

# GETTING DRESSED

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.



Image Credit: Keira Burton, Pexels

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

Getting dressed 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 **sequencing, relational concept, matching, or categorizing.**

Children learn new things when they practice them in everyday routines. Try one or two of the following activities. With a little bit of practice, daily routine activities like getting dressed 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.



# GETTING DRESSED ADAPTATIONS

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## ACCESS/ENVIRONMENT

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

- 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/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/stand against the wall/corner
  - Letting your child sit/stand on a firm surface

## 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 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 and/or have elastic that are comfortable for your child
- Clothes that have large buttons, and buttonholes or use Velcro
- Use adaptive devices (e.g., 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



*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.*



# GETTING DRESSED ADAPTATIONS

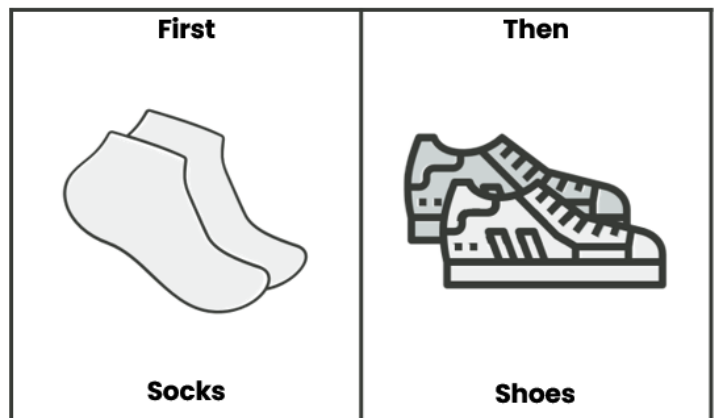
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## INTERACTIONS/INSTRUCTION WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

**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 eye level
- Speak/sign slowly, emphasize keywords, and wait for a response
- Praise your child's efforts with words, facial expression, 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 get dressed/undressed
- 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



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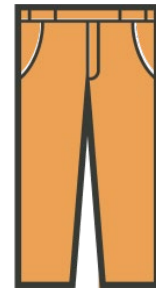
## VISUAL CUES: USE TO PROMPT



Get dressed



Shirt



Pants



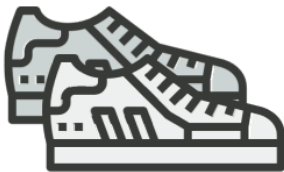
Shorts



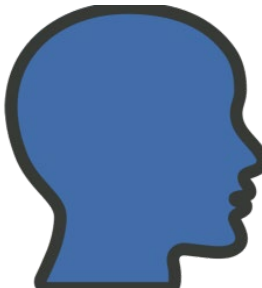
Jacket



Socks



Shoes



Head



Shoulders



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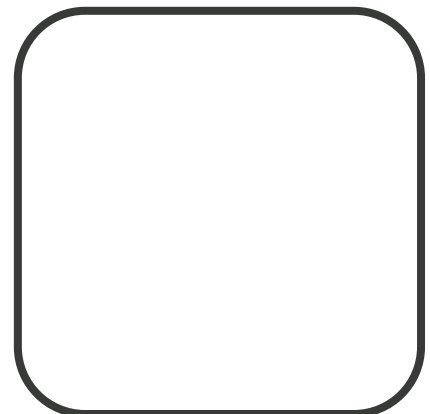
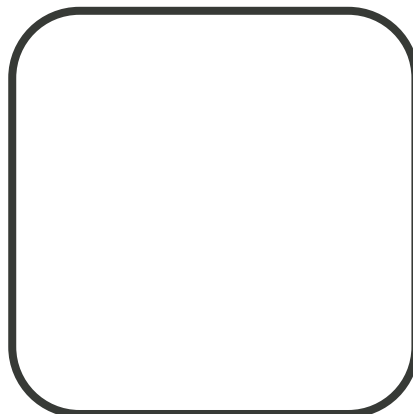
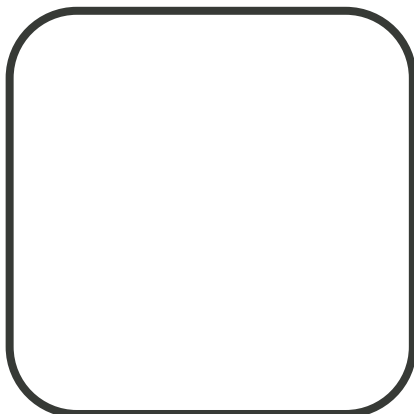
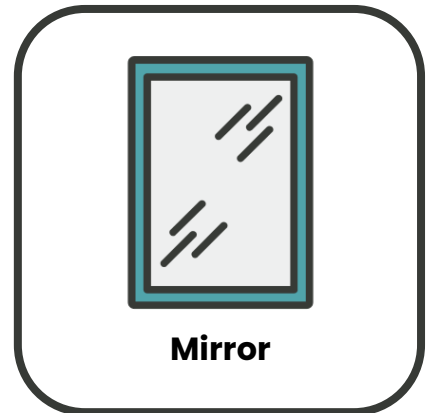
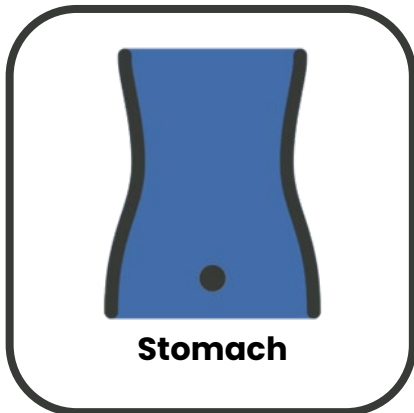
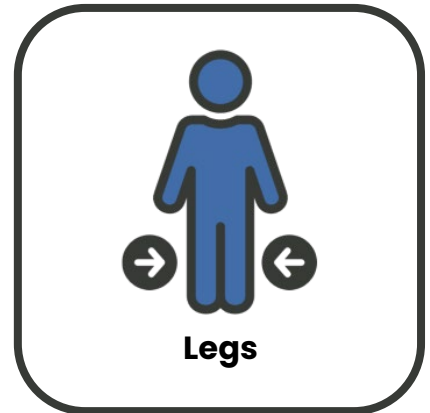
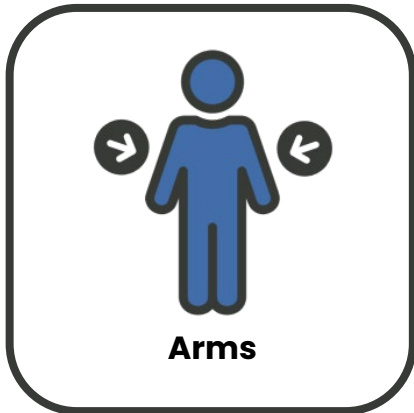


