



Self Care Dressing Myself

Shoelaces Information for Parents / Carers

Learning to tie shoelaces is hard. Teaching your child how to do it before they need to wear shoes with laces is a good idea. You need to be able to use both hands together to do different jobs. Most children don't have the required hand skills until they are between 5 and 7 years.



Hints and Tips

Before you start:

- Think about the type of shoes you buy. Look for flat laces. These are easier to tie than round laces as they are less likely to loosen between steps.
- Make time to learn different methods for tying laces yourself. There are lots of different ways to tie shoelaces. The way you do it might not work for your child. Or better still, learn to do it a different way together.
- Practice looping the cords on the waistbands of shorts, joggers or dressing gowns. This will get your child used to making that first part of a knot.
- Sometimes using two different coloured laces in the same shoe can help. Or you can stick different colours of tape to the two different ends of the shoelace.
- Make time to practice. Having time to practice shoelaces when you are not rushing to get out of the house can make it less stressful. Give yourself and your child plenty of time before leaving can help. Practising for a short time every day might be better for your child than a long session.

When teaching:

- Get your child to sit down or kneel down when learning to tie their laces. Sitting on a chair or a step might be easier. If you find this really difficult, you could teach them with the shoe on their knee or on a table in front of them. Once they can do this easily, then get them to try with the shoe on their foot.
- Teach your child how to untie their laces first. This is easier.
- Use backward chaining. This is a good way of teaching dressing skills. You start by breaking the task down into small steps. You teach your child the last step first, working backward from the goal. You complete all the steps except the last one. You get your child to practice the final step. Your child will enjoy the success that comes from completing a task. Once your child can do the last step you complete all the steps except for the last two. You teach your child the second from last step and they then complete the last step themselves. Even more success! Keep going until you are teaching the first step and your child is completing all the other steps.

- Children learn in different ways so you might need to vary your approach. There are different ways you can help:
 - Physically assist your child. Put your hands over your child's and help them to tie their laces.
 - Show your child. Sit next to them and tie your laces as they do it.
 - Tell your child. Talk your child through the steps.

Try each of these ways to find what works for your child. Sometimes you might need to use more than one of these methods. Please remember that some children cannot look and listen at the same time. You are aiming to give the least amount of support needed. If you start by physically helping your child, work towards showing them what to do. Then work towards telling them what to do.

- If your child is struggling it can be tempting to take over - **don't!** Give your child time to work it out for themselves. Give them lots of encouragement and hints if you need to. If needed, talk them through what to do and only step in if they get really stuck.
- Instead of automatically correcting a mistake (e.g. wrapping the lace round the wrong way) why not let them finish what they are doing and then try to work out what went wrong. You may need to ask them some questions to help them work it out. You might need to show them what you do and then show them what they did. Exaggerate their mistake so that they can see it.
- There are step by step videos you can watch with your child. Remember you can pause these at any time so your child can do the step immediately after watching it. There are also step by step photograph guides.

Alternative Strategies

If your child still finds shoelaces difficult there are lots of alternatives out there. You can get trainers, school shoes and sports shoes that do up with Velcro in lots of different sizes. Or you can choose slip on shoes to avoid laces altogether. You also get elastic shoelaces and bits to add to laces so you don't have to tie them. You can see some of these below.

Hickies Laces



Xtenex Laces





Greeper Laces



Zubits Laces

zubits magnetic
shoe closures



No Tie Elastic Shoe Laces



Atlas Laces



Shoe Lace Buckle Stopper



Curly Shoe Laces

