

DRESSING



PACKAGE FOR TRAINERS



Towards Independence Series - 7

SKILL TRAINING IN THE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

A PACKAGE FOR TRAINERS

DRESSING

(Funded by UNICEF)

National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped

(Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India)

**Manovikas Nagar, Bowenpally,
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Reprint 2001

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Other titles in the series :

- * Gross Motor Skills
- * Fine Motor Skills
- * Eating Skills
- * Toilet Training
- * Tooth Brushing
- * Bathing
- * Grooming
- * Social Skills

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Printed at : Sree Ramana Process, Secunderabad. Hello : 7811750

ABOUT THE BOOKLET

This book is one among the series of books developed for the benefit of the parents and trainers of the mentally retarded and developmentally delayed children. The activities in which these children are to be trained for independent living are very many. Among them, feeding, toileting, brushing, grooming, bathing, dressing, gross and fine motor activities and socialization are some of the basic and important skills. This series of books provide in a step by step manner, procedures for finding out the delay or deficit in the child and the steps in training them. Simple language is used with appropriate illustrations so that parents and other trainers can easily follow the steps. It should be remembered that the activities listed are some of the basic ones. Common sense and imagination of the trainers will be of great assistance in enhancing the skill in the child. We hope that the trainers find these booklets useful to them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team expresses sincere thanks to UNICEF for funding this project. The advice and guidance provided by the following project advisory committee members periodically during the course of the project is gratefully acknowledged.

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The guidance and suggestions of Dr. D.K. Menon, Director, NIMH are especially acknowledged with special reference. The efficient secretarial assistance in typing out the drafts throughout the project by Sri A. Venkateswara Rao requires a special mention and grateful acknowledgement. The administrative support by Sri T. Pitchaiah, Sri V. Ram Mohan Rao and Mr. K.S.R.C. Murthy are sincerely appreciated. Last, but not the least, we are grateful to the parents of the mentally retarded children who cooperated with us for the field trial of the skill training packages and for having given suggestions for modification which are suitably incorporated.

CONTENTS		PAGE
Introduction	...	1
Check before training	...	2
Design modifications if needed	...	3
Use appropriate methods	...	6
Removing clothes	...	10
Wearing clothes	...	18
Some useful hints to teach buttoning	...	25
Selection of clothes for various activities	...	29
Appropriate selection of clothes for seasons	...	31
Selection of clothes for various occasions	...	34
Selecting clothes from a shop	...	36
Maintenance of own clothing	...	37
Give rewards to strengthen	...	38

INTRODUCTION

Dressing is one of the important skills of daily living that needs to be developed to become an acceptable member of the society. In case of normal children, as he grows, he learns to undress and dress by himself. Gradually, he avoids assistance from others and wants to dress up by himself. He becomes aware of the need for privacy. This awareness motivates him to become independent in dressing.

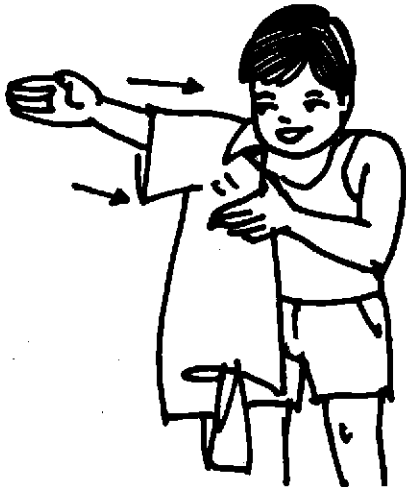
In case of children with mental retardation, due to delayed milestones and lack of initiation, the parents and caretakers take care of most of their activities including dressing skills. Unless proper training is given and children are motivated, they continue their dependence on others even in adolescence and adulthood.

Dressing skills include,

- * undressing
 - * dressing
 - * fastening
 - * appropriate selection of clothes
 - * purchasing
 - * maintaining

Check before training

Check whether the child has proper finger coordination to hold the clothing properly.



Proper shoulder and arm movements are also necessary for independent dressing.

If there is difficulty in proper coordinated movements consult a medical person.



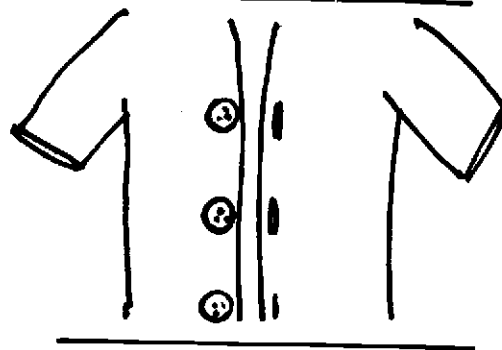
Check whether the clothing items are appropriate for training. The child's ability to follow instructions is essential for training.

Design modifications if needed

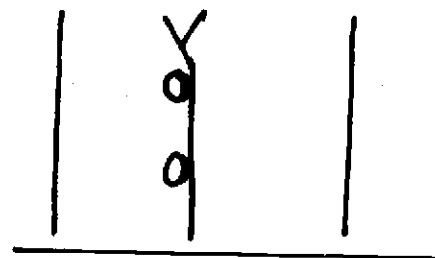
Buttoning may be difficult, when there is poor finger grasp. In such cases buttons can be modified.....



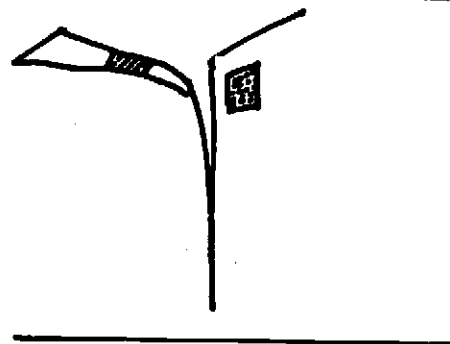
Use large buttons.



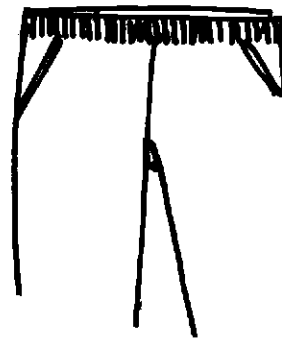
You can have press buttons with shirt buttons stitched on the outer flap.



Velcro fasteners may be used with buttons stitched on the outer flap.



Elastic waist bands may be provided in pants.



In case of poor shoulder and arm movements

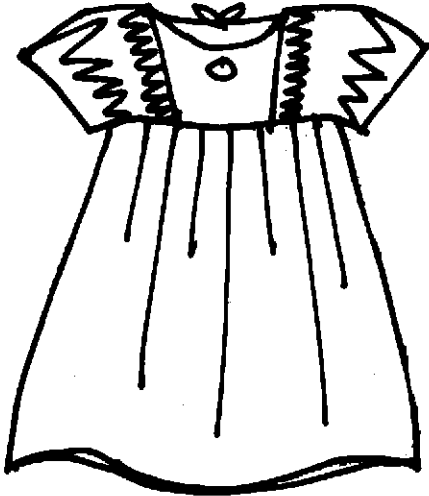
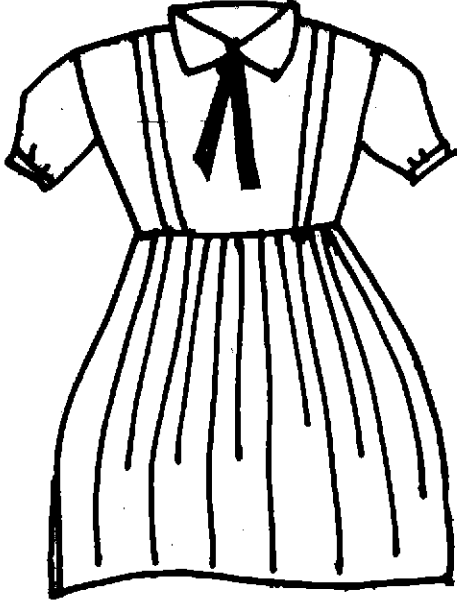
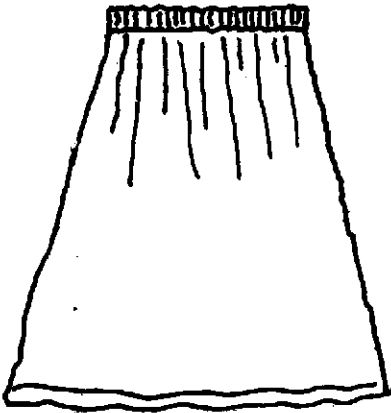
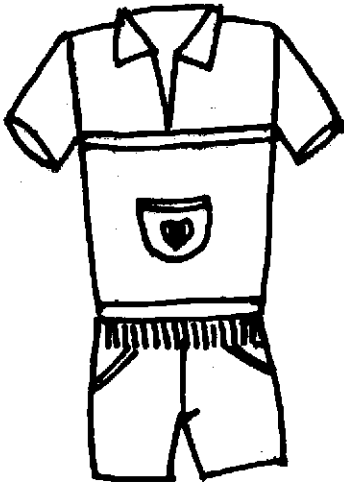
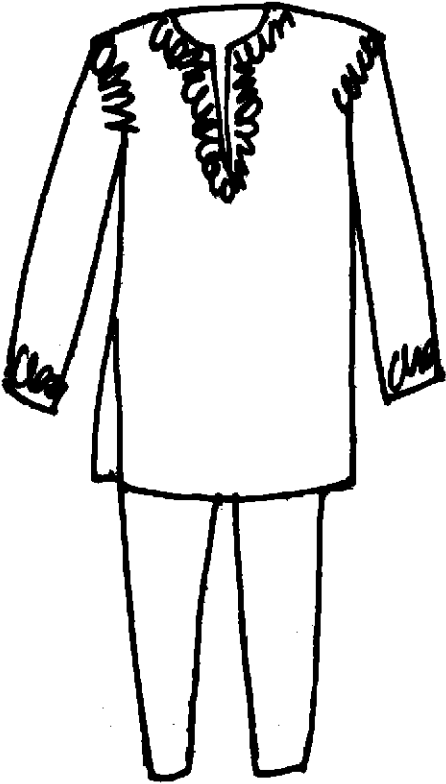
- * Pattern of clothings can be modified.
- * Buttons/hooks at the back of clothing can be avoided.
- * Dress can be designed in such a way that fasteners are in the shoulders.

