



GETTING DRESSED

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



ABOUT THIS ROUTINE:

Getting dressed is a great opportunity to support STEM learning! Talk about STEM ideas and use STEM words as you and your child choose and put on clothes together.

Getting dressed is a perfect example of computational thinking! Just like following a recipe, getting dressed works best when we **follow the steps** in the right order. Talk through the steps together: "**First** we put on our underwear, **then** our shirt (or pants), then our socks, and **finally** our shoes." Ask your child: "What do you think **would happen** if we tried to put our shoes on **before** our socks? What if we put our coat on before our shirt?" Thinking about why the order of steps matters is a big part of computational thinking!

As you help your child put on each piece of clothing, talk about **position** and **direction**. "Put your arm **through** the sleeve. Your tag goes in the **back**. Your buttons go in the **front**. Pull your pants **up**!" Thinking and talking about where things go and how they fit together helps your child develop spatial orientation skills.

STEM LEARNING AREAS:

Computational Thinking: Concepts involved in programming computers and coding.

Math: Concepts related to numbers, patterns, shapes, and space, and how to use them to solve problems

- **Spatial Orientation:** Understanding the relationships between different positions of objects or things

Every child is different. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested daily routine. These are only suggested activity adaptations. Consider consulting your child's care team first.



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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ADAPTATIONS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

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

ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENT

- Place materials within reach in a contained space for easier access
- Use stool if your child can't reach the sink
- Allow your child to sit on the bench or chair while putting on shoes, if they need trunk support
- Ensure your child is sitting or standing in a stable position while putting on clothes. If your child needs support in maintaining balance in sitting or standing posture, you can try:
 - Letting your child sit or stand against the wall or corner
 - Letting your child sit or stand on a firm surface

MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- Use shoes with Velcro or other adjustable type opening
- Use adaptive shoes (Consult with your PT)
- Use dress aid to help the foot slip into the shoes
- Using elastic band to help your child's hand attach to the brush
- Clothes that are loose, tagless or have elastic that are comfortable for your child
- Clothes that have large buttons, and buttonholes or use Velcro
- Use adaptive devices (reacher, sock aid, dressing stick) to help children pick up, put on, or take off clothes)
- Use braille tags to help children with visual impairments find or organize the clothes

INTERACTIONS OR INSTRUCTION

- Narrate or sign your child's actions as they interact with clothing items
- Use a variety of methods of communication (sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage your child
- Communicate with your child eye level
- Speak or sign slowly, emphasize keywords, and wait for a response
- Praise your child's efforts with words, facial expression, or body language



Adaptations are simple changes you can make to your child's space, toys, or activities to help them stay engaged and learn STEM ideas and words during daily routines.

Quick Tip:

Communication may include the use of words, signs, gestures, and different types of cues, such as touch, object, movement, or visual.



More

INTERACTIONS OR INSTRUCTIONS →



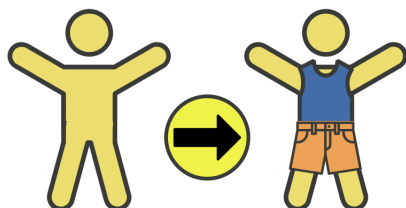




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VISUAL CUES FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

USE TO PROMPT



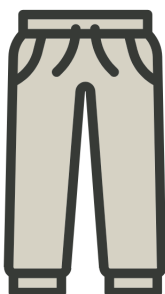
Get dressed



T-shirt



Shorts



Pants



Jacket



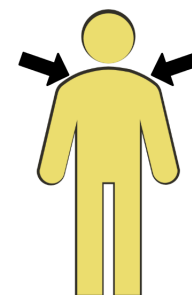
Socks



Shoes



Head



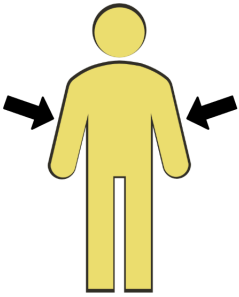
Shoulder



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VISUAL CUES FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

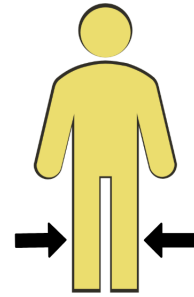
USE TO PROMPT



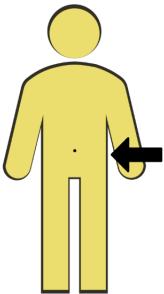
Arm



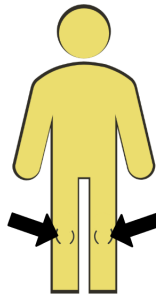
Hand



Leg



Stomach



Knee



Foot



Need more visual cues?

