**Areas of Occupation for Children and Young People**

**Life Skills**

Learning to look after yourself is an essential life skill.

**Key Points for Parents**

* Try to break any tasks down into manageable chunks / steps.
* Keep your instructions clear and simple.
* Remember that there are lots of different ways to learn; demonstration, using visuals, talking though the stages, watching video clips etc.
* Practice when you have lots of time so that the child will not feel under pressure i.e. at weekends or in the evening.

**Self-care**

**Undressing / Dressing**

* Start with undressing as this is usually much easier to manage.
* Ensure the child is in a stable position when attempting dressing skills e.g. sitting on a chair, on the floor or on a firm bed. Once well supported they will feel confident to freely use their hands.
* Elasticated waistbands on trousers (shorts) / skirts are easier to pull down
* Loose fitting clothing is easier to manage than tight fitting clothing. Practice with pyjamas first or clothing that is 1 size to large. Go to tighter clothing once the child is confident with loose clothing.
* Try different techniques or a combination of techniques: hand over hand, modelling the task alongside them, talk through each step of the process, use visuals as a prompt /reminder.
* Try using **backward chaining** i.e. teach the last step of the task first. Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second-last step, then the third-last step and so on. For more information:  <https://canchild.ca/en/resources/305-dressing-work-book>)
* Try not to correct mistakes immediately, give the child a chance to work it out for themselves first. Only help if they get really stuck.
* Problem solve together – discuss what went well or how things may have gone wrong and then how they might try and fix it.
* If clothing is on back to front or inside out encourage the child to look in the mirror and get them to work out what is wrong. Ask questions to help them work it out.

**Dressing Skills Advice Download**