

# Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Resource Pack

## ACTIVITY IDEAS



This pack has been modified with permission from the Paediatric Occupational Therapy team in the North Surrey Locality

Surrey **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

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## Introduction to Activity Sheets

In this section you will find the activity sheets; “Vizzies” (Visual Memory & Visual Perception), “Handies” (Using Two Hands, Hand skills & Letter formation) and “Movies” (Body awareness and co-ordination, Ball skills & Balance). Choose the sheet or sheets identified from the flow charts which can be found in the “The difficulty and what you can do” document. Each sheet contains various activities that can be carried out by the child with adult support. This can be done on a one to one or with a small group of children who have all been identified through the screening flow charts.

The activity sheets aim to:

- Address the areas of need identified using the flow charts.
- Enable schools to implement resources whilst may resolve the difficulties highlighted.

We would advise you complete a variety of activities from the appropriate activity sheet(s) a minimum of 3 times a week.

Please ensure you use the Occupational Therapy Screening Form and the progress record forms which can be found on page 4 and 15-17 of the “The difficulty and what you can do” document. This will enable you to record the activities completed and the child’s progress. This information will be required should you need to make a referral to the OT service in the future.

VIZZIES - VISUAL MEMORY  
VISUAL PERCEPTION

HANDIES - USING TWO HANDS  
LETTER FORMATION

MOVIES - BALANCE  
BODY AWARENESS & CO-ORDINATION  
BALL SKILLS

# VIZZIES ACTIVITY SHEETS

## VISUAL MEMORY



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**These activities have been put together to improve visual memory skills.**

**They can be done in any order and should ideally be practised about 3 times a week for 10 – 15 minutes.**

# 1

## Card Games



Play card games such as Snap, Happy Families, Uno and Picture Lotto.

# 2

## 'Pairs' Game



Use a selection of matching pair cards. Place several sets of pairs face down on the table, mixing them up as you do this. Encourage the child to take it in turns with you to turn over two cards, trying to find a pair. Whenever a pair is not found both cards should be put back on the table, facedown. Whoever finds a pair gets to keep the two cards. The winner is the person with most pairs when all the cards have been used / picked up. Gradually increase the number of cards used to increase the challenge.

# 3

## Threading



Adult threads a sequence of beads. Allow the child to view the sequence before covering it. Then encourage the child to reproduce the sequence. Gradually increase the number of beads used, to increase the challenge.

# 4

## Kim's Game



Place some everyday items on a table (e.g. key, spoon, cup). Encourage the child to remember as many of the items as they can. Remove one item without the child looking. Ask the child to identify the missing object. Try to increase the number of objects used to increase the complexity of the game.

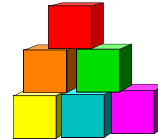
# VIZZIES ACTIVITY SHEETS

## VISUAL MEMORY



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 5 Coloured Cubes



Provide a sequence of objects e.g.; picture cards, Lego bricks or coloured cubes- begin with sequence of two. Allow the child to view the sequence. Cover the sequence and encourage the child to copy the sequence from memory. Increase the number of objects in the sequence to increase the challenge.

## 6 Jumping Sequence



Make a hopscotch template with masking tape or draw hopscotch squares on the floor with chalk. Colour, number or letter the squares to clearly differentiate them. Demonstrate a sequence of jumps from square to square to the child. Limit this initially to 2-3 jump steps. Then ask the child to copy your jump sequence. Increase the difficulty by increasing the number of squares used in the jump sequence. Increase the fun by encouraging the child to demonstrate a jump sequence for you to copy and ask them to tell you if you have done it correctly.

### Equipment needed for Vizzies – Visual Memory:

- A lace and coloured beads for threading
- Letter\number\picture cards for pairs
- Everyday objects e.g. key, cup, pencil
- Large paper squares with colours/numbers/letters
- Masking tape
- Coloured cubes/ Lego bricks
- Card games –UNO, Snap, Happy Families, Picture Lotto.

## VISUAL PERCEPTION



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Visual perception is our ability to understand and to use the visual information that we see. It is important for handwriting skills, such as letter formation and spacing, as well as reading and maths.**

**These activities can be done in any order and should ideally be practised about 3 times a week for 10 – 15 minutes.**

### Finding things in a busy background

## 1 (Visual Figure-Ground)

- a) Look at pictures with the child and ask them to find specific details (e.g. look at a page in a magazine or book and 'find the blue jumper' or 'find all of the butterflies'). Increase the challenge by looking at pictures that are more complex and have more details in them.



