



T-shirt and tops

Many children have difficulty learning how to dress with t-shirts and tops.



Here are some ideas to help teach your child these skills:

Practice at first with short sleeved tops with a wide neck opening. Pyjama tops can be a good place to start.

Practice taking tops off first before learning how to put on.

Practice when there is plenty of time, such as on the weekend.

Start with the child sitting down in a chair so that they are stable, particularly when taking things on/off over their head.

Use a quiet place away from distractions

Use a t-shirt with a picture on the front to help the child know which way round to put the top.

Use the backwards chaining method to teach putting on tops. This is when you start off doing most of the task and the child finishes it off. When this last part of the skill is learned you can progress to the child doing the last two stages. Continue with the child progressing to each previous stage until he/she can do the whole task independently. Different families do dressing in different ways, so the stages may alter between families.

Here is an example for how to break down the task:

Parent gathers up t-shirt and puts it over child's head. Child puts arms in and pulls t shirt down.

Parent gathers up t-shirt. Child pulls over own head, puts arms in and pulls it down

Parent places the t-shirt face down on child's lap. Parent prompts child to pick up t-shirt, pull over head & put arms in etc.

Parent hands t-shirt to child and prompts child to put t-shirt face down on own lap.

Child picks up t-shirt to pull over head etc. Parent prompts child to recognize when t shirt is inside out (i.e. picture is on the inside). Parent prompts and supports child to turn t-shirt around the right way.

Progress to using long sleeves.

Progress to using the label in the back as a prompt to see which way around it should be.

Progress to more difficult tops such as jumpers.