In case of immobility - if the child is not able to talk, moves on buttocks and has stiffness at joints - clothings are to be designed suitably.

- * Instead for frocks/skirts, the girls can have pyjamas or salwars.
- * Half pants/loose full pants help better movements.

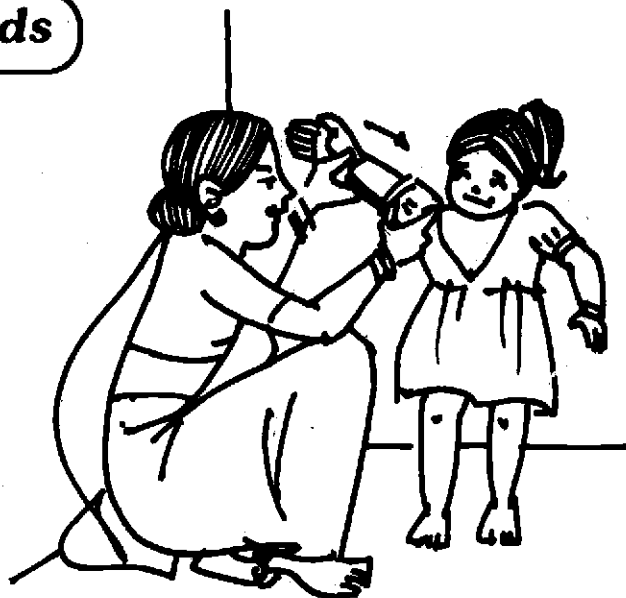
Begin with something that the child knows. When the child extends his arms to insert into sleeve, he is learning. Look for steps forward, as he makes progress.

Patterns of clothing



Use appropriate methods

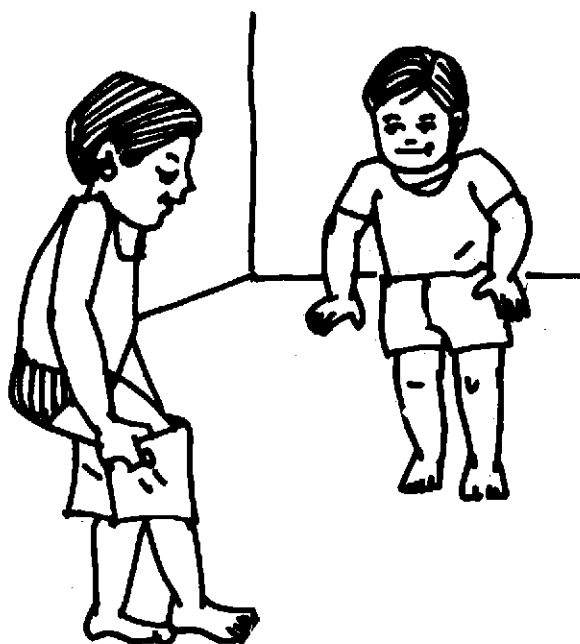
Privacy is a necessary concept to be introduced while dressing. Always remember to take the child to a place where privacy is possible while dressing.



Depending on the age and ability level, get the child's cooperation to stretch hands, lift legs, pull and adjust clothes and select and maintain the dress.



When he is young, allow him to watch how his brother/peer gets dressed. If he shows interest, allow him to try.

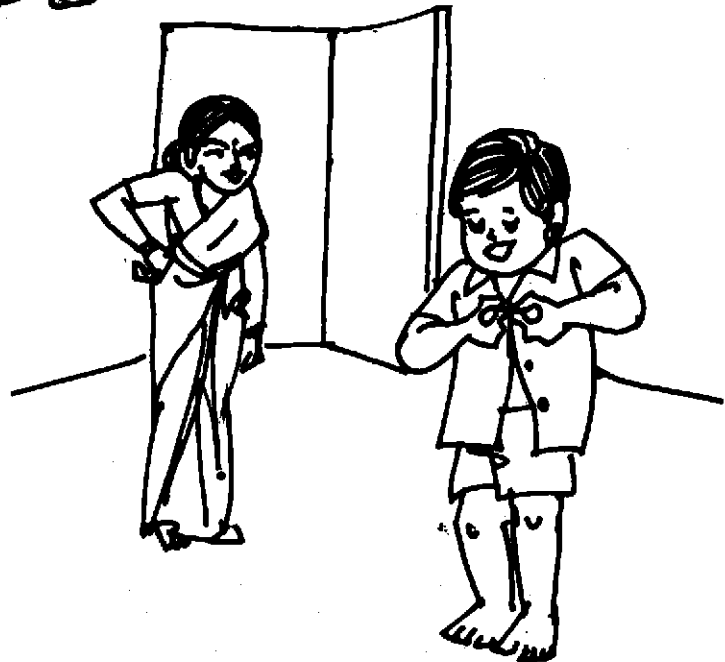


Imitating the model is one of the best ways of learning.

Physically help him to stretch hands, to insert into sleeves, and so on, telling him each step he is performing. Physical help should be gradually reduced. Praise his attempts and efforts.



By reducing physical help, tell him verbally what to do after every step. Instead of verbal instruction, occasional clues also can be given so that the child can understand what to do next. Gradually the verbal instructions and clues also should be faded.



Keeping in mind that the child is under training, all occasions for undressing and dressing should be utilized for teaching dressing skills.

When purchasing clothes from shops, take the child and give him chances to select clothes. Let him learn the size, colour and cost of clothes.



Praise and reward all his appropriate attempts.



**Teach the easier step first and the difficult steps later.
Move from simple to complex.**

Use loose clothing for training

If the child experiences difficulty with some of the dressing sequences, using slightly oversized clothes may help him to manipulate more easily. Make sure that the big size does not look ugly on him.

Oversized clothing will help especially for learning to put on blouses, socks and T-shirts.

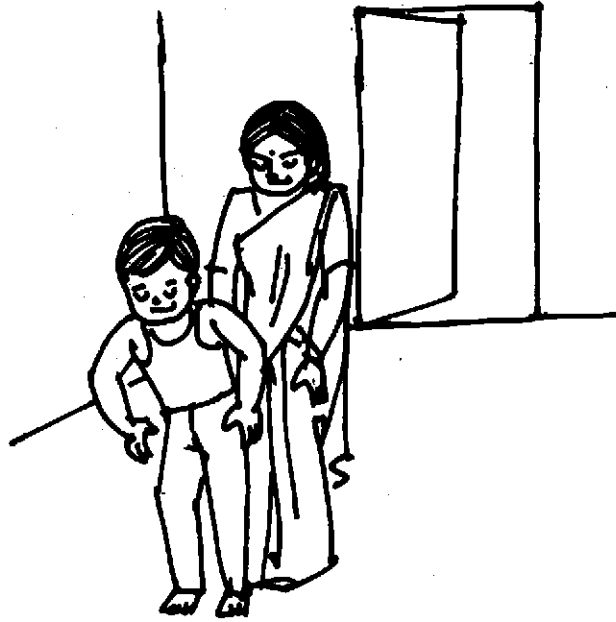


If oversized clothing is used, the entire sequence should be taught with the oversized clothing. When the sequence has been mastered by the child, the clothing should be gradually reduced in size and the clothing of the appropriate size should be provided.