- b) Produce sheets of assorted letters / numbers and ask the child to find all the reoccurring letter or numbers. Increase the challenge by increasing the number of letters or numbers presented. Try 'word search' books if the child is reading and spelling.
- c) Sort toys into categories – all the cars into one box, dolls into another etc.

## 2 Recognising that an object is the same despite it being a different size, colour or in a different position

(Visual Form Constancy)

This starts to develop at around 7 years and is fully developed by approximately 11 years.

- a. Sorting daily objects eg. different sizes/shapes of knives, forks and spoons etc.
- b. Give the child a picture made from geometric shapes and ask them to find specified shapes within it.
- c. "I spy" games – eg. Ask the child to look for everything that is a certain shape (eg circle, oval, square) in the room around them.



## VISUAL PERCEPTION




Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3

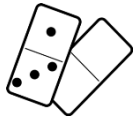
**Understanding how objects fit together, and how they should be positioned, without physically moving them**  
(Visual Spatial Relations)



- Completing shape sorters, form board puzzles or interlocking puzzles. 
- Playing board games such as snakes & ladders or draughts, moving counters around a board to play.

### 4

**Our ability to recognize similar shapes and to be able to 'tell the difference' between shapes and objects**  
(Visual Discrimination)


- Matching and sorting objects by their size, colour, shape etc. 
- Activity books that ask you to 'spot the difference' or 'find the odd one out'
- Use picture cards for games such as 'snap', play games such as dominoes or picture lotto



### 5

**Recognising an object when it is incomplete or part of it is hidden**  
(Visual Closure)

This is fully developed by approximately 9 years.

- Draw some incomplete shapes, numbers or letters on a whiteboard, chalkboard or in sand. Ask the child to guess what the letter shape is. 
- Dot to dot activities. Ask the child to guess what the finished picture will be.
- Draw one half of an object and ask the child to complete the other half

### Equipment needed for Vizzies – Visual Perception:

- Chalkboard/whiteboard
- Paper, Pens, pencils, coloured pencils &/or felt tip pens
- Books/Magazines
- Puzzle books (e.g. Wordsearches, 'spot the difference' and 'dot to dots')
- Shape sorters and puzzles
- Board games
- Pictures cards

## USING TWO HANDS TOGETHER



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**These activities have been put together to improve bilateral hand skills. They should help with skills that require the use of two hands such as dressing, tying shoelaces or using a knife and fork.**

**These activities can be carried out in any order and should ideally be practised about 3 times a week for 10 – 15 minutes.**

## 1 Craft Activities



There are many craft activities that encourage children to use both hands together and are fun and motivating. Try some of the following:


- Paper folding - make paper chains or origami
- Paper tearing – to use for collage or paper maché
- Paper weaving
- Threading – making jewellery from beads/ pasta/ snipped straws
- Sewing cards
- Cutting and sticking activities – for further information regarding scissor skills please see the reference sheet on our website. <http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/childrenandyoungpeoplesot>
- Pencil activities – stencils, rubbings, tracing – try these on a vertical surface
- Sticker books
- Using sellotape/ masking tape



## 2 Musical Activities



Encourage children to use both hands in musical activities such as:

- Action songs such as “Head, shoulders, knees and toes”, “Incy Wincy Spider”, “The Hokey Cokey” and “Wheels on the Bus”.
- Clapping – singing songs that involve clapping e.g. “Pat-a-cake” and “Wind the bobbin up” or “High/low” and “Sailor went to sea”. You could also try copying a partner’s rhythm patterns. 
- Musical instruments – drumming maracas, tambourine. Try copying a partner’s rhythm patterns.

## USING TWO HANDS TOGETHER



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Toys and Games



Encourage children to play with toys and games that require the use of both hands:

- Constructions toys – Lego, Duplo, Stickle bricks, Popoids, Meccano
- Card games
- Wind-up toys
- Rubix cube
- Twister
- Zoom Ball
- Ball games using large balls



### 4 Home Activities



There are lots of everyday activities around that children can do at home which encourage them to use both hands together, such as:

- Cooking – kneading dough, stirring thick mixture whilst holding the bowl, rubbing margarine into flour, using a rolling pin, spreading butter on toast or spreading icing on biscuits.
- Gardening – planting, digging, using a hosepipe or watering can with two hands.
- Bath time water play – wringing out sponges with two hands, squeezing water from bottles with two hands, pouring water from one container to another.
- Household chores – hanging up washing, drying dishes, folding laundry, stacking chairs, using a dust pan and brush, tidying toys.



