

Dear Families,

Your child is learning to perform **self-help skills** at school each day. Self-help skills are a vital stepping stone to a child maturing and becoming independent. Because learning self-help skills requires practice, encourage your child to practice the following self-help skills at home:

- Putting on and removing clothing.
- Fastening clothing.
- Putting the correct shoe on the correct foot.
- Tying shoes.
- Washing and cleaning up.
- Following safety rules.
- Preparing for different activities with minimal supervision.

Try some of the following activities to help your child practice these skills:

1. **Let your child dress himself.** Let your child attempt to button or zip clothing on his own before you lend a helping hand.
2. **Encourage dress-up play.** Have a dress-up box available for your child. Include costumes, adult clothing, and clothing with different fasteners. The natural imagination of children lends itself well to playing dress-up. During play dates, children gain additional practice by helping each other put on and take off dress-up garments.
3. You can **encourage your child to button, lace, snap, zip, and buckle** using a dressing doll (available at toy stores). The advantage of using a doll is that your child can develop a skill (buttoning, snapping, zipping) apart from any other factors, such as having to dress in a hurry or coping with a tight-fitting jacket. Your child can take his time and can repeat the motions again and again.
4. Keep a chart to **record your child's achievements**. Write "I Can Do It Myself!" at the top of the chart. List the self-help skills on one half of the chart. On the other half, put a sticker or a happy face and the date when your child performs the skill on his own.
5. **Read books** with your child about taking care of personal needs. Here are a few suggestions:
Carlstrom, Nancy White. *Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?* illus. by Bruce Degen.
London, Jonathan. *Froggy Gets Dressed*. illus. by Frank Remkiewicz.
Morris, Ann. *Shoes, Shoes, Shoes*.