

I Can Make My Bed

Encouraging your child to try making their own bed will inspire independence and an understanding of the importance of helping with jobs around the house.

How to Do It

Encourage your child to help you in this process first before expecting them to complete the task on their own. You might show them how you pull all the bedclothes back and remove the pillows and then talk through the way you make the bed, what you are thinking, or checking, e.g. that the sheet is around the correct way, or the corners will match the shape of the bed etc. Show them how to puff the pillows and shake out the sheets and blankets. You might talk about the day of the week that you are doing this washing and why you have chosen today. Is it sunny outside or has it been a certain time since the sheets were last changed?

Now it's their turn, only you're going to help them learn this skill backwards! Depending on your child's age they might start this learning process by helping you finish the task e.g. to puff the pillows and put them where they need to go. You might ask them to put the pillows back at the top of the bed, explaining why they go there - to support their head and neck. Celebrate these small achievements. Next time they can help you pull up the sheets and then add the pillows. This is called backward chaining and supports children to succeed in small parts of a task, to practice and learn all of the necessary skills which will enable them to eventually complete the task independently.

Talk your child through the process and each step of pulling up the sheet and smoothing all the wrinkles out, then repeat with the blankets/ doona. Use or introduce language to describe what you are doing e.g. fold, lift, tuck etc.

They may need some help tucking the bedding in, particularly on the far side of the bed. Perhaps an older sibling can support and demonstrate this learned skill? Ask your child if they have a special toy who would like to sleep on the beautiful bed they have just made.

Help your child share his or her accomplishments, particularly now when we are isolated from familiar family and friends. Text a photo to an Auntie with an explanation, or a video from your child or encourage your child to have a chat on the phone with their grandparents to let them know about their new skill. Nan or pop might be able to suggest a few more tasks they can try next!

What Learning is Occurring?

- Sense of pride and accomplishment
- Communication skills – sharing what has happened with others, ringing someone to tell them about their new learning, recounting an experience
- Language skills as you discuss the process - new words such as sheets, tucking, smoothing, under, over etc.
- Self-help skills and independence

Things you will need

- Bed
- Pillow
- Sheet
- Blankets

Tips

- For an extension, your child may like to help you strip the bed and put the sheets in the washing machine and then hang them out to dry.
- Resist the urge to fix your child's work knowing that practice makes perfect! Remember to praise your child's efforts and be specific about what they have done well.



Age Considerations

- Toddlers: make the bed together and then encourage your child to decorate the bed with teddies, dolls, special toys, creating a sense of ownership.
- Preschool: engage children to help out by making it fun! Ask your child to lay down on the bed and lift the sheet high up into the air and down over their body. After the giggles have stopped, work together to smooth out the sheets and blankets.
- Transition to school: ask children to take off all the sheets and blankets and get them to help you out with the entire washing and drying cycle.