### 5 Fortune Tellers

Take a square piece of paper. Fold all the corners in to meet each other in the centre. Then turn the page over and fold the corners into the centre again. There should be 8 triangles visible. Lift up each triangular flap and write a secret/clue/instruction underneath. Then label the outside of the flap with the numbers 1-8. Turn the paper over and lift out the four flaps visible. Place your two thumbs and index fingers under the four flaps. Move them apart and together in both directions according to the number rolled on the dice. Open the number visible and read out the 'message'.



## HAND SKILLS



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**These activities have been put together to improve hand strength and finger dexterity, thereby helping handwriting and other fine motor skills.**

**The activities can be done in any order. In order for hand strengthening activities to be effective they must be completed a minimum of three times a week for at least 15 minutes.**

### Theraputty Activities

Theraputty is resistive putty that works on strengthening the small muscles of the hands and fingers. Theraputty is available online. Most children should start with red putty. If this is too hard, use plasticine or play dough.

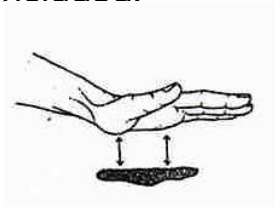
#### **1** Grasp

Squeeze a ball of putty 10-20 times with each hand making sure that all fingers are included.



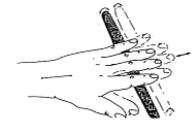
#### **2** Wrist Extension

Squeeze a ball of putty 10-20 times with each hand making sure that all fingers are included.



#### **3** Extension

Roll out a ball of putty into a sausage using the whole hand. Use one hand at a time, then 2 hands together on the table and then try rolling the sausage between 2 hands up in the air.



#### **4** Finger Extension

Use a straightened finger to press into the putty to make holes in it. Repeat with each finger.



## HAND SKILLS



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5 Opposition

Hold putty sausage with one hand. Use the other hand to pinch the sausage between the thumb & index and thumb & middle fingers alternately. Repeat with other hand.



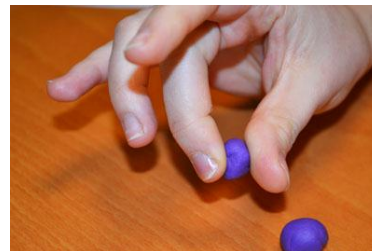
### 6 Tripod Pinch

Place putty sausage flat on the table and pinch the putty into small peaks using the thumb against the index and middle fingers.



### 7 Manipulation

With the child's forearm resting on the table, take small pieces of putty and roll them into balls using only the tips of the fingers and thumb. Repeat with the other hand.



### 8 Other Games and Activities

**Many games and activities require precise movement of the fingers and hands and are motivating for children.**

- Hide small beads/marbles/coins (pocket money is generally motivating!) in the putty and get the child to find and remove them.
- Paper football - Tear up piece of scrap paper, scrunch it up into a ball using fingertips and using the thumb and index finger flick the ball towards a goal.
- Play games with tweezers e.g. sorting small objects, "Operation", "Feed the Dog", "Jolly Octopus."
- Playing with water using pipettes or spray water bottles. Try adding some food colouring or paint and painting pictures using these too!
- Sticker books
- Games such as pick up sticks, "Ker Plunk", "Frustration", "Connect 4", card games



## HAND SKILLS



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**These activities have been put together to practise and improve letter formation skills, thereby helping handwriting skills.**

**Please ensure letters in these activities are consistently formed as per the child's school writing programme. All activities can also be used to practise number formation.**

**A varied combination of these activities should ideally be carried out about 3 times a week for about 10 – 15 minutes.**

### 1

#### Multi-sensory letters



Make and draw letters using lots of senses. The more senses used to learn a letter, the better chance the child has of grasping the physical pattern to make the letter. Always ask the child to write the letter afterwards.

