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Buttons one handed

Mastering how to do buttons with one hand can take a long time to figure out as it requires good coordination and fine motor control.

Hints and tips

- See General Dressing Skills for general hints and tips.
- Start with larger buttons and with big holes then progress to smaller ones.
- Unbuttoning is often mastered before buttoning.
- Practicing with the shirt on a table or the child's lap with the collar closest to them can sometimes be easier as they can see what they are doing.
- Sometimes wearing a shirt that is tight can be easier to master as the material moves less.
- Buttoning from bottom to top can make it easier for the child to see what they are doing.
- Breaking down the activity into stages and backward chaining are both methods frequently used with success.
 - Break down the activity into small stages (see below)
 - Backward chaining involves you doing all the stages of buttoning apart from the last bit where the child does this – this can work well to give them a sense of achievement
- Focusing on what the child can already do promotes a positive attitude.
- Be consistent in the method – do it the same way each time to reinforce
- Do the buttons next to your child for them to imitate.
- Practice, practice and practice.

Stages

Girls shirt unbuttoning using the right hand

picture	picture	picture	picture
Grasp the material with thumb and index finger until the tips are just touching the edge of the button	Pull the material away from the body	Push the top of the button with the tip of the thumb until you can feel with your index finger that the button is through the hole	Pull the material back towards the body

Girls shirt unbuttoning using the left hand

picture	picture	picture	picture
Grasp the material with thumb and index finger until the tips are	Pull the material away from the body	Push the top of the button with the tip of the index finger until	Pull the material back towards the body

just touching the edge of the button		you can feel with your thumb that the button is through the hole	
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Allow extra time for your child to practice these new skills