



The Development of Dressing

Age	Skill	Strategies
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Holds foot up for shoe, arm out for sleeve ➤ Likes to pull shoes and socks off ➤ Pushes arm through sleeves & legs through pants ➤ Puts own hat on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talk about what you are doing as you dress and undress your child ○ Loose socks (i.e. elastic at the top) are easier ○ Give your child time to perform tasks; avoid jumping in and doing everything for them.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finds armholes in T-shirt ➤ Purposefully removes shoes (if laces untied) ➤ Helps push down garment (pants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A loose-fitting top may be easier ○ Avoid buying pants with tight elastic ○ May need assistance over the hips initially if nappy is bulky.
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Removes pull-down garment with elastic waist ➤ Tries to put on socks ➤ Unbuttons one large button 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have your child sit down to pull pants over their feet once pants are over the hips ○ Avoid socks that are too tight.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Puts on T-shirt, with some assistance ➤ Needs assistance to remove T-shirt ➤ Puts on shoes (may be wrong foot) ➤ Puts on socks with difficulty turning heel ➤ Buttons large buttons with large holes ➤ Able to use zipper 	<p>T-SHIRTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid t-shirts with a tight neck opening ○ To take off, try crossing arms over at the hips, grasping the shirt, and pulling up to make the arms point straight to the sky. <p>SHOES & SOCKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Try marking all left or right shoes (e.g. with nail polish inside on the heel) and telling you child which foot the mark goes on. ○ Identify with your child characteristics of shoes to help when putting them on (eg buckles go on outside, maker's logo on outside, toes point to the middle). ○ Purchase socks with different coloured toes and heels. <p>BUTTONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice buttons and zips on pyjamas, teddies/dolls, and dress-ups ○ When buying pyjamas, choose ones with large buttons and loose button holes. <p>ZIPPERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adapt zippers by adding a ring (curtain or key ring) or ribbon to small zipper attachments to make it easier to grasp and pull.

3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finds front of clothing most of time ➤ Snaps or hooks front fastenings ➤ Buttons series of 3 to 4 buttons ➤ Dresses with supervision 	<p>FINDING THE FRONT!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Look for clothes with the tag at the back/picture on front, ○ pants with a drawstring/zipper at the front, ○ underwear with a decoration at the front. <p>BUTTONING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If buttoning a shirt, line up the bottom hole and button first, then work upwards. When we're learning, buttons outside visual range are more difficult to do up. <p>PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remember: be patient and give your child time – don't jump in! ○ Think about the dressing sequence: eg underwear first, then shirt, shorts, socks, and shoes. What will be the most logical order? For example, it will be easier for your child to tuck in a shirt if they put the shirt on first and then pull pants/skirt on over the hem of the shirt.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Removes pull-over garment by self ➤ Puts on socks – heel correct ➤ Puts on shoes – little assistance ➤ Laces shoes – practices with shoes off ➤ Consistently knows front and back of clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Try socks with a contrasting colour on the heels ○ Remind your child the buckle or velcro is on the outside of the shoe.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Puts on pull-over garments (e.g. T-shirt) by self ➤ Dresses unsupervised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teach the same method consistently
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ties a bow ➤ Does fastenings at the back (e.g. back zipper, back button, apron string, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decide on one method and use it consistently (i.e. – standard 'one loop' method or 'bunny ears'/two loop method).
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Selects clothes appropriate for the weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss the weather before your child gets dressed. Discuss why a particular item of clothing may/may not be appropriate.

Reference: Dunn Klein, Marsha (1983) *Pre-Dressing Skills Revised*. Communication Skill Builders: Arizona.

