly together) and "pull his tail up" (pull the zipper up). Again, starting with the item on their lap or table in front of them is a bit easier. Just make sure it is facing the way it would face if they were wearing the garment!

RESOURCES

- ❖ <https://sites.google.com/a/nwresd.k12.or.us/autism/using-visuals-for-teaching-routines> - This website contains sample visual schedules for dressing.
- ❖ <http://www.canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/resources/chainning.pdf> - A PowerPoint with helpful suggestions and a progress chart.
- ❖ <http://www.whattoexpect.com/toddler/photo-gallery/dressing-skills.aspx#> - Helpful tips for dressing.
- ❖ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80ZMLes2UFQ> – YouTube video presentation for teaching fasteners.
- ❖ <http://www.brownsburg.k12.in.us/attachments/article/205/fine%20motor%20skills1.pdf> – Scroll down to the dressing section for helpful tips.