

## BACKWARD CHAINING

### TIPS FOR TEACHING DRESSING SKILLS

Backward chaining is used for teaching dressing skills by breaking them down into steps, which are always performed in the same order. For example, putting on pants can be taught using this technique. First, the dressing task is broken down into small, manageable steps. (Your child's occupational therapist can help you with this and may recommend positioning and/or adapted dressing techniques based on your child's abilities.)

1. Pick up pants by waistband
2. Lower pants and lift up leg
3. Put left t leg into pant hole
4. Put right t leg into pant hole
5. Pull pants up to knees
6. Stand and pull pants to waist

#### In General:

- Undressing is an easier skill to learn than dressing.
- Loose-fitting clothing is easier to manage than tight fitting clothing. Try tighter fitting clothing once your child is confident putting on loose fitting clothing.
- Try to be consistent with the dressing task. For example, encourage your child to start with the same side of the body each time.
- Try to work on dressing at the same time each day, during your child's daily routine.
- Leave extra time so your child does not feel rushed.
- Try to work on dressing in the same location.
- Try to minimize distractions and interruptions.
- Remember to end each session with a success and praise your child's efforts.

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**1** This information is researched by staff of RFECY and is adapted from Your Child's Dressing Workbook. Laura Turner, Brenda Lammi, Kent Friesen, Natalie Phelan. 2001.  
<http://www.canchild.ca/en/canchildresources/resources/chaining.pdf>

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## COMMON DRESSING TASKS BROKEN DOWN INTO STEPS

### Steps for putting on a pull-over/t-shirt

- 1. Pull shirt over head
- 2. Push right arm up through right sleeve
- 3. Push left arm up through left sleeve
- 4. Pull shirt down to waist

### Steps for putting on socks (while sitting)

- 1. Hold sock by edge with both hands
- 2. Push toes into sock
- 3. Lift foot and pull sock over heel
- 4. Pull sock up leg

### Steps for putting on a jacket

- 1. Pull jacket onto right shoulder
- 2. Slip right arm up through right arm hole
- 3. Reach with left arm to pull jacket around
- 4. Pull jacket onto left shoulder with right hand
- 5. Hold collar of jacket with right arm
- 6. Push left arm through left arm hole

### Steps for putting on pants

- 1. Hold pants by waistband
- 2. Lower pants and lift left leg
- 3. Put left leg into pant hole
- 4. Put right leg into pant hole
- 5. Pull pants up to knees
- 6. Stand and pull pants to waist