Dressing involves many skills: visual perception, motor planning, balance, and gross and fine motor skills. It is a complex skill; therefore, always allow your child time to practice and keep practicing. Independence in dressing contributes to a real feeling of mastery, which contributes to a healthy self-esteem.

Sensory Strategies

* Be conscious of sensitivities regarding texture; buy clothing that you know your child will like (it is more valuable for your child to be at school in an uncoordinated outfit feeling calm than to have your child at school looking beautiful and upset).
* Build a wardrobe of comfortable clothing for your child which they have had a choice in.
* Encourage deep-pressure activities such as wall press ups and commando crawling prior to dressing to decrease the tactile sensitivities.
* Wear undergarments inside out to prevent scratching seams and tags.
* Increase hat tolerance through massage of the scalp and putting the hat on in front of the mirror.
* Be aware of audio and visual overload and minimize it.
* If your child is fearful when body position is changed, dress him or her in one position.
* Use different communication strategies to encourage understanding of the consequences of taking clothing off such as pictures and social stories.
* If your child has sensitive feet, have them wear socks inside out and wash shoes to make them soft prior to wearing them.
* Try laced shoes because they can be more effectively tightened.
* Cut labels out of clothing.
* Wash clothing with unscented detergent andunscented fabric softener. Alternatively, use a laundry wash ball.
* Dry clothing in a drier to reduce stiffness.
* Choose fabrics like fleece rather than rigid items like denim.
* Be conscious of noises from buckles.
* If your child cannot keep their hands out of their nappy or undergarment, try a body vest or body suit / unitard, available from stockists such as <https://www.fledglings.org.uk/> and <https://www.marksandspencer.com/l/kids/easy-dressing>
* Be sensitive to the length of sleeve/trouser leg your child prefers or the tightness / looseness of clothing they prefer.
* Be aware of patterns in fabrics and distraction the patterns may cause.

Look at the section on Planning Wheels on the Occupational Therapy web site for more ideas: [www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/BedsandLutonOT](http://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/BedsandLutonOT)

The following websites stock adapted clothing including seamless socks, underpants with flat seams and without labels, pull up trousers with the label in the pocket:

The following websites also stock adapted clothing:

* <https://www.marksandspencer.com/l/kids/easy-dressing>
* <https://www.sensorysmart.co.uk/>
* <https://www.spectrasensoryclothing.co.uk/>
* <https://www.fledglings.org.uk/>