

# DOING LAUNDRY

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

**Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.**



Did you know daily routines and activities are a great opportunity to support STEM learning? You can talk about STEM ideas and use STEM words as you go through the day.

Doing the laundry is a wonderful opportunity for young children to build feelings of independence. It is also a wonderful opportunity to embed STEM learning opportunities, such as **matching, or categorizing** while **exploring** colors and **textures** through **comparing and contrasting**.

Children learn new things when they practice them in daily routines and activities. Try one or two of the following activities. With a little bit of practice, daily routine activities like doing the laundry can become a natural place to talk and learn about STEM. Use these ideas to set up the environment and materials to best suit your child's needs.

## ACCESS/ENVIRONMENT WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

- Place clothing items and/or laundry basket within reach in a contained space for easier access
- Use stool if your child can't reach the washer and/or dryer
- For children with low muscle tone, use a pillow or rolled up towel to support their trunk and body if seated



# DOING LAUNDRY ADAPTATIONS

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## MATERIALS

### WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- Use adaptive devices (e.g., reacher, sock aid, dressing stick) to help children pick up clothing items
- Use braille tags to help children with visual impairments find or organize the clothes
- Place an anti-slip mat below the basket(s) so it does not move

## INTERACTIONS/INSTRUCTION

### WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

**Note: Communication may include the use of words, signs, gestures, and different types of cues (e.g., touch, object, movement, visual, etc.)**

- Narrate/sign your child's actions as they interact with clothing items
- Use a variety of methods of communication (e.g., sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage your child
- Communicate with your child at eye level
- Speak/sign slowly, emphasize keywords, and wait for a response
- Praise your child's efforts with words, facial expression, and/or body language
- Make eye contact and smile as you talk to your child
- Provide hand-over-hand support or be physically close by if needed to help guide your child sorting and/or moving clothing items
- Support children with communication challenges and/or visual impairments by using actual objects or pictures to represent steps of the routine
- Consider using visual cues or a tablet with pictures of the objects to signal next steps and/or each step of the sequence (see following pages)
- Use Braille on the visual cue cards to support children with visual impairment
- Model and demonstrate how to do the steps of the routine



*Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.*



*Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.*



*Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.*



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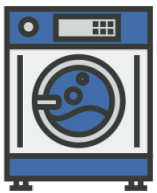
# VISUAL CUES