Removing clothes

Removing pants/panties

1. Stand behind the child

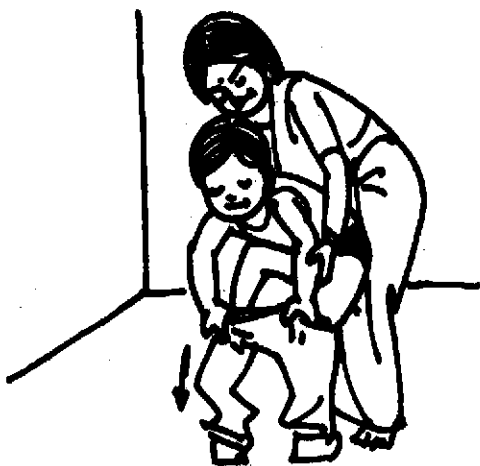


2. Place his hands on the pant on both hips.



3. Place your hands on his hands.

4. Pull down the pant with his hands on pant and your hands on the top of his, saying simultaneously "remove pants".



5. When it reaches the ankle help him to take out the legs one by one.

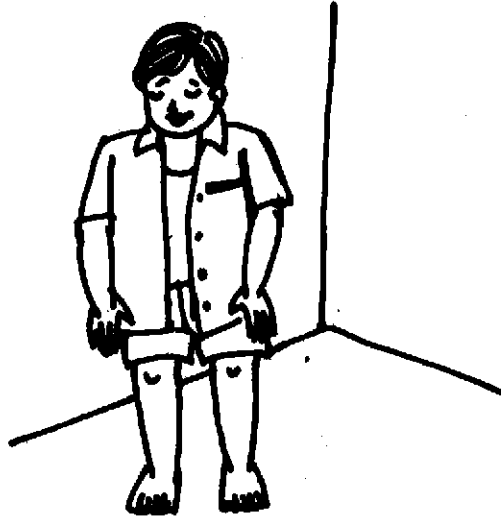


6. Gradually reduce physical help. Say only "remove pants".

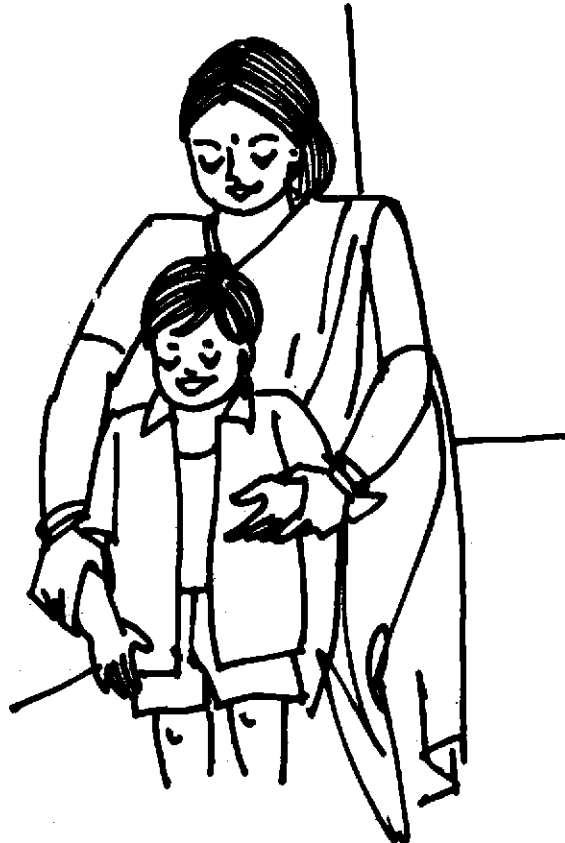
Many children learn to undress before they learn to dress. Be sure they do so at the appropriate times so that they can be encouraged.

Removing unbuttoned shirt

1. Unbutton the shirt



2. Stand behind the child



3. Place your hand on his hand.

4. Take out the left sleeve



5. Take out the right sleeve

6. Gradually remove your hand, and tell him to pull out. Reward appropriately.



Whenever the child needs to remove his shirt, take him to dressing area, unbutton his clothes and tell him to remove by himself. Wait for him to do. Provide assistance only if needed.

Steps to remove banian/T-shirt

1. Holds the edge of the bottom of the T-shirt with both hands crossing each other.



2. Pulls the T-shirt upto the chest using both hands.



3. Takes out the T-shirt over the head.



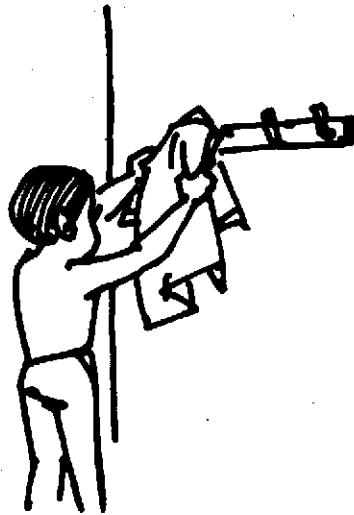
4. Takes out the T-shirt from one hand.



5. Takes out the other hand from the sleeve.



6. Keeps T-shirt in the proper place after removing.



Use these steps explained, to remove frocks also. Initially, physically help him. Gradually reduce the physical help and verbally tell her what to do next.

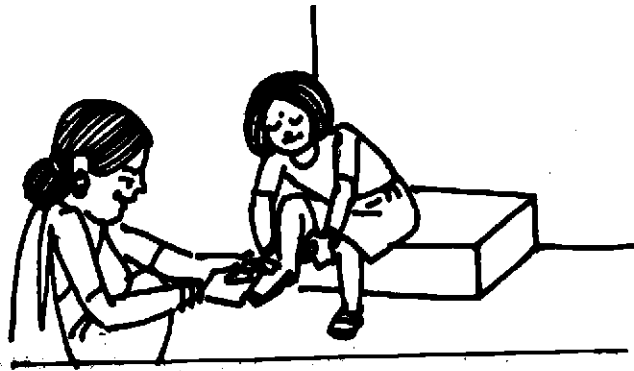
Appreciate him at every step in his attempts and success. If possible, make him stand in front of a mirror while teaching. The need for privacy also should be insisted especially during removing dress.

Always talk about the steps in short, meaningful phrases. 'pull the T-shirt', 'Take out over the head', 'Take out the hand', 'Look you have taken out', 'That's right' and so on.

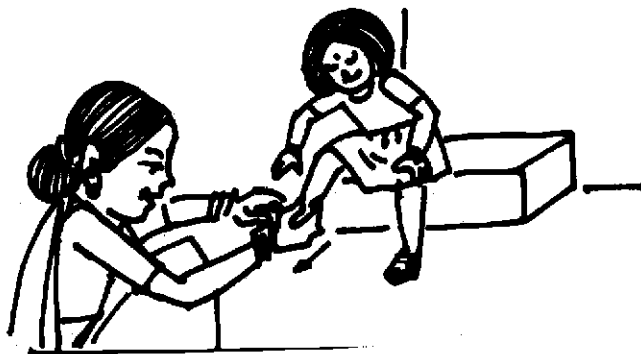
Steps to remove slippers/shoes

(Steps to untie laces/buckles are explained elsewhere in the booklet)

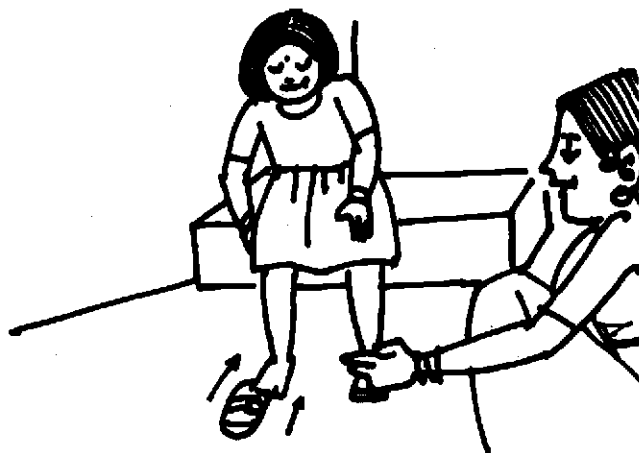
1. If the child wears sandals with buckles, remove buckles.



