

## Self-Care Skills

Self-care skills or self-help skills are the everyday tasks children do to participate in life activities such as dressing (including fasteners), tying shoelaces, eating/feeding (including opening packages and containers), toilet hygiene and clothing management, simple meal preparation, etc. These skills impact a child's independence at both home and school.

Ways to improve self-care skills include:

- Work on clothing management, shoelace tying, and fasteners at a time of day when your family is less rushed, such as at bedtime.
- Pajamas with buttons are usually easier to learn because of the larger buttons and looser fabric compared to blue jeans and button front shirts.
- Practice with fasteners like buttons, snaps, and zippers on dolls.
- Practice fasteners on clothing placed in front of the child or fitted around a pillow—it is easier for your child to see the fasteners when placed in front of him or her.



- Say the steps aloud to your child as you help him or her.
- Help your child with steps as needed, and slowly decrease the amount of help as your child is able to do more for him or herself.
- Encourage your child to try skills for him or herself before getting help, such as with opening packages, manipulating fasteners, etc.
- Give your child prompts or demonstrate how to do the skill and ask your child to try again.

## Online Resources for Self-Care Skills

- Button Practice: 5 Steps for Kids to Master Buttoning  
<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2020/02/03/button-practice/>
- 5 Gross Motor Activities to Help with Dressing Skills  
<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2016/09/27/5-gross-motor-activities-help-dressing-skills/>
- Tips for Teaching a Child Dressing Skills  
<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2011/11/08/tips-for-teaching-a-child-dressing-skills/>
- Ian's Shoelace Site <https://www.fieggen.com/shoelace/index.htm>
- YouTube videos for shoe tying and fasteners. There are various techniques and tricks. Let your child help decide which method seems easiest and be consistent. Examples:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJVR8hHBQyM>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehwqhHLJY5Y>