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- Gather dirty clothes



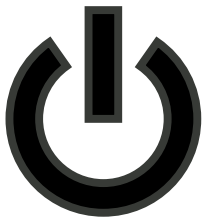
- Open washer



- Add soap



- Add dirty clothes



- Turn on washer



- Hang up or move to dryer to dry



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## VISUAL CUE

## USE TO SIGNAL NEXT STEPS

**Compare & Contrast**

**Sort**

**Notice**

**Same**

**Different**

**Match**

**How many?**

**Count**

**Washer**



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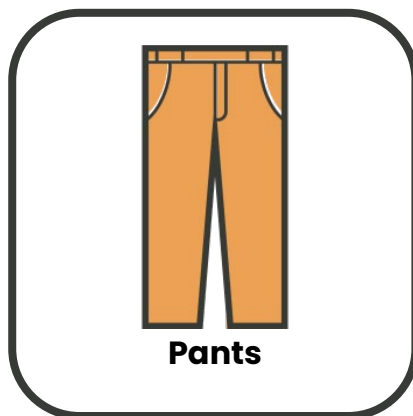
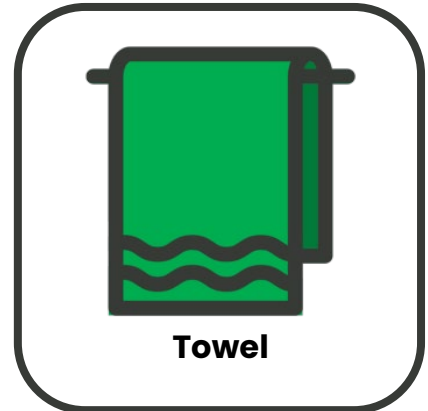
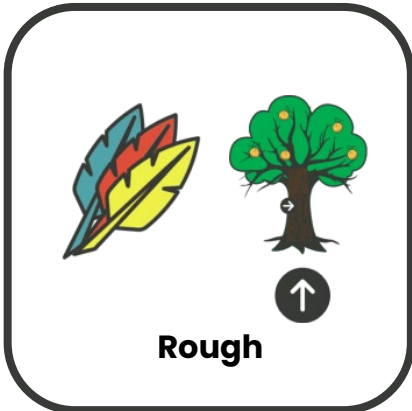
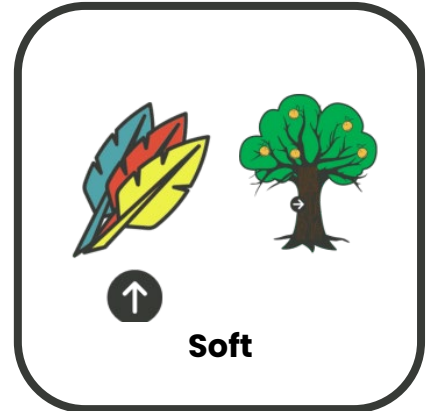
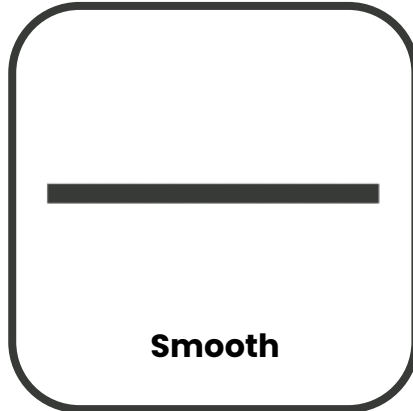
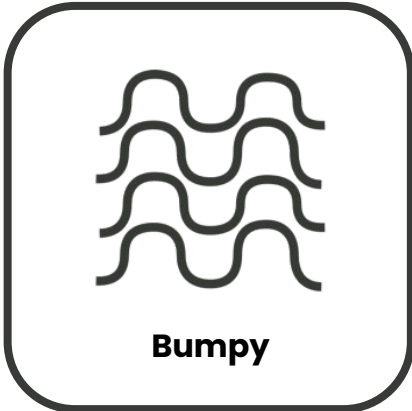


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## VISUAL CUE USE TO SIGNAL NEXT STEPS



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## EXPLORATION

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### ***Laundry Sorter***

**Description:** Help your child recognize that clothing items come in ***different colors, sizes, shapes, and textures***. Encourage your child to ***classify and sort*** into piles clothing items based on one category, such as texture, which family member wore it, color, or some other category that interests your child.

#### **What My Child Is Learning!**

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to participate in doing the laundry. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as math skills.

Talk about the variety of clothing items. Ask, "*What types of clothing items do you **notice** in the laundry? **How many** of each? Who do you think this clothing item **fits**?*"

If your child does not ***classify*** independently, encourage them to put all the clothing items of one ***color, size, texture***, or wearer together. If your child still does not sort, model sorting by one attribute (e.g. color) and encourage children to keep sorting the remaining clothing items. Ask, "*What do you **notice** about the laundry? **Same/Different? Color? Size? Texture? Smell?***"

If your child sorted the clothing items by the color, encourage your child to think about how else they could sort the clothing items. "*Hmmmm, I noticed you sorted the laundry by the color. The white shirts over here and the blue shirts over here. I wonder how else we could sort the laundry? Maybe we could **classify them by texture**.*"



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# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- Check out our Daily Routine Explorations for Getting Dressed
- Check out these books about clothing:
  - *Clothing of the World* by Clara Cella
  - *Clothes Around the World* by Clare Lewis
  - *Clothes in Many Cultures (Life Around the World)* by Heather Adamson
- Check out these books about laundry:
  - *Maya's Magical Laundry Basket (The Adventuristas)* by Carolyn Florey & John Garrity
  - *Lost in the Laundry: The Story of the Separated Sock* by Grace Liska-Verdu
  - *Henry Helps With Laundry* by Beth Braken