- Try making letters out of pipe cleaners, wikki sticks, sandpaper, playdough, painted string, spaghetti.
- Try drawing letters in cornflour, sand, lentils, shaving foam, paint & glitter.



### 2

#### Variety of Surfaces and Tools



Give the child opportunities to form letters using various mediums and on various surfaces. This helps reinforce letter patterns and keeps letter formation motivating.

- Try using pens, pencils, pastels, paint, crayons, chalk, scented pens, sparkly pens, finger paints, glitter glue, light up pens, vibrating pens.
- Try writing on whiteboards, chalk boards, Magnadoodle & large paper on the wall/ floor.
- Writing on paper with sandpaper /other textures underneath can also give increased sensory feedback.

### 3

#### Letters in the air



Write letters in the air using a rolled up magazine or newspaper as a writing wand. Write each letter three times verbalising the direction and sequence of the strokes (i.e. up, down and around) and saying the name and sound of the letter.

### 4

#### Rainbow Letters



Use a variety of colours to draw over and over a particular letter to make a rainbow letter. An adult may need to draw the letter first so that the child traces over it accurately.

Preferably do this activity when standing with the paper / chalkboard secured vertically at shoulder height.

## HAND SKILLS



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4 Magnetic Letter Fishing

Child to 'catch' a letter with a magnet tied to a piece of string, identify the letter and then write it onto paper using the correct formation. If you do not have magnetic letters, write each letter onto small squares of card and attach a paper clip to each letter.



### 5 Wet, Dry, Try



Based on the "Handwriting without Tears" concept devised by an American OT.

Adult draws a letter on a chalkboard.

**WET** - Ask the child to clean the letter off the chalkboard using a "wet" sponge, following the correct letter formation.

**DRY** - Then ask the child to use a "dry" sponge to dry over the letter, following the correct letter formation.

**TRY** - Then ask the child to "try" using a small piece of chalk, to trace over the letter on the chalkboard.

This is also available as an iPad app. If using this encourage the child to alternate between using a stylus and their finger.

### 6 Car Track Letters



Make large letters out of paper and make them look like roads. Get the child to "drive" cars along the road, around the letter following the correct letter formation.

### 7 Water Letters

Get the child to form letters on the pavement or playground using water and a paintbrush, hosepipe or spray bottle.



### 8 Ready, Steady...Write!

For further information about handwriting skill development and additional activity ideas to support this, please refer to the "Ready, Steady...Write!" programme available on our website.

<http://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/childrenandyoungpeoplesot>

# MOVIES ACTIVITY SHEETS

## BODY AWARENESS AND COORDINATION



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

These activities have been put together to practise and improve co-ordination skills and body awareness. These skills are needed to navigate around the environment.

They can be carried out in any order and should ideally be practised about three times a week for 10-15 minutes. They could also be incorporated into P.E lessons.

### 1 Simon Says



Practise identifying body parts through game of Simon Says e.g. Simon says touch your left arm.

### 2 Body Image



Child draws around a partner's body on a large piece of paper and then labels the body parts.

### 3 Ball Pass



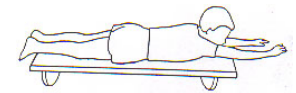
Child to pass a ball around their body. Adult to reinforce with prompts for over, around, behind, under, through. The "over and under" game could also be played with a group of children.

### 4 Animal Walks



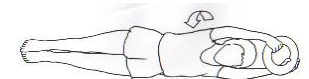
Child to adopt animal positions and move as animal does.

### 5 Bench Pull



Child lies on low bench on tummy or back. Child pulls self along bench using hands.

### 6 Body Roll



Child lies straight with arms above head. Child rolls over and over trying to move body as one.

Child can hold a ball or ring while rolling and once lying on their backs, bring themselves up to sitting, then throw it at a target.

## BODY AWARENESS AND COORDINATION



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 7 Star Jumps



Child to complete star jumps. Begin with legs only. Once achieved bring arms in.

If struggling, complete slowly prompting child to stand tall like a soldier then jump out like a star. Continue slowly.

### 8 Dog with sore paws

Child crawls around pretending to be a dog. Adult directs child to lift their right hand and left hand at the same time and then their right knee and left knee at the same time as shown in the picture below. You could try and keep crawling while you do this.



### 9 Twister

Play Twister, how long can the child play for without falling over? Adult directs child to place left hand/right hand and left foot/right foot on different colours.



