

TYING SHOELACES

Tying shoe laces is a complicated task as your child needs to be able to remember each step and then sequence those steps in order, as well as have the fine motor and bilateral integration skills (using both sides of their body) in order to carry out the refined movements (see [Being able to use both sides of my body to use both sides of my body](#)). A lot of attention, concentration, motivation and persistence is needed and your child will need to practice, practice and practice!

The NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde website has some excellent videos that you can use to try different techniques for tying shoelaces, as well as advice to support other aspects of dressing like doing buttons and zips.

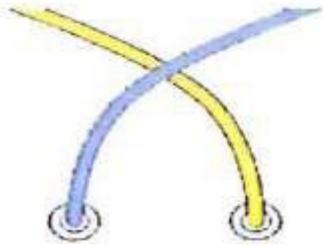
<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/self-care/dressing-myself/>

Strategies to support tying shoe laces

- before beginning to practice tying shoe laces, your child needs to understand and be motivated to practice frequently. Agree a consistent approach with all adults and ensure that your child has a good sitting position (see [Good seating](#) advice sheet)
- when helping your child, think about where you are both positioned; sit alongside your child so that you are both approaching the task from the same angle
- start by using the step-by-step visuals (like the pictures below or your own photographs) and practice tying the shoelaces around the thigh rather than on the shoe
- use stiffer shoelaces (dip shoe laces in PVA glue to make them stiffer and easier to manipulate) with two colours to support the child to differentiate between the two strands
- once the steps are mastered move onto shoe on lap / table making sure the child is correctly positioned
- practice!!! Explain to the child that this needs to be practised regularly for them to be successful
- consider making a record/reward chart to take a note of how many times a day the skill has been practiced
- practice should take place when there isn't a time pressure i.e. NOT when rushing out the door to get to school on time

- favourite toys or games could be stored in bags/containers which require the child to undo/do up a lace to access them and encourage them to practice tying other items of clothing such as ties on dressing downs or pyjamas
- try using a story to support the child to remember the steps like this one:

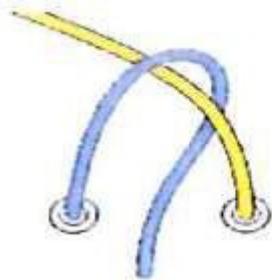
Step 1



Cross the left (blue) end over the right (yellow) end. The left (blue) end is now on the right side.

‘Build a Tee-Pee.....’

Step 2



Wrap the blue lace around the back of the yellow lace and through the gap between the laces.

‘Come inside....’

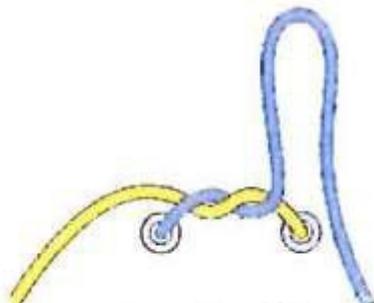
Step 3



Pull both ends tight to complete the knot.

‘pull it tight so we can hide.’

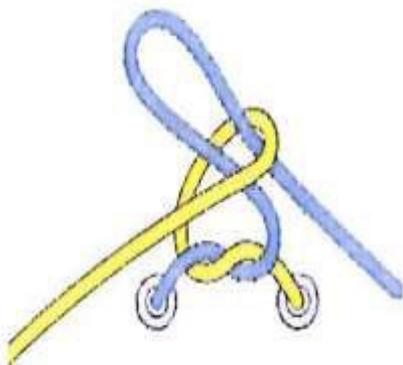
Step 4



Make the blue lace into a loop by doubling it back onto itself

‘Over the mountain....’

Step 5



Take the yellow lace and pass it behind the blue loop. Continue around the right loop to end up in front.

‘and around we go.....’

Step 6

Start to feed the left (yellow) lace into the 'hole' that has just been made.

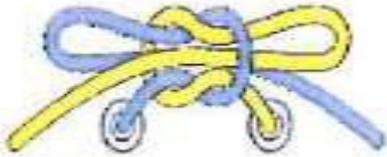
'Here's my arrow



Step 7

With the yellow lace now through the 'hole', grab hold of both loops and start to pull the knot tight. Continue pulling on the loops until the knot is firmly tied.

'And here's my bow



Backward Chaining

Backward and forward chaining techniques are used to teach the child a task and to actively involve the child in the task. It involves breaking complicated activities into smaller steps. Visual prompts such as photographs and symbols can be used to help prompt the child at each step. The adult performs most of the task and the child performs the last step of the sequence to receive positive reinforcement for completing the task. Practice continues with the adult completing fewer steps and the child completing additional steps until the child is able to complete the whole task.

Backward chaining is particularly helpful for children with a low frustration tolerance or poor self-esteem because it gives immediate success.

Alternatives to shoe laces

Tying shoe laces is a very difficult skill to master, especially if your child has difficulties with fine motor manipulation, bilateral coordination and/or planning. There are new ideas for alternatives to shoelaces developing all the time – keep a look out on amazon and social media!! Here are some ideas to start with:



Greeper laces from www.greeper.com



Hickies from amazon



Coiler laces from amazon



Easy lace from www.easylace.com

Alternative methods of tying shoelaces are also available, just Google "You Tube Tying Shoelaces" for lots of ideas!