

Self-Care

Zips

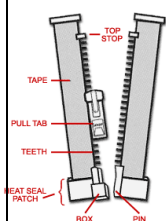
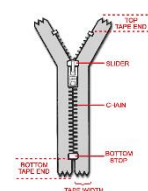


Zips are often the first fastening children learn how to manage on their clothing.

Children will need help to put the two sides of a zip together to start with. From around the age of three they may start helping to pull the zips on their jackets up and down once you have placed the pin in the box.

General tips: -

- Practice opening and closing lots of zips first. Zips with a fixed closed-end such as on rucksacks, pencil cases and bags are easier to start with or make a DIY zipper board.
- When you start practicing with separating zips on clothes lay the item of clothing on a table in front of your child, with the bottom of the zip furthest away. This will make it easier for them to see what they are doing. Once they can do the zip, get them to practice with the clothing on their body.



- Use the backward chaining method to teach your child. Start by getting your child to put their jacket on, then you can place the pin in the box and pull zip up a little. Your child can now pull the zip all the way up whilst you hold the bottom of the zip. Next you start the zip for them and pull it up a little. Your child can then hold the bottom of the zip and pull the zip up to the top. Finally get your child to put the pin into the box. Your child then holds the bottom of the zip and pulls the zip up to the top. This step is the hardest to teach. You might need to put your hands over your child's when you are teaching this part. Be patient and only help when they get really stuck.

Adapted from our colleagues : NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde – KIDS (www.nhsggc.org.uk/KIDS)

- Test the zips on clothing before you buy them. Make sure they are not sticky to pull up or difficult for the pin to fit properly into the box.



- Make the zip pull easier to hold by attaching a zip pull cord, keyring, piece of string or ribbon. This will make it easier to hold and pull.
- If your child has to do a zip on a skirt twist the skirt so that the zip is at the front. Your child will be able to see what they are doing. Once the zip is closed twist the skirt round until it is in the right place.

- **Practice, practice, practice!** Give them opportunities every day!

Alternatives to zips:

- Buy clothes that have alternative fastenings. Velcro or elasticated waistbands will allow your child to be independent with fastenings until they can manage zips by themselves.
- Buy quarter zip jackets or hoodies. These are designed to go over your head and have the easier closed-end zip. Poncho jackets are also an alternative you may wish to try.
- For jackets, do up the first few of centimetres of the zip for them. Your child can then pull the jackets over their head and push their arms through the arm holes, finishing the zip themselves when they can. Make sure the jacket is slightly large so they have room to place their arms in. If you want to make this more permanent, place a stitch at the top of this section to stop the zip coming undone.



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Further resources: For more resources to help with dressing skills please visit our website or lookout for our Facebook posts.

www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot



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NHS Borders Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Service