

“Good Morning!”

Getting Dressed

Children can be very slow or refuse to put clothes on. Here are dressing tips to help:

- Play a game, get dressed before the timer says, ‘Ping’, or a parent completes a task. “Can you get dressed by the time I finish washing up, ready, steady, go!” Imagine a snake or animal (child’s hand) coming out of the hole, “Look where is the ..., here he is!” A little imaginative game can go a long way. Put on the appropriate clothes yourself (be a good role model to copy); put a sunhat on and your child may imitate. Dress teddy at the same time, teddy puts on his socks too. Start a game when everyone is dressed. My daughter loves hopscotch, she can play outside, but only if she is ready;
- Give a choice between two suitable options, a coat or jumper? Lay all clothes out the night before (choose together as a routine), life is so much easier in the morning! Take the clothes to the child, do not wait for the child to move to the clothes and help to get started, complete tasks if adult help is required. Allow time for new skills, this may mean putting shoes on in the car. When older, with good dressing skills, say “I bet you can surprise me in the morning”;
- Use a sequence chart to help, take photos of all morning tasks. Use a tick chart, not to get a reward, but to focus the child and receive a hug and hurray! Leave a magic wand by the front door, the clothes fairy is checking how you are dressed today; “Yes, you get a wish!” The winter gnome can come and put all the summer clothes away, only the suitable clothes for the season are available. What the child cannot see, she will not usually ask for, or dress herself inappropriately in.

Getting into the car seat (and not putting the seatbelt on)

If a young child is refusing to get into the car, start by looking at your car usage. It is unnatural for a young child to be strapped in, for long periods. At this age the child’s body wants to move and play. Is it possible to build into your routine time to stay at home, to quietly play, or to walk to the park or shops? If car journeys are necessary and avoidance is becoming a pattern, here are some tips to help:



- Buy a car seat bag to place in special car books and toys. Place teddy in the car too, he needs his seatbelt on too. Does toy dolly or doggy need looking after in the back? Buy a new story tape for the car journey, or get a special container of healthy car treats (change the environment to make the car more motivating).

Ideas for getting dressed and into the car with young children

by: Lou Harvey-Zahra

- A routine of playing games - or telling stories - on long car journeys, so that journeys become enjoyable and a time to connect, can be a winning tool. Games can include, sing a song, guess the song, find a blue car out the window, I spy with colours. Play games and supply car books and toys to re-direct and occupy the young child on car journeys.
- "Let us see if we can hear the seatbelt talk, can you hear him say, "Click?" "Ready, quiet now..." Each morning listen for the seatbelt to say, 'hello.' Set up a play scene of car journeys inside, put seat belts on all the toys, and explain how important it is to keep them all safe.
- Explain in an appropriate manner, "Police people are not happy if children do not put their seatbelts on, they love children and want them to be safe. This is why it is a rule." If the child refuses to sit down, or put a seatbelt on, try counting down, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. If a child takes the seatbelt off on a journey, stop at the side of the road, sit silently and wait, "Oh look there is policeman hurry!"
- Have bubbles in the car (in the glove compartment). Blow bubbles when the young child is in the seat, with the seatbelt on. When ready, they can play a little game of catch the bubbles (limit to three blows as a routine and one try themselves). This is not needed every time, only when met with avoidance and a tantrum is around the corner! Although it may become a fun pattern, that the child enjoys each day for a while.

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