2. Holding her right leg, take her hand, make her hold at heel and help her to pull off. Repeat it with the left foot.



3. Train her to keep her shoes/slippers in proper place after removing them. Praise her attempts and success.



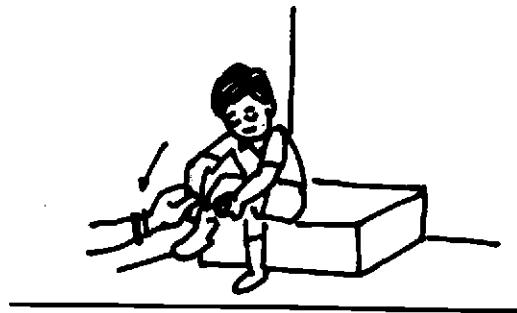
Steps to remove socks

1. As the child learns to remove shoes, train him to remove socks. Make him sit in a comfortable place.

2. Make him hold the top edge of the socks. By inserting thumbs into the socks and holding it bring it down upto the heel.



3. Let him push it through the heel and pull from the toe end.

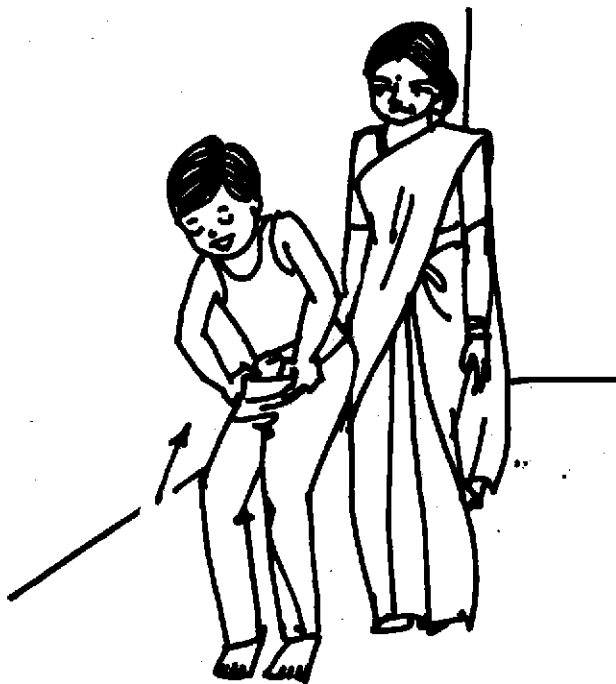
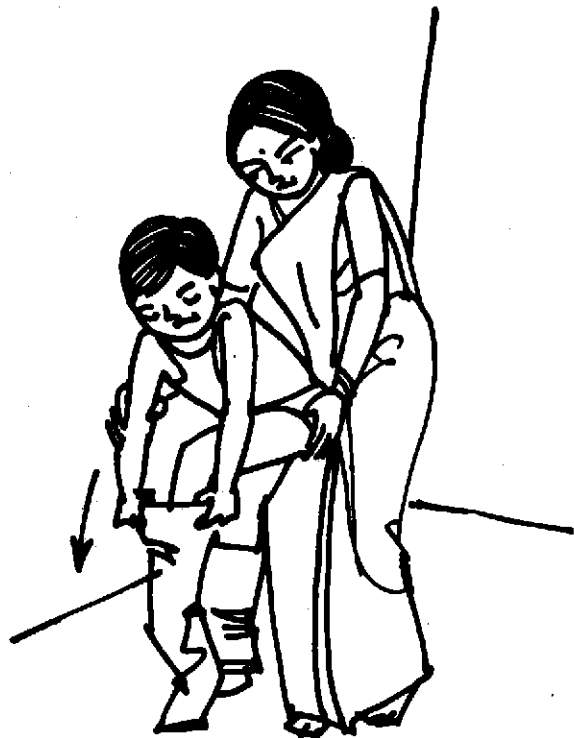


Appreciate his attempts to remove the socks by himself. Reduce the help gradually.

Wearing clothes

Wears panties/underpant/pants

1. When teaching the child to put on his pants, start with small steps and begin at the end of the task. That is, when the pants are almost pulled up, let him complete the task. It will probably be easier for him to perform this part first, as he will feel successful by completing the task.



2. As he progresses, gradually let him attempt more complex parts of the task - to pull the pants up over the hips, and then from his knees up. The last step would be to hold the pants and wear them independently.

Many parents say, 'My child can wear by himself. But he is slow and so usually I help him'. Don't be in a hurry. Let him have the chance to do by himself. Be patient.

Wears shirt/blouse

1. Show the edges of stitching. Let him see and feel it and know the right side of the shirt.

2. Teaching the child to wear a shirt is much easier if you begin at the end of the task. Help him until he gets the arm half way in. Then encourage him to take over. He will straighten his arms into the sleeve. Then pat him and appreciate.



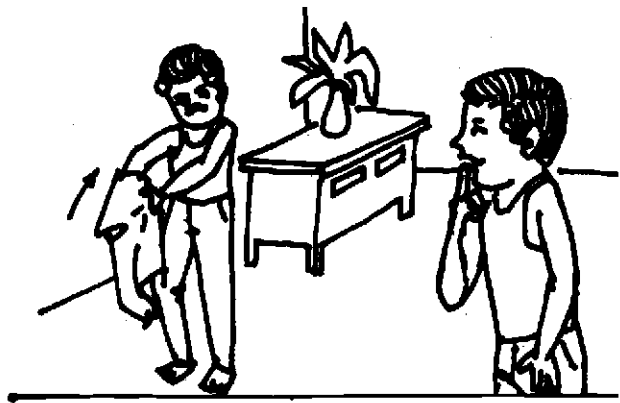
3. After he inserts one hand, bring the shirt through the back and assist him to insert his other hand through the arm hole. Help him to bring both the flaps of the shirt properly in front.



Initially he may be slow and clumsy. He may fail to identify the right side and front of the shirt. Do not discourage him. Let him touch, feel and see by himself so that he can understand that he has to remove it and wear it properly.

Steps to wear banian/T-shirt/Frock

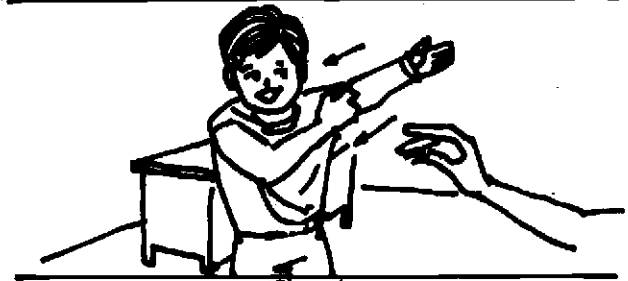
1. Demonstrate how to hold and roll the T-shirt upto the sleeve, after identifying the front. Let him hold it in such a way that back of the T-shirt faces him.



2. Guide to lift the hands with the T-shirt towards head and wear it upto the shoulder.



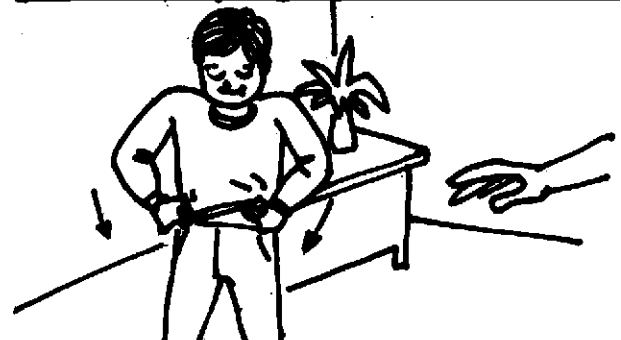
3. Help to locate the sleeve of the shirt and insert one hand and pull the hand.



4. Help to insert the other hand in the same manner.

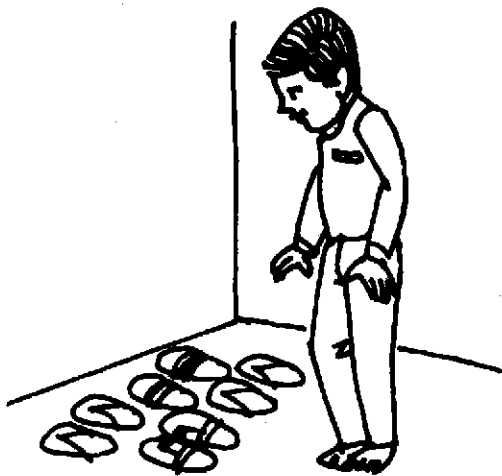


5. Tell him to pull the T-shirt properly upto the waist holding with both hands on the sides.



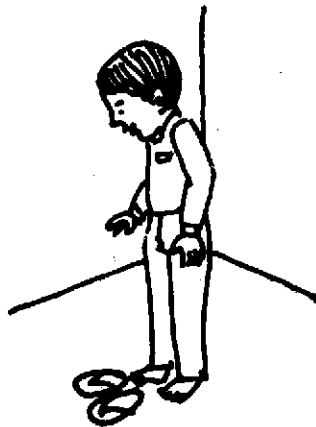
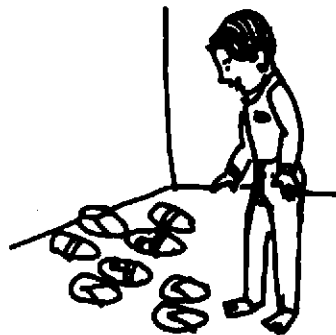
Show him that the side with button or design is the front of the shirt. Initially use only those shirts/frocks that have design in front, so that the child can easily distinguish front from back.

