

Helping Your Child Learn to Tie Their Shoelaces

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Learning how to tie shoelaces can be an extremely difficult task for a child with fine motor, sensory motor, and or visual motor difficulties. This task can be made even more difficult when having to practice on one's own shoe with the typical short lace ends.

Here is a cheap and easy way to help in this learning process. You can make a homemade lacing board with long laces that your child's sneaker can go right on top of. This way, your child can practice tying their shoelaces in the proper position as well as have multiple opportunities to practice what they have learned. Just follow the directions below.

Supplies needed:

One piece of 8 ½ x 11 inch corrugated cardboard (larger, if needed)

One of your child's sneakers

A pair of scissors

Three shoelaces

Pen or pencil

To make the base:

1. Place your child's sneaker on top of the piece of corrugated cardboard. Trace around the outside of the sneaker.
2. Next, trace around the outside of the sneaker again, but make this trace line 1 inch to the outside of the first trace line.
3. Cut the corrugated cardboard along the outer most trace line.

Making the holes:

4. On the inside line that runs down the left side of the base, mark three holes, 1 inch apart, beginning 1 to 2 inches from the front (toe) of the base. Repeat this on the right side of the base.
5. Using a pair of scissors, CAREFULLY punch holes through the three markings you made on the left and right sides of the base in step 4.

Threading the laces:

6. Thread one shoelace down through the first hole closest to the front of the base on the right side and then thread it up through the hole that is directly opposite it on the left side. Repeat this for the other two shoelaces.

To use:

7. Have your child place their foot in their sneaker and then it on the base. From either behind the child or from the side of the child, the teacher should reach forward and demonstrate how to tie a simple knot on the set of laces closest to the front of the base. This allows the child to see position of the teacher's hands throughout the making of the knot. Let the child try. Once the child has mastered tying a simple knot on the first set of shoelaces, allow them to demonstrate their new skill on the remaining two sets shoelaces.
8. When the child is comfortable with tying a simple knot, teach them how to make the loops and complete the knot. Again, the teacher should demonstrate this by reaching forward from either behind the child or from the side of the child.