

Students with fine motor and strength difficulties may have difficulty developing self-care skills. The ability to manipulate a zipper typically develops between three and three and a half years of age.

Tips to Promote Success with Zippers

- Initially use large, easy-to-close zipper (1/2" wide). Progress to smaller sized zippers.
- Try adding a key ring or key chain onto the zipper tab to enhance grasp.
- Ensure both thumbs are on top and beside the zipper pieces.
- Use liquid paper to highlight the zipper shank and the opening of the slide body to enhance visual attention and eye-hand coordination.
- Pick a zipper that does not have excess material around it (ie. coat flap).



Backward chaining: lead student through entire process, leaving the last part or parts for student to complete.

- Student pulls zipper when three-fourths zipped (by instructor)
- Student pulls zipper when one-fourth zipped (by instructor)
- Student zips with shank and slide body already fastened, with guidance to grasp the zipper tab.
- Student holds slide body with one hand, is guided to insert shank into the slide body completely, and zips.
- Student zips independently

Forward chaining: lead the student through the entire process starting at the beginning.

- Put the zipper shank into the opening of the slide body, ensuring the shank is pushed down completely, keeping the zipper engaged (ensure sides do not separate).
- While keeping the zipper engaged with one hand, pull up on zipper tab with the other hand.