Steps to wear slippers



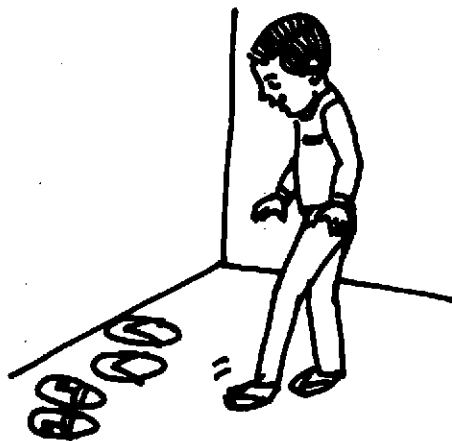
1. Let him find his slippers when mixed with others.

2. Guide him to keep both slippers properly in front of him.



3. Let him stand near the slippers.

4. Let him wear the slippers in the appropriate foot.



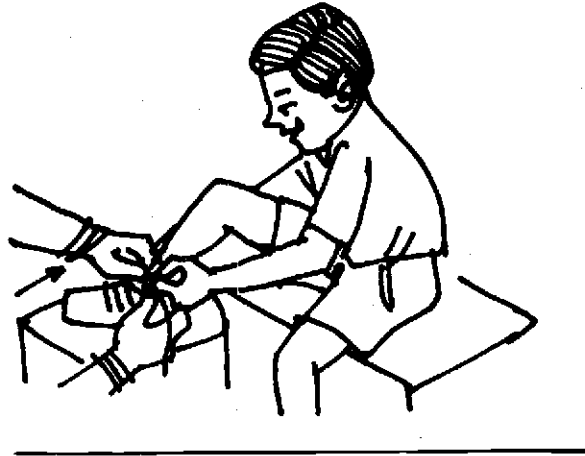
Suggestions :

1. If he wears incorrectly, tell him to walk and see that it is not comfortable. Let him change and wear properly and see that it is comfortable.
2. Train him to identify his slippers by himself.
3. Encourage using slippers with toe rings. Instruct that the big toe should be in the ring. This would enable correct wearing even though he does not have the concept of right and left. While placing slippers, show that the toe rings of both slippers must be next to each other.
4. If it is a havai slipper, instruct that if the little toes touch the ground when the slipper is worn, it is wrong. This will enable correct wearing.
5. If it is sandals, instruct that the buckle should be always on the outside of the feet.

Steps to wear shoes

1. Start training to wear slip-on shoe that has no shoe lace. Let the child sit on the floor/on a stool and select the shoe for the left foot. help him to insert toes first inside the shoe. Make a mark on the inner side of the heel with which he can identify the left and right shoe.

2. After inserting the toes, help him to insert the heel and press to go inside the shoe. Repeat with the other foot. Ask him to walk and see that it is comfortable.



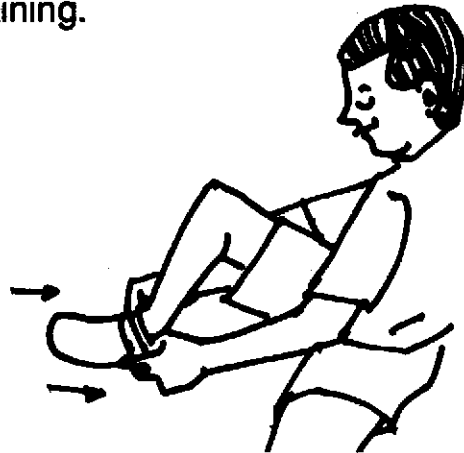
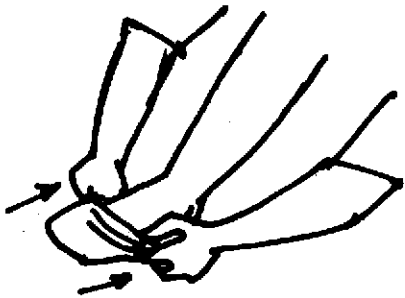
3. As he learns, train him to wear shoe with shoe lace. Show him how to insert shoe lace crosswise. Also show him how to loosen the lace before inserting the foot.
4. When training on tying shoe lace, if he can tighten the strings, that is a good start. Later he may learn to tie the knot, and gradually he will learn to make a bow.

If the child has problems in tying, modifications may be made such as use of velcro, or use of slip-on shoes.

Steps to wear socks

To teach wearing socks, the last step can be taught first. For example pulling the socks just above the heel is easier than to keep the socks in correct position and to insert the toes in. Use the steps explained below so that the child can meet with success at every step of training.

1. Pulls socks when it is just above heel.



2. Pulls socks when it is just below heel.

3. Pulls socks when toes are inserted.



4. Puts on socks when handed to him with heels in correct position.

5. Selects the socks for appropriate foot and put on heel in correct position.

Train the child starting from the last step to the beginning of the task.

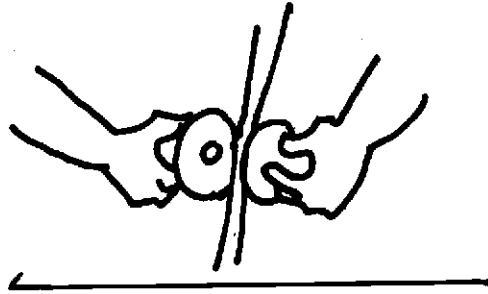
Some useful hints to teach buttoning

- * Bigger buttons or zips can be used initially if the child has difficulty with.
- * Initially buttons which are the size of fifty paise coins may be used. Gradually the size can be reduced until the child can successfully manipulate regular sized buttons.
- * As far as possible while training let the child fix fasteners on the clothes he is wearing, rather than on others or on button frames.

Steps for various types of fastening - buttons, hooks, buckles,

Unbuttoning :

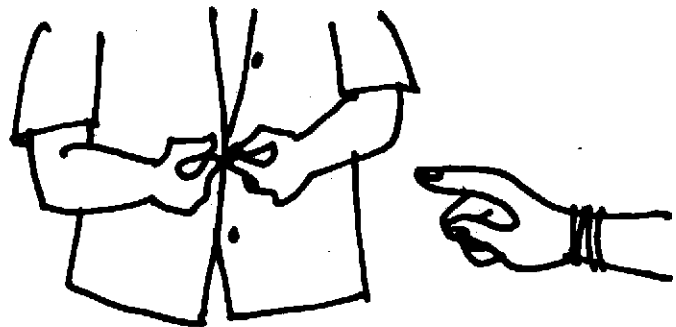
1. Always train the child to unbutton the shirt he is wearing and not the shirt of others or on the button frames. By this, he will be able to independently unbutton faster.



2. Start with the button that is at his chest or stomach level so that he can see when he unbuttons. When he has learnt, he can unbutton the ones near the neck.



3. While training you stand behind the child and if needed physically guide his left thumb and index finger to hold the button, insert in the hole and push. Remember to reward him when he achieves.

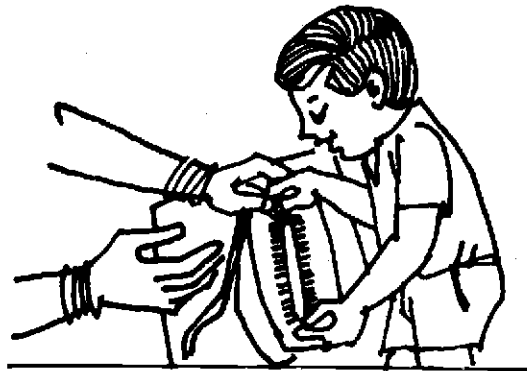


4. Initially use buttons that are stitched slightly raised from the cloth and fit easily into the hole. When he has learnt the substeps of unbuttoning he could be given the shirts with regular size buttons.
5. Buckles are used in belts, sandals and watches. Let him see how the other end of the leather piece is inserted and the pin on the buckle is fixed through the appropriate hole on the leather. Ask him to pull out the leather piece and insert through the loop.
6. Hooks are seen mostly on blouses and skirts. Let the child hold the hook with right hand and eye with the left hand thumb and index finger. Hold the hand with hook and pull towards the eye and help her to put through the eye. Give your assistance by standing at the back of the child.
7. Give the belt and pants in hand, let him practice inserting belt through the loops. As he learns train him to do it after wearing the pants. If the child has problems to buckle hooks, velcro and such fasteners can be used.
8. Wherever there is a need to tie a bow, such as in langa, skirts, pyjamas, ribbons and shoe lace, if the child cannot learn tying, do not waste time on training. Replace with other fasteners - skirt and pyjamas with elastic, ribbon with rubber band and shoe lace with velcro or slip-on shoes.