Visit [STEMIE's Visual Cue Library](#) or check out STEMIE's tips for creating and using visual supports with [A Guide to Visual Supports](#).



GETTING DRESSED

ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

1 – BABY DRESSER

Description: Help your infant to **notice** their **body parts** and how clothing keeps them **warm, dry, and protected**. Narrate what you are doing and name body parts as you dress your baby.

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 getting dressed. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

As you dress your infant, narrate each step out loud, naming **body parts** and clothing items: "**First** I am going to put the hat on your **head**, **then** I am going to help you put mittens on your **hands**!" Say, "Let's put your **arm through** the sleeve. Now the other **arm**!" Help your infant begin to make connections between **body parts** and the clothing that covers and protects them.

Watch for your infant's cues. They may show curiosity and engagement by looking at a clothing item, reaching for it, or kicking when a familiar item appears. Respond warmly. These back-and-forth moments not only help your infant begin to connect words, body parts, and the world around them, but helps establish positive relationships with them.

2 – TODDLER DRESSER

Description: Help your toddler to **notice their body parts** and explore the **function** of each piece of clothing — **where** it goes, **what it covers**, and how it helps their **body** meet its **needs**.

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 getting dressed. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Before you begin, talk through what your toddler will need to **put on**. Ask: "What do we put on our **feet**? What covers our **legs**? What goes on our **body** to keep us **warm**?" Encourage your child to **point to or name each body part** as you talk about it.

Talk about the **function** of each clothing item and how it **helps their body**: "We put a coat on your **body to protect** you from the **cold**. We put **shoes** on your **feet to protect** them when you walk."

Try asking playful questions to encourage your toddler to think critically: "What if we wore our hat on our feet?" Allow them to try and find the answers! Ask: "Which clothes cover your feet? Your legs? Your body? Your arms?" and "What would happen if we went outside without our coat today?"



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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

3 – SOCKS AND SHOES SEQUENCER

Description: Help your infant to **notice** their **body parts** and how clothing keeps them **warm, dry, and protected**. Narrate what you are doing and name body parts as you dress your baby.

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 getting dressed. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Talk through the **steps together** before you begin: "Getting our feet ready is has **steps we follow in a specific order!**" Ask: "Which comes **first?** Socks or shoes? **What happens** if we put shoes on **before** socks?"

Walk through each step out loud together: "**First one** sock, **then** the other, **then one** shoe, **then** the other."

Try intentionally **mixing up the order** and see if your child notices! Ask: "Does something **seem wrong?** What should we have done **first?**"

4 – WEATHER OBSERVER

Description: Help your child notice the **weather** outside and make connections to what they should wear based on what they see and know about the weather and seasons.

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 getting dressed. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Before getting dressed, invite your child to look outside and **notice the weather** together. Ask: "Is **it sunny or cloudy?** **Warm or cold?**" Help them connect what they **observe** to what they should wear: "It looks **cold** today. What should we put on to stay **warm?**"

Encourage your child to choose their own clothes based on the **weather**. Ask: "Why did you choose that jacket? What kinds of clothes do we wear in **winter?** How are those **different** from **summer** clothes?"

Try posing simple problems: "We are visiting Grandma for two days and it will be warm there. **How many** shirts should we pack? Will we need a coat?" "I wonder if tomorrow will be warmer or colder. How could we find out?"



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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- **Mix up steps** and mess up on purpose to help highlight that the **steps need to go in the right order**.
- Sing “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes”
- Check out these books about getting dressed:
 - *I Am the Best At Getting Dressed* by Melissa Winn & Zorana Rafailovic
 - *Getting Dressed* by Pauline Oud
 - *We Can Get Dressed: Putting on My Clothes* by Marion Cocklico

