

If you have any concerns about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on Freephone 0800 011 6113

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year contact NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or via www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Our Centres:

Bull Plain Health Centre, Hertford: 01992 528102

Danestrete Health Centre, Stevenage: 01438 737782

Peace Children's Centre, Watford: 01923 470600

Pat Lewis Child Development Centre,
Hemel Hempstead: 01442 230861

St Albans Children's Centre: 01727 891100

Tewin Children's Development Centre,
QEII Hospital, Welwyn Garden City: 01707 328111

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Sensory Strategies

Dressing

Children's Occupational
Therapy Service



Caring for you
... closer to home

Sensory Strategies

- Be conscious of sensitivities regarding texture; buy clothing that you know your child will like (it is more valuable for your child to be at school in an uncoordinated outfit feeling calm than to have your child at school looking beautiful and upset).
- Build a wardrobe of comfortable clothing for your child
- Encourage deep-pressure activities prior to dressing to decrease the tactile sensitivities.
- Wear undergarments inside out to prevent scratching seams and tags.
- Increase hat tolerance through massage of the scalp and putting the hat on in front of the mirror.
- Be aware of audio and visual overload and minimize it.
- Dress the child in front of a mirror to add visual clues to assist with motor planning.
- If your child is having difficulty initiating an action, start the action and have your child complete the action (e.g. pulling up a zip).
- If your child is fearful when body position is changed, dress him or her in one position (toddlers can have their nappies changed in a standing position).

Notes



Ideas for Self Help Skills – for children with Sensory Issues Adapted from 'Building Bridges through Sensory Integration' by Ellen Youch, Paula Aquilla & Shirley Suttan

- If your child has sensitive feet, have them wear socks inside out and wash shoes to make them soft prior to wearing them.
- Try laced shoes because they can be more effectively tightened.
- Cut labels out of clothing.
- Wash clothing in unscented detergent.
- Dry clothing with unscented fabric softener.
- Dry clothing in a dryer to decrease stiffness.
- Choose fabrics like fleece rather than rigid items like denim.
- Be conscious of noises from buckles and over straps.
- Be sensitive to the length of sleeve/trouser leg your child prefers.
- Be aware of patterns in fabrics and distraction the patterns may cause.
- Ensure that the garment fits well; it is not cutting into the skin when your child assumes another position

Other Strategies

- Organise drawers/wardrobes to help enable a child to choose their own clothing.
- Transitions for seasons may take time: discuss it, prepare for it, and use social stories to explain the change.
- Choose shoes with Velcro closures and add Velcro to button backs and hoops to zips for children with fine motor difficulties.
- Organise clothing the night before - lay the clothing out on the bed.
- Encourage your child to put away the clothing so that they know where it belongs.
- If balancing is difficult, have your child sit to put on socks and shoes.
- Colour-code clothing to help your child identify right and left.
- Put labels in your child's clothing to help identify him if he becomes lost.

- Sing the steps while dressing.
- Try dressing dolls or teddy bears to practice opening and closing fasteners.
- Try backward chaining, which involves having your child complete the last step of the activity, then the last two steps etc

