

## Dressing Skills and the JK/SK Student – Lunch & Learn

**Goals:** *What to do we want to achieve?*

1) To transfer knowledge to teachers about:

- the motor demands required to dress/undress
- the typical developmental progression of dressing skills
- facilitating age appropriate independence in school based dressing tasks

2) To help teachers:

- identify students who are not managing their dressing tasks at a developmentally appropriate level
- determine if a student's challenges are due to lack of experience/practice or if there may be possible coordination or other difficulties
- set appropriate expectations and use strategies to facilitate independence around school-based dressing tasks

**Activities:** *How can we achieve the goals?*

1) **Lunch and Learn:** 20-30 minutes seems to be a reasonable amount of time to expect the teachers to take out of their day for a lunch and learn. This can be offered during a nutrition or lunch break, at a team meeting, before or after school. Hands on activities with time for discussion seems to be appreciated by teachers.

**Materials Required** *Have these laid out so teachers can experiment with them as participants are gathering*

- ✓ jackets with large/small zippers and other fasteners
- ✓ shoes with velcro, laces, slip on
- ✓ variety of hats- toques, tie ups, velcro, buckles
- ✓ scarves and neck tubes
- ✓ variety of mitts and gloves
- ✓ boots with a variety of fasteners- slip on, tie up, buckles
- ✓ pants with buttons, snaps and elastic waists
- ✓ variety of backpacks and lunch containers if you feel there is time to address these as well as clothing

**Handouts** DRESSING AND THE JK/SK STUDENT- O.T. TIPS  
PLANNING YOUR CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN WARDROBE

**Content** Use the first handout as a guide for your lunch and learn and provide both to teachers as a resource

1) Ask a teacher(s) to sort the clothing into two piles, what she would like and dislike to see her students come to school wearing.

*-encourage/facilitate discussion:* Would this differ for a JK student and SK student?

- 2) Review the typical developmental progression for dressing- many kindergarten teachers are not aware of this progression, expecting students to arrive in kindergarten able to be fairly independent at the cubbie, at snack/lunch times and in the bathroom.
- *encourage/facilitate discussion*- How did you feel when faced with this challenge? How might this effect your independence at the cubbie? Your speed?
- 3) Illustrate both some of the required motor skills for dressing, and the challenges students may face using hands on activities for example:
- ✓ fastening buttons with rubber gloves or mittens on
  - ✓ standing on one leg while putting on a sweater with a zipper or buttons
  - ✓ if you have time, and want to make this really challenging, have a teacher try to tie a turban on their head after you provide a quick demonstration (you can learn how by searching You Tube- this will illustrate the sequencing of steps required in many aspects of dressing)
- *encourage/facilitate discussion*- Anything surprise you about this typical developmental progression? Does this knowledge impact your expectations for your students?
- 4) MATCH Strategies: introduce the MATCH acronym through demonstration of some of the strategies- allow teachers to try some of the strategies, for example:
- ✓ have one teacher teach another how to tie a turban (or necktie) first without talking, only demonstrating; second using words but no demonstration; third by using words and demonstration and hands on
- encourage/facilitate discussion*- What was helpful? Not helpful? Why? Use this to discuss the need for 2 hands during dressing, step by step, visual/auditory learners, explicit instruction etc.
- 5) Revisit the clothing piles...anything they would change?

### Follow Up Suggestions:

- Offer to visit the classroom at arrival/departure or recess time to identify challenges, trial strategies and provide coaching to the teacher.
- Offer to assist in designing/incorporating activities into classroom centres to provide practice in the classroom-eg. drama/dress up centres, fine motor/fun fingers centres.
- Offer to teach the class a song about the order for putting winter clothes on, with visuals for reinforcement, for example: *(To the tune of "Clementine") First the snowpants, then the boots, then the jacket, then the hat, and the mittens go on last, so we can go outside to play.*
- Offer to have a parent session on how to help your child develop dressing independence, at school and home- use the second handout on planning the kindergarten wardrobe.
- Participate in the kindergarten prep events usually held in the spring for incoming families. Set up two tables demonstrating the do's and don'ts items from the wardrobe handout. This generates a lot of discussion with families about clothing and accessory choices to facilitate independence.