### 10 Obstacle Courses

Create an obstacle course for the child using the resources available e.g. climb through hoops, walk along a bench, crawl through a tunnel. Give verbal instructions for the child to follow. Encourage the child to create their own course.



### 11 Tug of War

Play tug of war with the child using a rope. Provide gentle resistance to their pull.



## BALL SKILLS



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

These activities have been put together to practise and improve ball skills.

They can be carried out in any order and should ideally be practised about three times a week for 10-15 minutes. They could also be incorporated into P.E lessons.

### 1 Keep in the air

These activities help to develop eye tracking skills.

- Blow bubbles in the air for child to burst using two hands.
- Keep a balloon in the air by patting with their hands.
- Throw a light scarf for the child to try and grab before it touches the floor.

### 2 Bean Bag Throw

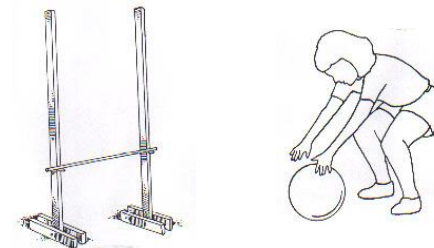
Throw a bean bag into a bucket or hoop on the floor a short distance away. As the child improves, move bucket further away and use a smaller bucket/hoop.

### 3 Target Practise

Throw a ball/bean bag at a target on a wall. Target should be same height as the top of child's head. Begin with 1.5m distance and increase as child achieves.

### 4 Ball Rolls

Roll a ball between partners sitting opposite each other, or roll a ball through a goal. Begin at 1.5m distance and increase distance as child achieves. Goal mouth should measure 75cm.



### 5 Ball Bounce



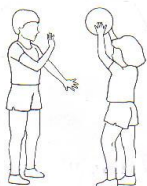
Child bounces and catches large ball with two hands. Once achieved, work towards using smaller ball and bouncing and catching with one hand.

## BALL SKILLS



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6 Throw & Catch

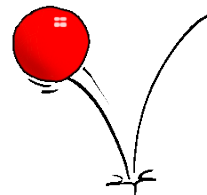


Child throws and catches with a partner. Child uses two hands working towards one handed throw and catch.

Begin close enough for child to achieve. Increase distance and decrease size of ball as child achieves.

### 7 Bounce & Catch

Child bounces ball between self and partner. Increase distance and decrease size of ball as child achieves.



### 8 Ball Kicks

Child kicks a ball between self and partner. Decrease size of ball and increase distance as child achieves.



### 9 Throwing with friends

Stand in a circle with a few other people. Throw a ball around the circle. Try throwing in both directions around the circle. Vary the size of the circle. You can even try adding an additional ball if the child is managing this!



### General Advice for Ball Skill Development

- Balls that are lighter will move more slowly through the air and give the child more time to plan their movements to successfully catch the ball. Progress through catching a light scarf, balloon, foam ball, air filled ball etc.
- Bigger balls tend to be easier for children to catch, however make sure they are not so big that the child struggles to hold onto them!

## BALANCE



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**These activities have been put together to practise and improve balance skills. Balance promotes good sitting and mobility.**

**They can be carried out in any order and should ideally be practised about three times a week for 10-15 minutes. They could also be incorporated into P.E lessons.**

### 1 Hoop Step



Place three small hoops in a line with no gaps. Child to step or jump in and out of each hoop. Increase the distance between hoops as child achieves.

### 2 Balance Walks

Child to walk along a line, round in a circle, in a zig-zag, along a wide bench.

Provide a beanbag to try and balance on their head.

Try walking heel-to-toe along a line.

### 3 Bat & Ball Obstacle

With a hockey stick, get the child to push a ball round a marked course i.e. around two cones.

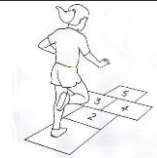


### 4 One Leg Balance



Child to stand on one leg. Time how long and encourage child to beat last balance score.

### 5 Hopscotch



Child hops then jumps on the spot or in number squares. As child achieves adult to request child to hop in a sequence of numbers.

### 6 All Fours



Child adopts an all-fours position, lifts arm to shoulder height and balances for as long as possible. Child repeats lifting other arm. Once achieved child lifts arm and opposite leg and remains balanced. Child should try to lift leg straight and hold at hip level.

