

Although it can be inconvenient to do so, it is important to support your child with dressing themselves. It will greatly increase your child's independence if they can manage to put their own coat, gloves or wellies on at preschool, nursery or school.

Small steps

As with most things children benefit from repetition and structure. It may seem obvious to us but a child might need reminding at first to pull their pants up before their trousers or leggings so they don't get in a tangle. Something called backward chaining can be helpful here. This means breaking down putting on an item of clothing into set steps that you follow in the same order each time you can even always start with the same leg or arm. Support your child to do the last part that they can manage, for example pulling up a zip that you have started for them or pulling up their trousers from the knees and gradually get them to do more and more of the steps for themselves. Narrating the steps as you do them will also help to embed them.

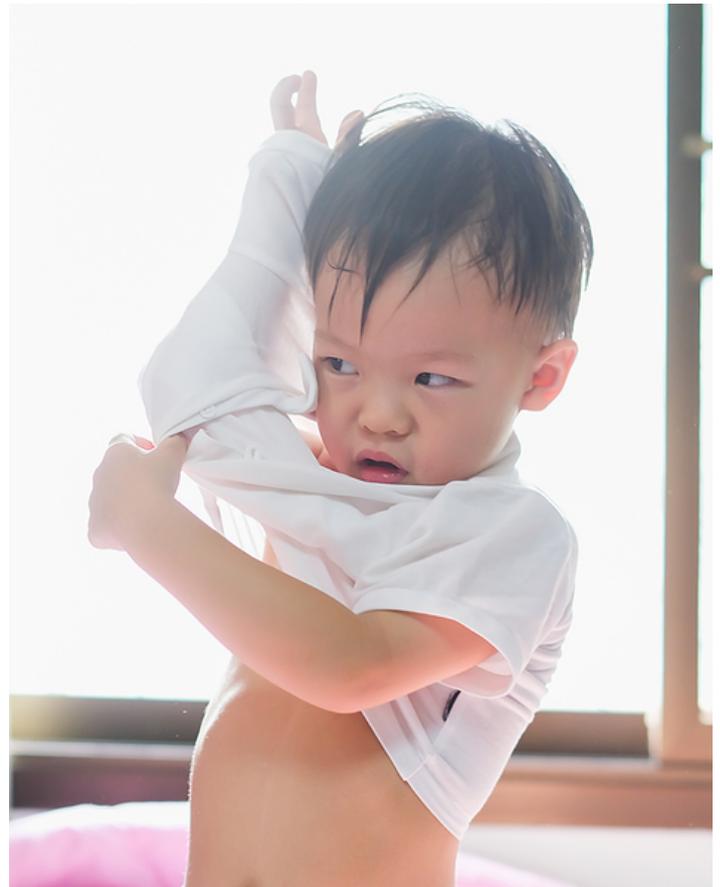
Make it easy

Limit the choices you offer your child or pick clothes out the night before if this usually requires a degree of negotiation. Thank goodness for uniform! If your morning routine doesn't allow for dressing unhurriedly, let them dress themselves for bed and at the weekends when pressures may be less.

Start off with loose fitting clothes, elastic waists or easy fastenings like poppers or velcro, rather than buckles, zips and laces. This is especially important if children are transitioning to using the toilet. Sitting down to put on bottoms or shoes can help.

Lay clothes out in a way that facilitates chaining and point out things that will help them tell the front from the back for example, motifs, labels or buttons.

If your child's coat has a hood, pop it on their head to make it easier to get arms in the right holes. Many children love the Montessori way of putting on a coat where it is spread out inside up, with the top closest to their feet, then they slip arms in and flip the coat over their head.



At preschool

Your child's preschool should be able to support the development of dressing skills as long as you apply the same principles of easy to manage clothing. At Play B C we will encourage children to put on their own coats, shoes or role play outfits as much as is possible.

Keeping it going

Praise your child's efforts with dressing even if things are on back to front or on the wrong feet.

Play B C Preschool where every day is a learning adventure.

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