

Everyday Early Intervention: Let's Get Dressed

Getting dressed is an everyday activity that is full of opportunities to work on EI outcomes. Getting undressed for the bath, putting on warm clothes for outside play, and changing from pajamas to daytime clothes are opportunities to practice skills. During these moments, your child is observing, trying new physical skills, and talking with caregivers. Here are some ways you can help your child learn and develop new skills during this everyday routine.



Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Encourage your child to try snaps, buttons, and zippers. Children also move their large muscles and develop motor planning skills while dressing. Help your child practice pushing her arms into the sleeves of her coat and balancing as she puts on pants. Sometimes, the skills for undressing are easier to learn. Encourage your child by saying, "Can you unsnap your pants or pull open the tabs on your shoes?"



Cognitive Skills

Practice cognitive skills such as sequencing, visual spatial skills, and matching. Help your child find matching socks, match items by color, and find clothes to put on. Practice first, second, and third. Say, "First put on your coat, then your hat, then your mittens." Be silly and see if your child notices things that do not belong.



Language Skills

Name the articles of clothing, use descriptive words for colors and textures of items, and describe the patterns and pictures on clothing. Introduce words such as *over*, *under*, and *through* as you put on pieces of clothing. Help your child practice following instructions: "Find mommy's boots by the door and bring them over."



Social Emotional Skills

Being able to dress oneself provides a sense of accomplishment and pride. Praise your child when he tries to dress himself. Say, "Good job getting your shoes on your feet!" Let your child decide what to wear. Say, "Would you like the shirt with dots or stripes?"



 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <https://eicclearinghouse.org>

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