Unzips, Zips, engages Zipper :

Unzips :

1. Initially train the child to unzip one fourth way, then one half way, and three fourth way and finally, total length of zip. Let maintain grasp on tab and to unzip fully.



Zips :

1. Initially assist to grasp the entire zipper with one hand, to take tab in the other hand and to pull.



2. Show him how to slide into tab, to engage zipper, and to pull zipper up. This is needed for open jackets.



3. Depending on the type of zipper, train to pull up/engage zipper before pulling up.



4. Advise him to get adult's help immediately if the zip gets stuck and not to meddle with it.

Initial training can be on stiff zips such as in baggages. He can learn to open and close it this way and later move to the zips of flexible clothing which requires slightly more skilled manipulation.

Selection of clothes for various activities

Clothings for play activities

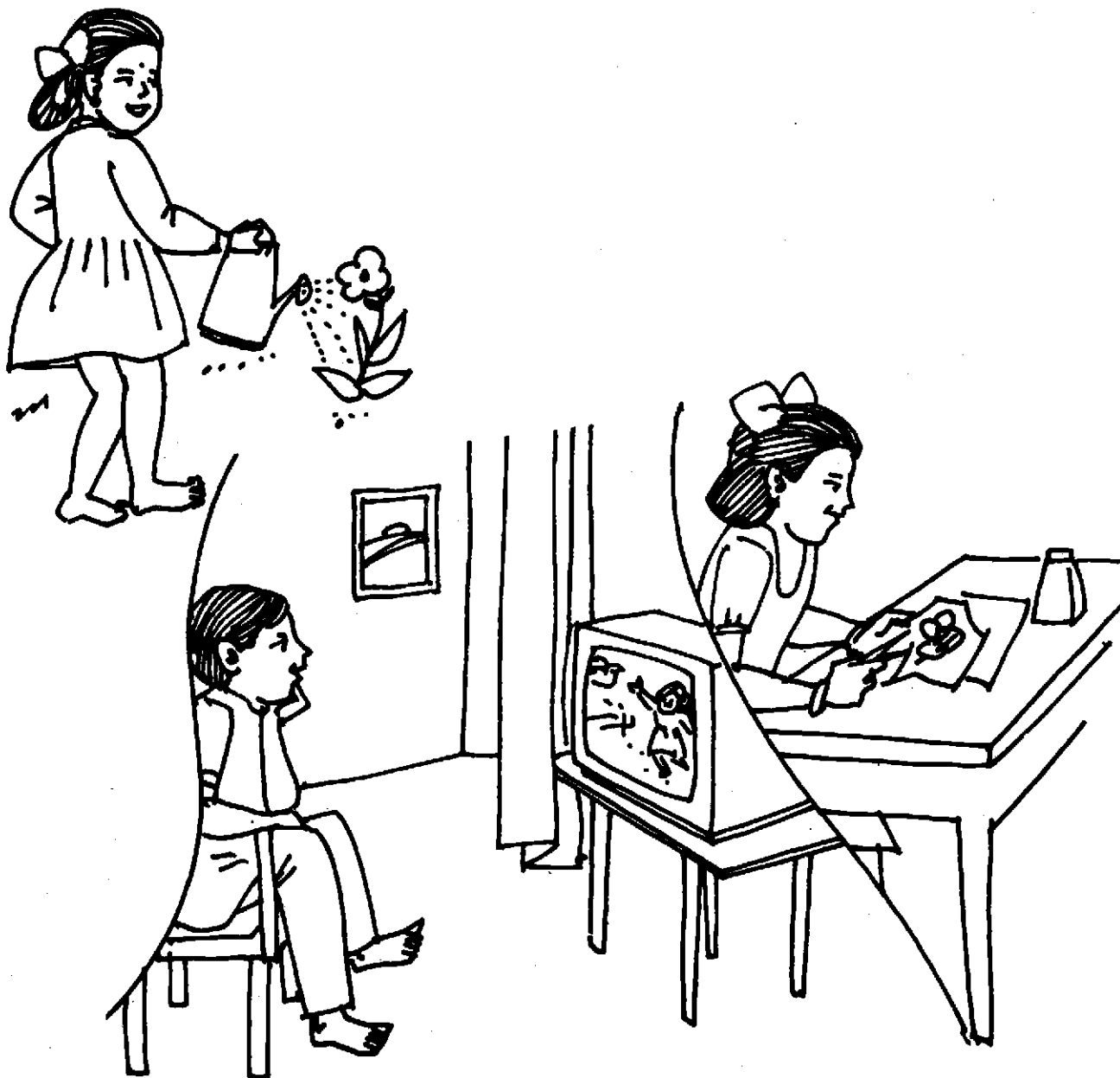
If the child's siblings are provided clothes for sports and games, the child also may be given, depending on the possibility and need. He should also be given chances to play with his peers in the neighbourhood.

Show the dress the child has to wear to go out to play with other children and keep it separately for easy identification.



Clothings for leisure time / recreational activities

Make it a habit in the child to use only ordinary dresses meant to wear at home when he is engaged in leisure time or recreational activities such as gardening, listening to music, watching TV and routine household activities. At the same time make sure that the clothes are not totally worn out and faded.

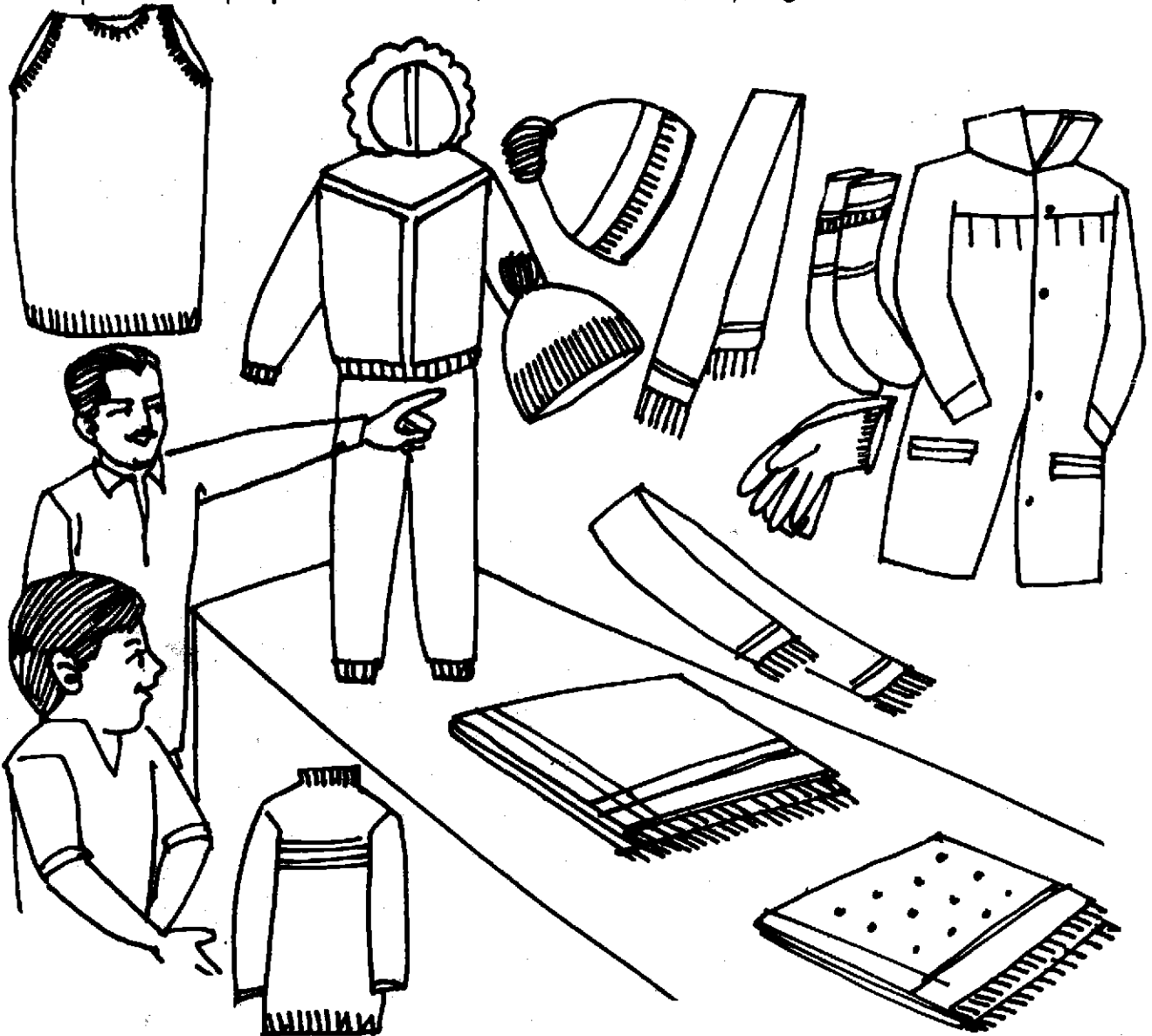


Let the child maintain a neat and well groomed appearance.

