

CHILDREN'S OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ADVICE SHEET

Managing Zips – Useful Tips

Advice and Strategies

- A video demonstration is available at: <https://www.bromleyhealthcare.org.uk/explore-our-services/childrens-occupational-therapy/> click on 'more information' – **managing zips and fastenings**.
- Use **consistent verbal prompts** when teaching your child a new skill. Make it fun and give lots of encouragement.
- Before practising zips on clothes, let your child practice on any item that has a zip **such as a pencil case, handbag or make up bag**.
- If it works better for your child, **adapt the zip tab for easier grasp** by adding a zipper ring, a heavy string with a wooden bead, a ribbon, carabina or a key ring.



- **A carabina:**
- Hold the bag and let the child unzip a with a **surprise item** inside for the child to discover. Give the verbal prompt, "open".
- Continue to hold the bag and let the child practise opening and closing the zip, giving the verbal prompts, "**open**" and "**close**" as they do so.
- Once they have mastered this, encourage the child to hold the bag with their non-dominant hand and open and close the zip with their dominant hand. Again, giving the verbal prompts, "**open**" and "**close**". You may wish to sit behind or next to you child and give some hand over hand assistance as needed.
- Once they can open and close zips independently, your child is ready to practise on clothing.
- Lay an item of clothing with a large zip on a table, it is better if the zip is a contrasting colour to the fabric. Let the child pull the zip up and down – demonstrate if necessary.
- Demonstrate to the child how to do only the fastening. Position both your thumbs on top of the bottom of zip and use the verbal prompts, "**thumbs on top, feed the food into the mouth**". Let your child practise this over and over again until they have mastered this.

- Putting it all together – repeat the above step but this time do up the zip. Demonstrate and then let your child try using the verbal cues, **“thumbs on top, feed the food into the mouth, pull”**.
- Now your child is ready to put the hoody on and try fastening the zip whilst on their body using same verbal cues, **“thumbs on top, feed the food into the mouth, pull”**.

Backward chaining: (completing the entire process, but leaving the last part for the child to do). Start with the shank already inserted into the slide at the bottom, and then introduce the insertion procedure:

- Have the child zip zipper when three quarters zipped
- Have the child zip zipper when one quarter zipped
- Have the child zip zipper from bottom, with shank and slide at bottom already fastened (child may need guidance to grasp the pull tab).
- The child holds slide bottom with one hand, and is guided to insert shank into slide bottom, and pull zip up.
- The child pulls zip down, separating zipper independently.

