



DRESSING

Dressing is an important routine where you can connect with a child. In addition to dressing in the morning to start the day, and evening to get ready for bed, there are other dressing routines in every day. This includes putting on and taking off shoes, coats, and other garments.

Your child is learning independence as he learns to dress. Each day is a chance to see what new skills he is learning, what he can do on his own, and what he still needs a little bit or a lot of help to finish. Use encouraging language and point out the progress your child is making. This will help your child know that you like taking care of them and are excited when they learn to do something on their own! Offer choices and show patience so your child knows you see them trying.

	Infant/Toddler	Pre-K
PROVIDE POSITIVE COMMENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deliver at eye level. ■ Use child's name. ■ Describe what you are seeing. Be specific. ■ Deliver with enthusiasm. ■ Deliver with a SMILE! 	<p>We got your shirt on {Child's Name}. Let's clap your hands!</p> <p>{Child's Name}, you wiggled your foot into the sock, nice job!</p> <p>You are doing such a good job holding still while I do your buttons.</p> <p><i>*NOTE about toddlers: Toddlers will want to show you they can do it "all by myself!" Provide them with encouragement and let them know their efforts matter.</i></p>	<p>{Child's Name}, you pulled your pants up! You are doing new things and I am proud of you.</p> <p>Your shirt is yellow. I remember that yellow is your favorite color!</p> <p>You did it {Child's Name}! You got your shoes on the right feet. Let's practice tying one together.</p>
OFFER CHOICES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep choices simple and fair. ■ Be sure the choices are available now. ■ When offering two choices, make both choices positive options for the child. 	<p>You're shivering. I think you might be cold. I'm going to change you into your sweater.</p> <p>I will help you get dressed and then you can pick out which socks you want to wear {Child's Name}.</p> <p>Which toy would you like to hold while I change you out of your wet clothes—the moose or the toy car?</p>	<p>{Child's Name}, do you want to start by putting on your pants or your shirt?</p> <p>{Child's Name}, do you want to put on your blue or red socks?</p> <p>Do you want my help putting on your socks or would you like to try by yourself?</p>
PROMOTE EMOTION VOCABULARY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cover a range of emotions, both positive and negative. ■ Describe what the child is feeling in the moment. ■ Model by describing your own feelings. ■ Validate how the child is feeling. Do not tell the child how she "should" feel. 	<p>This shirt is hard for me to get over your head and I'm getting upset. I am going to try a different way.</p> <p>{Child's Name}, I know you are excited to go back to playing with your friend. We are almost finished getting your dry clothes on.</p> <p>{Child's Name}, I see you smiling at yourself in the mirror. I think you are happy with your colorful outfit!</p>	<p>{Child's Name}, these shoes are tough to get on and I see you're getting frustrated. Let's take a few deep breaths and try again.</p> <p>[Child's name] I know you're mad about wearing your jacket. It's chilly outside and I don't want you to be cold.</p> <p>You seem so excited to be wearing your new sneakers!</p>

Special ideas for social-emotional teaching during dressing time:

- While helping a child get dressed, talk about each item they are wearing. How do the fabrics feel? Let them rub their hand over each of the textures and talk about what they are feeling (fuzzy, smooth, bumpy, rough). Point out colors and patterns as well.
- Ask children open-ended questions while dressing, even if they are too little to answer back: "Where will these sneakers take you on the playground today?" "How many fingers are in these gloves, let's count together...1, 2, ..."
- It's no surprise that dressing time can bring some feelings of frustration for you, and for the children. Sometimes clothing is hard to get on, zippers get stuck, knots are tied tightly, or items are difficult to snap or fasten. Foster children's social and emotional development by talking about these feeling words as you dress. Also, allow the child to do as much of the routine he can on his own. Provide support when you can tell the child is having a difficult time. Children gain a lot of independence as they learn how to dress and undress.



MEAL TIME

You have many chances to connect with the children in your program during snack and meal time. Meal time includes the time leading up to the meal, eating the meal, as well as the clean-up afterward. As these routines occur many times a day, every day, they are very good chances to bond with the children and help them learn new skills. Use these times to read children's cues, talk, sing, ask questions, problem-solve, and laugh.

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OFFER CHOICES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep choices simple and fair. ■ Be sure the choices are available now. ■ When offering two choices, make both choices positive options for the child. 	<p>{Child's Name}, you are turning your head away. I think you are all done eating.</p> <p>(Support adult breastfeeding) {Caregiver's name}, would you like to use the rocking chair or empty office next door to feed {Child's Name}?</p> <p>Can you point to the one you want, {Child's Name}? We have strawberries and mango—which one should I cut up for you?</p>	<p>It's snack time! {Child's Name}, do you want to the orange or apple slice first?</p> <p>{Child's Name}, come have a seat! Would you like to sit on the blue chair or the green chair for lunchtime?</p> <p>I can cut your sandwich into squares or triangles. Which shape should I make?</p>
PROMOTE EMOTION VOCABULARY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cover a range of emotions, both positive and negative. ■ Describe what the child is feeling in the moment. ■ Model by describing your own feelings. ■ Validate how the child is feeling. Do not tell the child how she "should" feel. 	<p>You like the orange carrots, {Child's Name}. I see that smile!</p> <p>You are clapping, {Child's Name}. I can tell you are happy it is lunchtime!</p> <p>I am having trouble getting the jar open which is making me frustrated. Thank you for being patient. Your food is coming.</p>	<p>I like these carrots. What foods do you like {Child's Name}?</p> <p>{Child's Name}, I also get frustrated when I must wait my turn. I appreciate your patience. Your snack is almost ready.</p> <p>I can see you're excited about what we're having for lunch today, {Child's Name}.</p>