Appropriate selection of clothes for seasons

Selection of clothes for winter

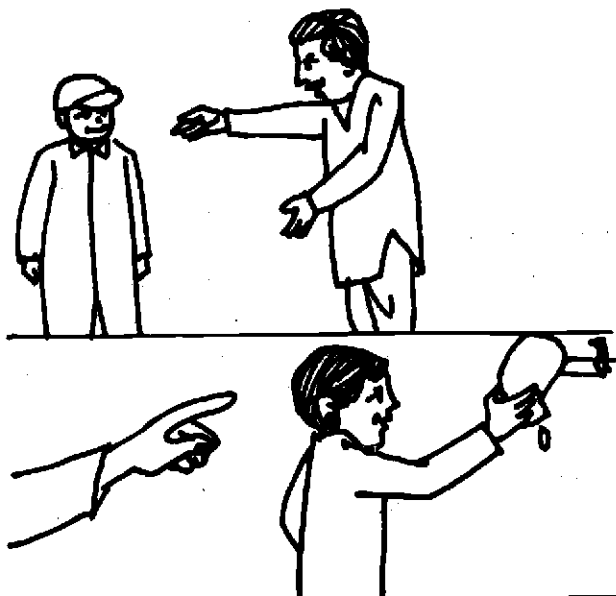
1. Let the child experience that the weather becomes cold during the months of November, December, January and February. Depending on the region where he lives, the age, the need and the availability, warm clothes may be selected.
2. Explain to him that during winter, in order to protect himself warm clothes are needed and that it would also keep him comfortable.
3. Show him on T.V., Pictures and if possible real ones - the warm clothes and explain their purpose : sweater, woolen socks, caps, gloves, shawl and blanket.



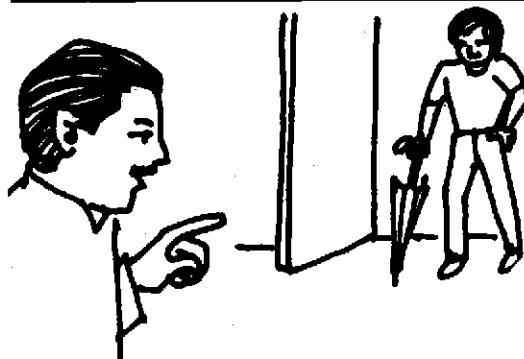
Selection of clothes for rainy season :

1. Describe to the child that there are different seasons in a year. We get rains for about 3 months in a year. During rain, some people use raincoats with caps, and some people use umbrellas when they go out.
2. Depending on the environment and habit of the family, train him to use raincoats/ umbrellas.
3. Tell him that it is better to wear synthetic clothes than cotton clothes during rainy days. Show him that when water falls on synthetic clothes, it easily drips down and dries sooner than the cotton clothes. It is also easily washable.

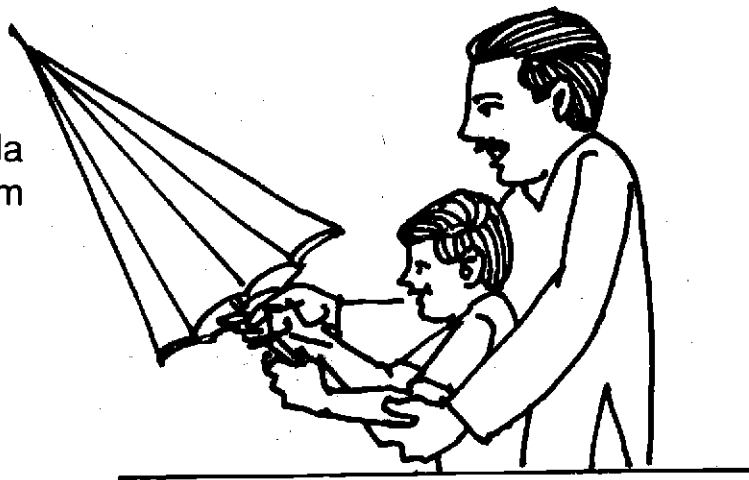
4. Before he enters the room guide him to keep the rain coat or umbrella in the proper place to let the water drain.



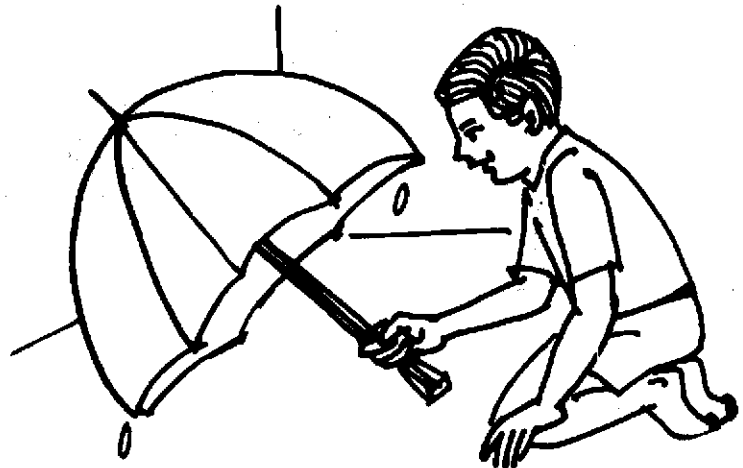
5. During rainy season, remind him to carry the raincoat/ umbrella and to take care of it. Check whether he brings back carefully.



6. Train him to open an umbrella when it is needed. Guide from behind, by holding his hand.



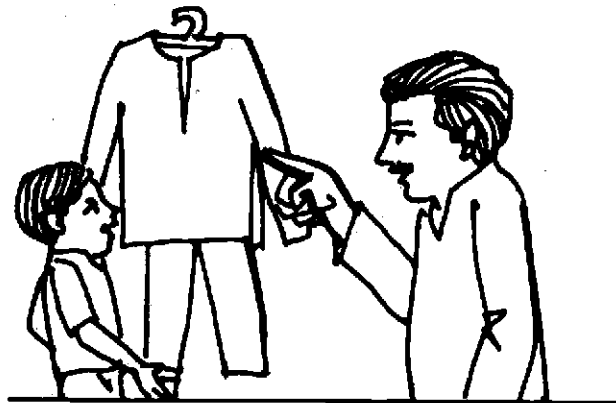
7. When it dries, teach him to close it and to keep it in its proper place.



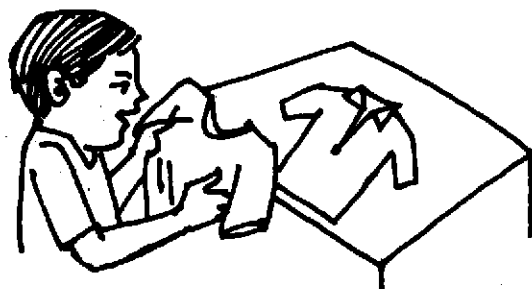
Selection of clothes for summer :

1. Let the child experience summer season. Compare the various seasons - tell him that during rainy season we get rain, it is cold during winter season and during summer season it is hot and depending on the geographical area, summer lasts from 4 to 6 months.

2. Show him in pictures and daily life that during summer one has to wear light/cotton clothes. The woollen clothes and raincoats are not needed unless one gets fever/rain during summer days.