# MOVIES ACTIVITY SHEETS

## BALANCE



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6 Twister

Play Twister, how long can the child play for without falling over?



### 7 Feet Pick Up

Child picks up marbles or objects with feet and places them in a container.



### 8 Hoop Skipping

Practise skipping with a hoop. The child should stand with the hoop in front of them, holding it with both hands, then step into the hoop and turn it so that comes over the head and back down in front of their feet again.



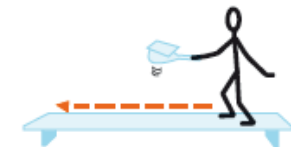
### 9 Obstacle Courses

Create an obstacle course for the child using the resources available e.g. climb through hoops, walk along a bench, crawl through a tunnel. Give verbal instructions for the child to follow. Encourage the child to create their own course.



### 10 Balancing Act

Walk along a bench, balancing a beanbag on a bat. Keep watching the beanbag.



# DRESSING ACTIVITY SHEETS

## HOW TO TIE A TIE



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**These activities have been put together to practise dressing skills.**

**They should ideally be practised about three times a week for 10-15 minutes.**

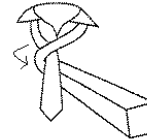
**1**

Place the tie around your neck with the fat end lower than the thin end.



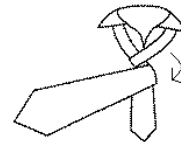
**2**

Wrap the fat end over and under the thin end.



**3**

Wrap the fat end over the thin end again.



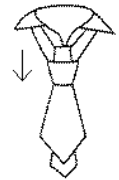
**4**

Pull the fat end up through the loop at the top.



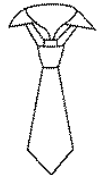
**5**

Pull the fat end down through loop in front.



**6**

Push the knot up and pull on the thin end to tighten.



**Tying the tie this way, allows you to loosen it enough to pull off over your head and then put back over your head and tighten, without having to tie and untie the knot.**

# DRESSING ACTIVITY SHEETS

## TIPS FOR DRESSING



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Forward Training

This means that the child starts the task, e.g. putting on sock and adult helps with later stages the child cannot achieve. The child needs to be motivated to begin this himself.

### Backward Chaining

Here the adult begins the task with the child only doing the last step. Gradually the adult does less so the child has to perform more steps. This way the child always has the reward of finishing the task, e.g. adult picks up jumper, places over the child's head, helps put arms through, but the child pulls it down. Always go at the child's pace and give lots of positive feedback.

### Types of Clothing

- Use 'loose fitting' lightweight clothing. Avoid lots of layers and difficult fastenings.
- Use wide neck holes and wide sleeves to make it easier to locate these. Cuffs can be elastic or have a button attached with elastic thread, so it stretches open when put on.
- Use elastic waistbands on trousers and shirts if buttons and buckles are difficult.
- Velcro / zips can be used instead of buttons or buckles e.g. on a coat, use Velcro and sew buttons on the top flap.
- To avoid shoelaces, Velcro fastenings or slip on shoes can be worn initially.



### SOME PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

#### POOR BALANCE

##### Suggestions:

Sit the child on a bed or chair with his feet supported or sit him on the floor if it is easier for him to reach his feet in this way, rather than bending down to his feet. Alternatively sit him against a wall or in the corner of the room or standing with the wall or a chair for support.

#### CHILD NOT GRIPPING CLOTHES TO PULL ON

##### Suggestions:

Use adult hand over the child's hand to grip underneath adult's fingers. Roll up clothing to create 'more' to grip e.g. roll up edge of jumper before putting on. Put elastic around the cuffs or waist to ease gripping. Use quoits, placing them over arms / legs as a game, pulling them off with the other hand. Use hoops to step into and pull up over the body.

#### CHILD LOSES ARM AND HEAD HOLES

##### Suggestion:

Lay clothes flat in front of the child with the arms showing. Place arms into garment first so they can't be lost. Then put head in.

#### CHILD TWISTS SOCK HEEL TO FRONT OF FOOT

##### Suggestions:

Do not use tight socks. Use marked coloured toes and heels. Use loop on back edge of sock for child to hold as he pulls up sock. Mark top of sock with ribbon threaded through.