Special ideas for social-emotional teaching during meal times:

- During mealtime, tell children about an appropriate situation that makes you feel a particular emotion (e.g., happy, sad, frustrated, angry, jealous, etc.). Then ask children to share the things that make them feel that same emotion.
- Have a "feeling face" snack time! Pull a feeling face and ask kids to eat snack showing the matching emotion. For example, during "sad snack" kids might eat while frowning and pretending to cry. This can facilitate great conversations about how our friends look when feeling these emotions and what might make them feel that way.
- At lunch, let children guess as you describe a specific food, one clue at a time. "This food is usually sweet. It can be green or purple. It comes in a bunch with other ones the same size, about this big [show children the size with your fingers]. Yes! It is a grape!" Let children take turns listening carefully to each other and raising a hand when they have a guess.



PLAY TIME

Children learn as they play and explore. When you join in the play, it builds your relationship and further supports children's growing brains! Play time may include pretend play, outdoor play, sensory play, and storytelling. Play time is often planned in a child care setting but can also be spontaneous! Play time is a chance for you to follow children's leads and see where their imagination takes them. You have a chance to connect with the children every time you are enjoying each other's company.

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OFFER CHOICES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep choices simple and fair. ■ Be sure the choices are available now. ■ When offering two choices, make both choices positive options for the child. 	<p>I see you smiling playing with the dolls. Do you want to keep playing here?</p> <p>{Child's Name}! Look at the red and green balls. Which one do you want to hold?</p> <p>Which hand do you want to hold the spoon and stir the mix with?</p>	<p>{Child's Name}, I see you getting out the paint which is so fun and can be messy. Do you want to put on the black smock or the red one?</p> <p>We have five more minutes until snack time, {Child's Name}. Do you want to help me set up snack, or keep playing?</p> <p>It is time to clean up. Do you want to stack blocks or put the animals in the bin?</p>
PROMOTE EMOTION VOCABULARY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cover a range of emotions, both positive and negative. ■ Describe what the child is feeling in the moment. ■ Model by describing your own feelings. ■ Validate how the child is feeling. Do not tell the child how she "should" feel. 	<p>I love your giggles, {Child's Name}! You are feeling joyful and happy!</p> <p>{Child's Name}, what you just said is so silly. You are making me laugh!</p> <p>I feel worried when you roll like that. I am going to move you to the blanket on the floor so you are safe.</p>	<p>Oh {Child's Name}, I am so sorry you fell down. I'll come give you a kiss.</p> <p>{Child's Name}, your friend is sad. You took the toy from her hands. How can we help her feel happy again?</p> <p>{Child's Name}, I love how you two play together. You are listening to one another and having lots of fun!</p>

Special ideas for social-emotional teaching during play time:

- Join in play in the pretend area. Take the children's lead. Weave in feelings words as you engage with the children. Pretend play is a wonderful place to talk about emotions. Jump into their play and use emotions to talk about the stories they are creating! "It's time for a birthday party - I'm so excited, are you excited?", "Daddy has to go to work, I'm so sad!"
- During sensory play (e.g., sand, shaving cream), have children draw what a happy, sad, frustrated, etc. face looks like.
- Play time provides many opportunities to talk about ways to share, take turns, and include peers. Observe children at play, only interrupting when there is a problem emerging. Instead of solving the problem, ask questions like "What is happening here?" "How can you both have some time with the toy?"



DIAPERING & TOILETING

Diapering is an everyday routine you can use to connect with children. When you coo, babble, and talk with an infant, you let them know you notice them, and that they are important. The children will benefit from having a simple routine for diapering and toileting. This will help them to know what to expect and help the experience go smoothly.

As children grow and learn, they will take on new challenges, such as toileting. Each child moves at their own pace with toileting. You will need to learn children's differing "cues" and find ways to support each child with this feat. Toileting is rarely a straight path to success, but instead has many ups and downs. A child may have some success, and then seem to take a step backward. You need to use patience and guide the children in loving ways. Using supporting, calming words and actions can help you and the children in the program feel less frustrated.

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OFFER CHOICES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep choices simple and fair. ■ Be sure the choices are available now. ■ When offering two choices, make both choices positive options for the child. 	<p>{Child's name}, it's time to change your diaper. Shall we change it downstairs or upstairs?</p> <p>{Child's name}, do you want the red ball or the bear to hold while I change you?</p> <p>Do you want to try to pull up your pull-up, or should I do it?</p>	<p>Let's pick a song to sing on the way to the potty. Do you want the ABCs or the Itsy-Bitsy Spider?</p> <p>Do you want to wash your hands by yourself or should we wash our hands together?</p> <p>{Child's name}, do you want to flush or should I?</p>
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Special ideas for social-emotional teaching during diapering and toileting:

- During toileting, when children forget part of the routine, like flushing or washing hands, pause and say "Hmm... I wonder if we are forgetting something?" Give the child a moment to remember on her own what she forgot instead of automatically telling her.
- When a child is engaging in a diaper-changing or toileting routine, talk about the feelings a child may be having. You did not want to stop playing; you are frustrated. You are fussing; you are upset. You are giggling; you are happy. You are taking your time: You are being patient. You are jumping up and down; you are excited!
- During bathroom routines, have children look in mirror and practice making mad/sad/happy faces.