3. Give him chances to select cotton clothes and light clothes which he can wear during summer days.



Selection of clothes for various occasions

Consider the various occasions in which the child might get chances to participate.
For example :

Social functions : (Marriage parties, get-togethers, birth day celebrations)



Religious functions : (Attending services at church, temple, mosque)



Festivals : (Diwali, Dasara, Christmas, Ramzan and so on)



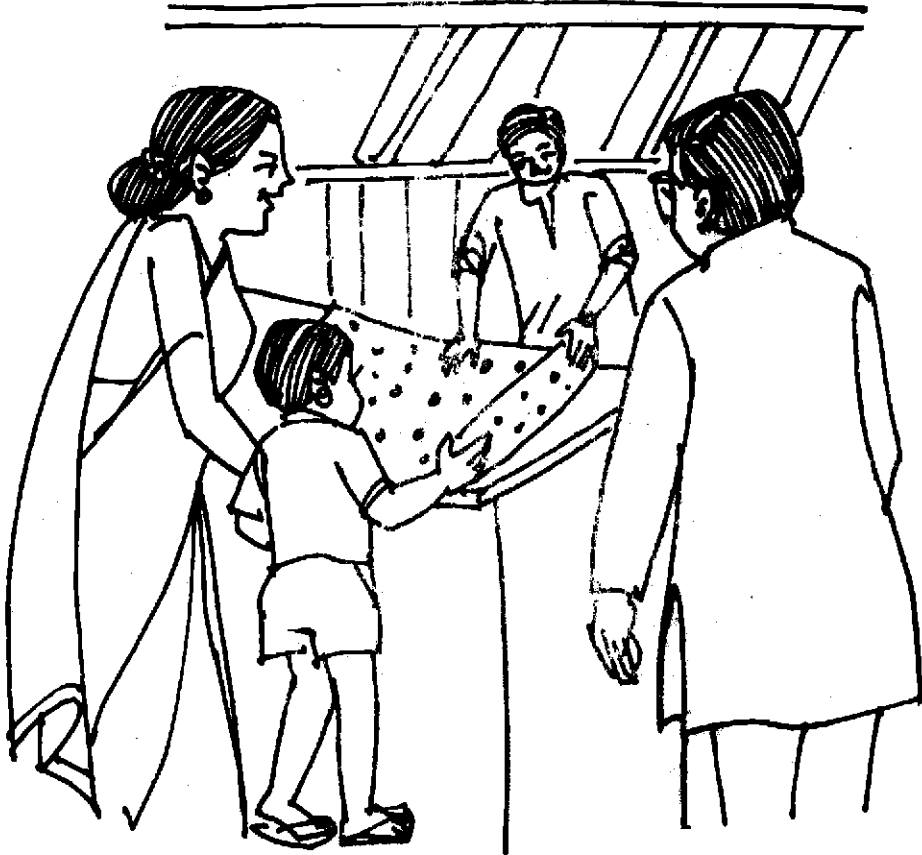
Explain to the child that he should keep the best clothes for social functions. It should not be used in ordinary days.

Tell him about the need to wear neat, and simple dresses when he goes for religious services.

If new clothes are bought for festivals explain the need to wait for the occasion to wear it.

Keep the child's clothes in a place that is convenient to him. Be sure they are always there. Consistency in arranging the clothes help him to get them by himself.

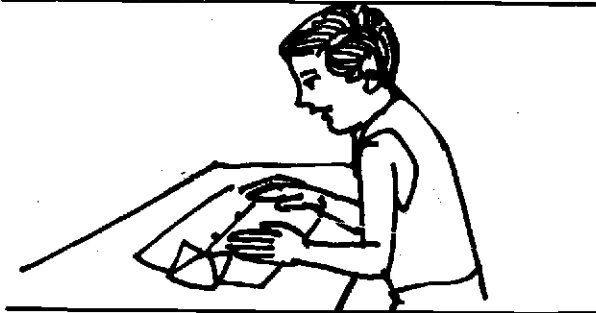
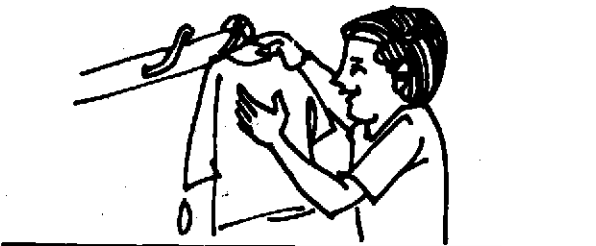
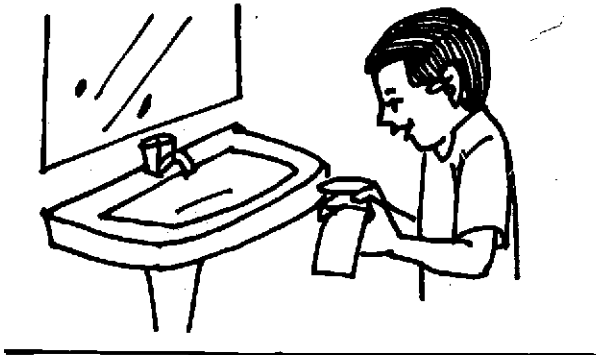
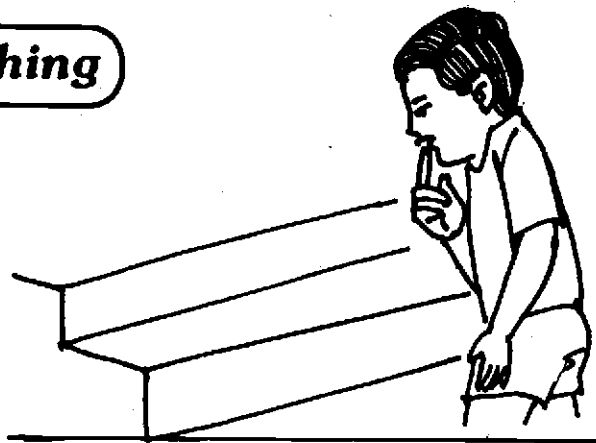
Selecting clothes from a shop



Try to get the child's cooperation and efforts while buying new clothes. As money is needed to purchase clothes, make it a habit for him to save money which he gets now and then, in a piggy bank. Let him open it, count it, and come with you to select and buy clothes/dress. By this way colour, size, money concept, and shopping skills can be introduced to your child.

Maintenance of own clothing

1. When the child goes out, insist on keeping his clothes clean. In case he has to sit somewhere let him check for the cleanliness of the place whether it is clean.
2. Train him to wash his hands if hands get dirty and to wipe in handkerchief so that he can keep his clothes clean.
3. When he comes back home, insist on changing his clothes and keeping the removed clothes in proper place before he goes to some other activities.
4. As the child grows, train him to wash his clothes, dry and to keep it in proper places.
5. If the clothes tear, or the buttons come off from the dress take time to explain to him the need to mend it. Depending on the ability of the child, teach him to sew the buttons and clothes when it tears.

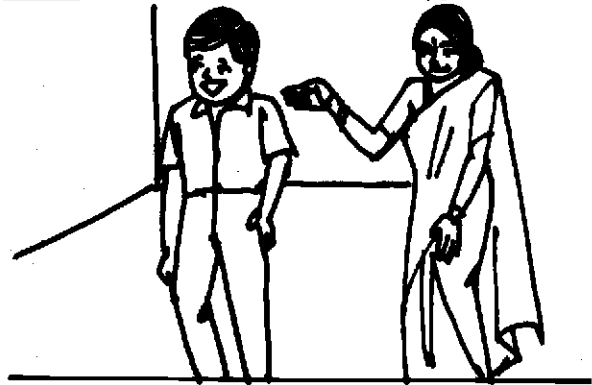


Give rewards to strengthen

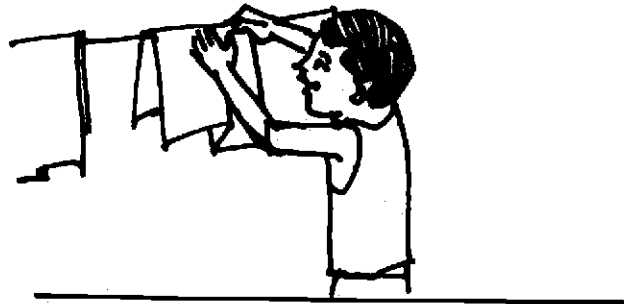
1. As the child learns to wear his clothes by himself encourage him with praises and appreciation.



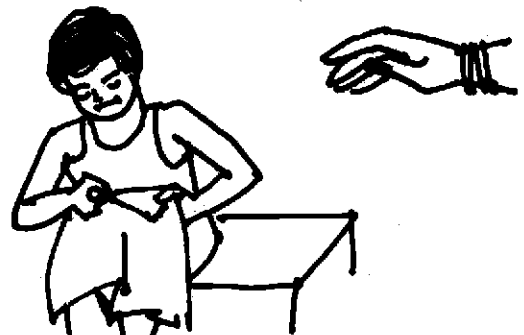
2. Appreciate him when he maintains his clothes for the whole day, especially when he goes out.



3. Reward him when he washes, dries and presses his clothes by himself.



4. Tell him that his clothes would last long, if he learns to sew the clothes when it tears and take care of his clothes.



Independence in dressing : Initially it seems impossible, but eventually it becomes possible. How? Consistency in systematic training with patience, modifying the clothings if needed, and through proper rewards.