## DRESSING AND THE JK/SK STUDENT O.T. TIPS

### Typical Developmental Milestones:



#### 3-4 years

- undresses independently
- buttons and unbuttons large, easy to get to buttons
- unzips zippers
- needs help with other clothing fasteners such as engaging zippers, snaps and clasps
- puts shoes on correct feet but likely needs help with putting on socks
- manages boots, mittens and hats



#### 4-5 years

- dresses/undresses independently except for back buttons and shoelaces
- able to engage and zip zippers
- buttons, snaps and clasps at top of pants can remain challenging
- inside out clothing can be a challenge



#### 5-6 years

- ties shoelaces (may be later now due to velcro and other shoe fastening options)
- can manage most clothing fasteners, although tight waistbands with buttons, snaps or clasps may still be a challenge



### When Should I Become Concerned?

Depending on experience, family/cultural expectations and clothing choices, children may achieve specific dressing skills and independence at different times. Children with motor coordination challenges will likely require the teacher to implement one or more of the strategies below to guide the child in mastering the developmental milestone of dressing and undressing independently at school.

### To Support and Encourage Dressing Independence at the Locker/Cubbie, Use the M.A.T.C.H. Strategy:

#### **M**odify the task:

- encourage parents to select clothing with a minimum of frustration -minimal number of fasteners, large buttons and buttonholes, large tabs on zippers or addition of zipper pulls, loose fitting clothing with large neck and armholes
- lay the coat on the floor and use the arms in and over head method
- if the coat has a hood, have the child put the hood on their head first, then the coat will hang in a way that makes it easier to place arms in the sleeves
- add visual cues: e.g: put arrows in shoes- when shoes are placed side by side on the floor, the arrows should point to one another; add mark in the back of a jacket or sweater that does not have a label

## Alter Your Expectations:



- allow plenty of time- send the students who find dressing a challenge first to their cubbies/lockers
- lay out the student's clothing on the carpet in the classroom in the correct sequence and orientation

## Teaching Strategies:



- encourage the idea that our two hands have different jobs, helper hands and doer hands e.g: when fastening a zipper, the helping hand holds the bottom of the coat while the doer hand pulls the zipper up
- encourage the use of the “claw fingers” (thumb, index and middle fingers) when manipulating small clothing fasteners
- explicitly teach/model how to manage clothing fasteners using demonstration with verbal cuing to accommodate the visual and auditory learners
- use a consistent step by step method to help the student learn the sequence of dressing
- try backward chaining- have the child complete the last step independently (e.g: pulling up the zipper) to experience success - work backwards from there
- enable success by helping the child with most steps, except the one or two they can do

## Change the Environment:

- allow plenty of space- assign the end cubbie or locker for additional room to organize and move
- try giving the child a chair to sit on for extra stability








## Help by Understanding:

- support the child in understanding there is more than one way to get dressed, and you will help them find the way that works best for them
- reward any effort towards independence made by the child to reinforce the “I can do it” attitude!

## PLANNING YOUR CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN WARDROBE

Kindergarten children take great pride in being able to do things independently. Help your kindergarten student be as independent as possible at school by choosing clothing and tools that allow them to say "I can do it myself!"

	LOOK FOR: 	AVOID: 
<b>SHOES</b>	slip on or velcro	laces and buckles
<b>BOOTS</b>	slip on, velcro straps	laces and buckles
<b>PANTS</b>	elastic waist bands, loose fitting	snaps, buttons, belts
<b>JACKETS/COATS</b> 	large, sturdy zippers  add a zipper pull to make the tab easier to grasp and pull up	snaps, buttons
<b>HATS</b>	pull on  velcro chin straps	tie up chin straps
<b>SCARVES</b>	neck tube	long scarves
<b>GLOVES AND MITTENS</b> 	mittens or rigid gloves  mittens that go over the coat sleeve	tight, stretchy gloves  gloves that go under a coat sleeve
<b>BACKPACKS</b>	large enough to hold lunch bag, mailbag, library book  sturdy zippers- zipper pulls can be added to make grasping and opening/closing easier	backpacks that unzip to the very bottom as these are more difficult to pack  clips and buckles
<b>LUNCH BAG AND CONTAINERS</b> 	big enough to hold lunch and snack foods  plastic drink container with flip up straw  snip corners of pre-packaged foods (granola bars, small bags)  easy to open plastic containers	too small a bag requiring everything to fit in "just right"  pouch drinks and drinking boxes with straws- difficult for kindergarten children to insert