## TIPS FOR DRESSING

### CHILD LOSES ARM AND HEAD HOLES

#### **Suggestion:**

Lay clothes flat in front of the child with the arms showing. Place arms into garment first so they can't be lost. Then put head in.

### CHILD PUTS CLOTHES ON INSIDE OUT

#### **Suggestions:**

Use contrasting linings – different colours and textures from outside to inside. Use contrasting sleeve linings from the rest of the lining. Draw child's attention to clothes that are the wrong way round. Use labels inside clothes. Wear T-shirts and sweatshirts that have a picture on the front.

### CHILD PUTS ON CLOTHES BACK TO FRONT

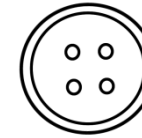
#### **Suggestions:**

Lay garment flat down on table or floor, front down. With bottom edge rolled up to give a good grip and to reveal a special mark on the inside, bottom, front to indicate the front of the garment. There can be a different mark for the back. Use patches of material or different textures for front and back and right and left sides.

### CHILD FINDS BUTTONS DIFFICULT

#### **Suggestions:**

It is easier to do up and undo buttons on someone else's clothes. Start with larger buttons, working down to smaller ones. Use pockets with rewards inside. Practise out of dressing times. Child needs to be able to use a pinch grasp before starting buttoning skill development.



### SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE FASTENING BUTTONS

- Start with large buttons and progress to smaller ones.
- Use backward chaining to teach the skill – e.g. start with the last part of the task first – child pulls button through buttonhole that you have pushed through first.
- Encourage general fine motor development, e.g. picking up small items and posting into holes.
- To reduce initial frustration replace buttons with Velcro fastenings until the skill is learnt.
- Add elastic to buttons at cuff so button can remain buttoned while sleeve is slipped on / off.
- Buttons are easier to grip if flat or textured. Be sure buttons and buttonholes are large enough for buttoning ease.
- Teach buttons at the front, then side and then back.
- Give direction slowly, clearly. Demonstrate first then guide the child, then allow independent practise. Intervene if he is frustrated or else he will lose motivation.
- Emphasise verbal directions; through, push in, pull out.

### **Activities to develop button skills:**

- Post different size buttons through a slot made in the lid of a cardboard box. (The box will catch the buttons).
- Cut out a slot in a piece of card and post the buttons through the slot.
- Sewing cards, threading beads on laces.
- Make a buttonhole on a square of material. Sew a large button onto another piece of material with elastic thread. Practise threading the button through the buttonhole and out again using the two pieces of material. Use bright colours for material and make the button a separate colour that highlights it i.e. red and yellow.
- Make the same again but with a smaller button and buttonhole.
- Use garments of the child and practise buttoning whilst placed in front of him on a table.
- Use garments of the child, whilst he is wearing them and practise buttoning.
- Make an oversized waistcoat with large buttons, and grade buttons accordingly as child becomes more proficient.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE TYING OF SHOELACES

- Provide the child with different coloured shoe laces. For example, buy one black and one white lace, snip the end off and sew them together. You will then have one long lace in two colours. This will assist the child to see what is happening with each lace, visually, so that they do not get the two laces confused during the process.
- Allow him to practise with the shoe in his lap before expecting him to tie the laces with his foot in the shoe.
- Demonstrate the activity from a position next to him, not opposite as the actions are easier to copy from this position.
- Ensure the child is sitting correctly on a stable, firm chair. (Hips, knees and ankles should be ideally at 90°). Or the child should be seated in a supported manner on the floor.
- Elevate the foot with the shoe on to a low surface, to improve his vision of the laces that are being tied and to reduce the distance that he has to bend down to reach his laces.
- Use shortened laces to encourage the child to pull the laces tighter and to make it easier for him to handle.
- Break down the process into steps, ensuring that he masters one step before moving on to the next.
- Allow the child to start the activity while an adult completes it. More steps should be given to him to do independently until he is able to tie his own shoelaces.

### Typing Process:

1. Make sure they tie the lace over the other lace TWICE before they begin to make bows, otherwise the knot will come loose and the bows will fall apart.
2. Make a loop with one piece of lace (call this the 'tree').
3. Wind the other piece of lace (the 'rabbit') around the 'tree' (loop) and through the hole.
4. Take hold of the rabbit and the tree and make one quick hard tug movement away from each other.

