

Concepts linked to my early independence

Age: 4+ Years

Resources: Everyday items within the home, such as a big cardboard box and items of clothing.

Tips:

Carrying out everyday activities with your child will soon become a familiar routine and are great opportunities to develop an understanding of concepts. These activities can be done at any time with your child throughout the day. They can also be explored in outdoor settings, for example when you and your child are out walking or when playing in the park.

You can use language to help develop an understanding of these concepts and to reinforce the action. Remember to keep your language short and simple when you're describing things and give your child time to process information.

Make important words stand out. For example, if you're helping your child to put on their coat, your child may not be ready to hear **'OK, let's put your coat on, it is yellow and blue with a white flower on it, and it has buttons and a zip. We will put your arms in first...'** Instead, you could say **'Coat on.'**, **'Arms in first.'**, **'Zip up.'**, **'Ready, steady pull.'**

Activity:

Dressing: When dressing, verbally identify main body parts. For example, **'Let's put your sock on your foot.'**, or when putting shoes on or off you can say **'Shoe on.'**, or **'Let's take your shoes off.'**

You can gently touch your child's foot as you ask, as this provides tactile feedback and reinforcement of the body part.

When helping your child put on their coat, you can identify the parts of the coat, such as the front, back, sleeves and hood. If your child is confident with these, you could also introduce the concept of **left** and **right** – ‘Let’s put your left arm in the sleeve.’

Playtime: This can provide great opportunities to introduce concepts such as **in/on/under/in front/behind/between**. For example: if you have a large cardboard box, you could play hide and seek games with your child where you take turns to go **in** the box and **under** the box. Similarly, when playing with toys, your child can place the toy **in/on/under** a container or toy box.

Going for a walk: When out for a walk, talk about the weather (wind, rain, sun-warm). Provide opportunities for your child to touch and explore their environment. Talk about the things you see or hear together – ‘I can hear an ambulance.’, ‘It goes nee-nah.’ Remember you can get information from a wide range of different senses. You could play games where you run with your child **behind** a tree or stand **in front** of the tree.

Songs: Use songs and nursery rhymes, especially action songs, such as Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes, The Wheels on the Bus or See the Sleeping Bunnies.

Notes:

For safety reasons, start the activity by having someone sit or stand behind your child for support until they become confident with their balance.

Please supervise your child at all times while completing any of the activities outlined on this sheet. Stop any activity if your child becomes upset, unwell or you are unsure if you are completing it correctly.



If you would like any further advice or support, please contact the advice line on **0800 7811444** or via email children@guidedogs.org.uk