



Self-care checklist:

Dressing development/ activities to support development

1. Awareness of body schema

- Body awareness songs (head, shoulders, knees, and toes)
- Massage/ sensory massage
- Proprioception activities such as jumping, bouncing on a ball, use of body sock
- Deep pressure

2. Awareness of movements such as up and down, in and out

- Body awareness songs (hokey cokey)
- Up and down songs or exercises, consider using a hula hoop, parachute, or ribbon wands
- Putting items into a box and then taking them out again
- Jumping in/out of a hula hoop on the floor/ stepping into the hoop and pulling this up and over their head
- Target practise activities

3. Participation in dressing skills

- Use visuals to go through sequence
- Use a mirror to reinforce visual feedback and body awareness
- Use backward chaining techniques so that the child completes the last step of the dressing sequence such as pulling up their trousers once trousers are over the knee, and then pulling trousers up from below then knee, and then putting in one leg, then both legs, then doing the whole task
- Practise undressing as this can be easier and there's usually less time pressures with undressing
- Play dress up games and activities

4. Laterality and crossing midline

- Body awareness songs (hokey cokey)
- Practise reaching across the middle of the body to get toys (may need to gently hold down one hand to encourage reaching with the opposite hand)
- Place stickers on each arm and encourage taking them off (requires opposite hand)
- Encourage wiping the table or the board using two hands together
- Dancing/ movement across the body with both hands (e.g. oops upside your head)

5. Taking a t-shirt off and putting it back on again

- Awareness of in/out, up/down as above
- Use backward or forward chaining approach
- Dressing up games
- If the child has a weaker side – weaker arm should go through the sleeve first, then over the head, and then the stronger arm should go through the other sleeve

6. Taking trousers/underwear off and putting them back on again

- Awareness of in/out, up/down as above
- Use backward or forward chaining approach (see step 3)
- Postural stability – it is easier to coordinate putting on trousers in sitting position on a chair, bed, or sat in a corner on the floor
- Lower limb stability – if putting on trousers in standing the child will need to be able to weight bear and balance on one leg. It can help to practise hopping and balancing activities to work on strength and balance

7. Managing socks and shoes

- Thumb isolation; practise thumbs up activities, pressing down leap frogs or play doh with thumb and then each finger

- Oppositional movement (one hand pulls one way, and the other the other way), practise ripping paper, stretching monkey noodles/ TheraBand
- Hide toys inside the sock to practise movements and rescuing toys
- Practise with trainer socks first, or try socks with the corner and toes coloured as a visual cue

8. Managing zips

- Oppositional movements (pulling down with one hand and up with the other), practise ripping paper, stretching toys, opening packets, or unzipping pencil cases
- Fine motor activities and grasp; practise inset puzzles, hand strengthening exercises, or use a keyring or ribbon to support grasp
- Busy board activities, hide toys in zipped compartments to increase participation
- Hooking zip into place; consider painting or putting tippex at the bottom of the zip to increase visual feedback. Practise with hand over hand approach

9. Managing buttons

- Hand strengthening activities such as play doh/ theraputty exercises, or use of hand strengthening toys and fidgets
- Pincer grasp activities such as finger feeding, posting coins, placing pegs on a peg board
- Oppositional movements (pulling fabric one way and the button the other way before pushing the button through) see activities above
- Practise with a button snake, busy boards etc. Always use large buttons first, and cut the hole bigger if needed to increase confidence

10. Tying shoelaces

- Bilateral coordination skills (use of two hands together) through activities like cup stacking exercises and building with magnets
- Fine motor activities such as posting coins, placing pegs on a peg board, threading activities and lacing activities
- Finger strengthening exercises such as pop its, leapfrog toys, playing keyboard
- Sequencing skills – use visuals, practise following instructions

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