**DIFFICULTY WITH SEQUENCING A TASK**

Sequencing a task is the ability to order an activity in a specific way. Sequencing is a skill we use when we break down an activity into smaller steps and then put those steps in order. Sequencing is an important skill for all children to develop. We all sequence tasks throughout the day without necessary realising that we are doing it, for example: dressing, going to the bathroom and brushing our teeth.

An example of a child who struggles to sequence a task would be a child who frequently puts their jumper on the wrong way around, or someone who does not put their socks on before putting their shoes on.

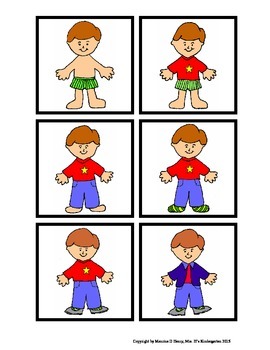
**HOW WE CAN HELP OUR CHILD SEQUENCE:**

The first thing you need to do is help your child understand when we sequence tasks, one thing needs to come first and another comes last.  We start by sequencing two steps together and then slowly adding more steps to the activity.  For example: placing toothpaste on a tooth brush.

1. Pick up your tooth paste
2. Open the lid of the toothpaste and place to the side
3. Pick up your toothbrush
4. Put toothpaste onto the toothbrush

Encourage your child to think about what they did first and what they did last.

Using visual prompts or pictures can help a child sequence the task in the right way. They can either tick off what they have done or simply look up and refer to the pictures or words.



Introduce sequencing words into conversation with your child and use them daily. Use words such as first, second, third, next, then, before, and after. You can use and teach your child these words in everyday conversations. For example:

‘First we are putting our socks on,

Then we will put our shoes on,

Finally we will tie our shoe laces’

Story pictures are an excellent way to help children understand the sequencing concept of first, next, and last. Encourage your child to line the picture story up. For example, the life cycle of a butterfly or how plants grow. Children can sequence the picture cards in the correct order and retell the story!

Talk about the order of the activity when you or your child is practicing. Ask questions e.g. “What do you do next?”

Include your child in learning the order of activities such as dressing or toileting as early as possible. Make up songs or actions to help them remember the sequence.  Converse with your child about sequencing.  Have fun and be silly.  If they put clothes on in the wrong order, encourage your child to fix where they may have gone wrong.

If your child makes a mistake, help them to work out what went wrong and how to fix it. Don’t fix it for them. Encourage them to problem solve the activity. You can do this by:

* Ask them questions to help them figure out what has gone wrong.
* Compare what you have done and with what they have done.
* Encourage them to look in the mirror to work out what is wrong.

**Children can find it challenging to dress themselves independently. A common example is a child dressing a t-shirt the wrong way around or inside out.**

Make sure that the item of clothing has a definite front and back (eg. A t-shirt with a picture on the front and a plain back), this will allow your child to visualise the way that the t-shirt should be put on.

Include your child in house hold chores, such as helping with the laundry. Encourage your child to pull clothes the right way around, this will allow them to learn the difference in textures and identify when an item is the right or wrong way around.

With t-shirts and jumpers, encourage your child to:

1. Hold the t-shirt up against their body the way that they would like to wear it.
2. Place it face down on a surface in front of them
3. Put t-shirt/jumper over their head.

Allow your child to practice getting dressed in front of a mirror, this will allow them to identify if they have gone wrong.

It would be beneficial to remove any distractions such as phones or computers as this will likely divide your child’s attention from the task.

**Practice, practice, practice! Give your child opportunities to practice sequencing tasks every day.**

Additional information can be found at:

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/order-of-dressing-information-sheet/>

<https://www.lwtears.com/blog/sequencing-activities-kindergarten-preschoolers>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-s-1699-sen-sequencing-cards-resource-pack>