

Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Occupational Therapy

### Dressing

*The ability to dress independently is important to a child's self-confidence and self-esteem. While at school, children should be able to dress themselves as independently as possible. Areas of difficulty may include fasteners (buttons, zippers, snaps), sequencing and tying one's shoes.*

#### **Activity Suggestions:**

##### **General Dressing and Sequencing**

- Clothes should be laid out in the order they are to be put on.
- Picture cues may be useful to encourage correct sequence.
- Organizing child's drawers in order may help to encourage independence (i.e. underwear in first drawer, socks in the next, shirt in the next, pants in the next).
- When practicing dressing skills, let the child know how long they will be practicing or use a timer.
- Practice with child's favourite clothes.
- T-shirts with logos, pictures or buttons make it easier to tell the front from the back.
- Until child masters fasteners it may be easier to use clothes that the child can put on independently (pull on pants, pullover tops).
- Ensure you have allowed enough time for child to complete task.

##### **Buttons**

- Teach unbuttoning first. Once child has mastered unbuttoning, move to buttoning.
- Keep verbal instructions to a minimum. The three key words are pinch, poke, and push.
- Begin with large fasteners and slowly work towards more challenging smaller fasteners.
- If needed, sew on new buttons that contrast the fabric to make it easier for the child to see.
- Stretchy fabrics (sweater, knits) are easier than stiff fabrics (denim).

##### **Zippers**

- Zipper should be in good condition.
- The length of the coat should allow the child to see the zipper clearly.
- When first learning it may be necessary to "start" the zipper for the child. Then, encourage the child to use both hands (one to zip and one to hold the bottom of the zipper).
- Once the child has mastered this, have the child practice sliding the pin into the shaft of the zipper. It is important that the child has a clear view of the zipper.

## Occupational Therapy

### Tying Shoes

- Use a large adult shoe to practice on. Start with the shoe on the child's lap.
- Shoe tying should be practiced daily. The number of times will vary depending on the child's frustration tolerance.
- Cotton laces are easier to tie than nylon laces.
- If you and your child are the same hand-dominance you can sit beside your child. If you are different it may be easier to sit in front of the child so the child can mirror your actions.
- Generally there are two methods of tying. Tying two loops together (bunny ears) or making one loop and putting the second lace around and through the loop. You may find it easier to teach your child the method you use.
- A **backward chaining approach** may help to give your child the confidence he/she needs to complete the task of tying his/her shoes.
  - You would complete the whole task except the last step (i.e. pulling of the two loops).
  - Once the child is able to do this correctly, you can add the step immediately before (i.e. pulling the second loop through the hole).
  - Backward chaining means that the child will always complete the task successfully.
  - The steps will vary depending on the method of tying used.
  - It is important that the child watches all the steps of the task so they can begin to learn them before trying these steps themselves.