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## VISUAL CUES: USE TO PROMPT



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# EXPLORATION I

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

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## ***Baby Dresser***

**Description:** Help your child recognize that **they can move** their body. Narrate what you are doing **first/next**, and **body parts** as you change your infant whether it is in the morning, after a diaper change, or getting ready to go outside. You may say, "**First** I'm going to put the hat on your **head**, **then** I'm going to help you put mittens on your **hands**."

### **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.

Getting dressed is an important routine that children engage daily. During this time, infants learn by observing what is going on and interacting with their caregivers. By describing your **actions and their body parts**, you are not just helping them make sense of new information and learn **sequencing** but establishing positive relationships with them.





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# EXPLORATION II

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## ***Toddler Dresser***

**Description:** Help your child recognize the **function** of clothing items and **where** they go on **their body**. Talk about what items they are **taking off and putting back on which body parts**. Talk about where to put clothes after they are worn. Ask which clothes/items cover their **feet, leg, body, arm**, etc.

### **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.

Help children build strong connections with the world and experiences by extending their explorations. After narrating, start introducing simple questions to help your children use previously learned information to find answers. Invite them to ask their own questions and conduct their own experiment. For example, you may ask, 'What **might happen** if we put socks on our hands/hat on our feet.' And allow them to try and find the answers.





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# EXPLORATION III

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## *Toddler Prepper*

**Description:** Help your child **notice the weather** and make **connections to getting dressed**. **Give your child a chance to help by simply asking** "Mommy is feeling cold. Can you **help me find** my socks? We are going to the park. **What do we need** to wear before we go out, so we won't get sunburned?"

### **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.

By encouraging your children to become a little helper, we are not just preparing them to become a responsible citizen but setting them up for success. Through helping, your child can practice different STEM concepts, such **as sorting and categorizing clothes, sequencing, counting, relational concepts, how the button/zipper works.**







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# EXPLORATION IV

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## Dresser

**Description:** Help your child **notice the weather** and make **connections to getting dressed**. Encourage children to organize the clothes or find the clothes they want to wear for the day. You may pose questions such as, **'Why did you choose this jacket?'** **'What would happen if you didn't wear enough clothes?'** **'What types of clothes do we wear in summer/winter?'** **'I wonder what we should pack to go stay over with Grandma for 2 days. It will be very warm there! How many shirts should we pack?'**

### 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.

Encourage your child to **choose or organize** their own clothes can help them develop independence and build their **scientific reasoning and thinking skills**. You can do this by integrating questions and problems for your children to **solve**. Children's STEM learning starts with curiosity. Use questions to guide their investigations and advance their scientific discoveries. Remember to encourage them **to explain and report** their findings, which is also an important scientific inquiry process.





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# EXPLORATION V

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## Putting on Shoes

**Description:** Help your child recognize that there are **steps in daily routines**. Encourage your child to **follow the steps**. While putting on your child's shoes say all of the **steps** you take out loud. Talk about the importance of **following the steps in the right order**.

### What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to explore various materials. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Ask **"What should we do first? Next? Then what? Last?"** **"Which comes first? Socks or shoes?"** What would happen if we put on your shoes before your socks? Consider intentionally messing up (e.g., put on shoes without socks) to see if your child notices. It may be helpful to have pictures to illustrate each step of tying shoes (put on sock 1, sock 2, put on shoe 1, shoe 2, etc.). You can help the child in put the pictures in the correct order somewhere where the child can see while putting on their shoes.





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# PUTTING ON SHOES

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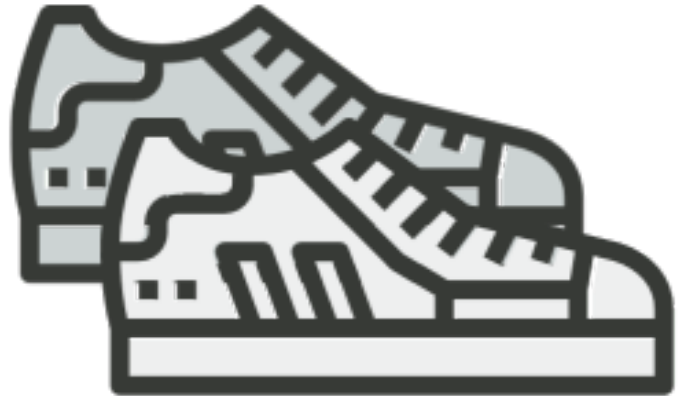
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**First**

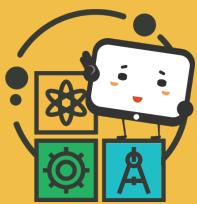


**Socks**

**Then**



**Shoes**



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# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- 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

