

ACTION RESEARCH – DRESSING

Focus

Junior students – Te Matatini Tahī, Te Matatini Rua, Donovan, Salford, Poutama Junior

Strategic aims

Junior students who engage in swimming sessions three to four times per week will have more opportunities to practice dressing skills and will increase their level of independence with dressing

Annual Aim

Students will increase their level of independence with dressing tasks following swimming sessions.

Target

Increased level of independence across five junior classes.

Context

There is a growing number of students within Ruru School, mainly from the junior classrooms, who are referred to occupational therapy for personal cares skills, especially for dressing. Students of the junior classes at Ruru Specialist School attend swimming sessions 2-4 times per week. This is a naturally occurring environment where the occupational therapist and teaching staff can assess the level of support required for dressing.

Completing personal cares as independently as possible creates a sense of personal achievement and can motivate students to achieve additional tasks. As dressing is practised most days in Ruru's junior classrooms, it fits well into the established routines of the students to teach new skills and create an increase sense of achievement.

Gathering of Information/Action

Occupational therapist gathered dressing information through observations and discussions with classroom teacher for t-shirts, underwear, and short/trousers and the students' level on independence (independent, verbal prompts, and physical support). This information was pre tested at the beginning of term 2 and post tested at the end of term 3.

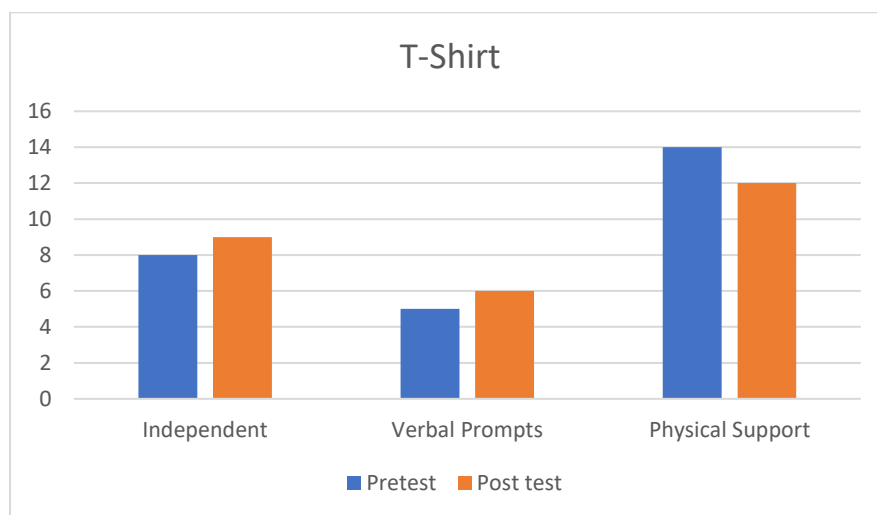
Staff were provided with professional learning in regards to dressing and strategies to assist the students in becoming more independent. Dressing visuals were provided to the pool changing areas which were used with some students who required more assistance with the sequencing of the task.

Outcome

Overall, the pretest data shows that of the 27 students involved, 8 were fully independent with dressing at the beginning of the trial. These students were not post tested. Of the remaining 19 students, 11 increased their level of independence with at least one item of clothing, while 8 students showed no evidence of improvement.

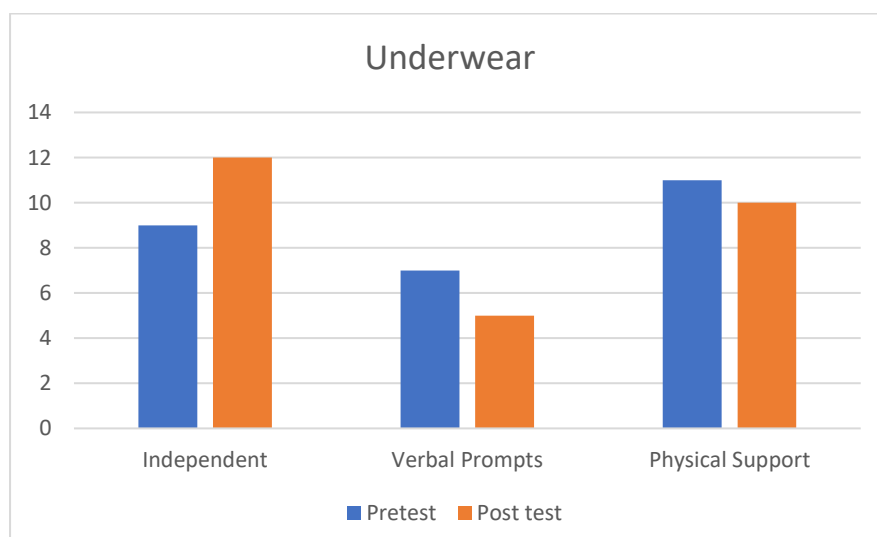
T-Shirt

Overall, three students increased their level of independence with putting on their t-shirt when dressing after swimming. One student moved from requiring verbal prompts to becoming fully independent, while two moved from requiring physical support to requiring verbal prompting. Putting on t-shirts after swimming was the area of dressing that saw the least amount of increase in independence.



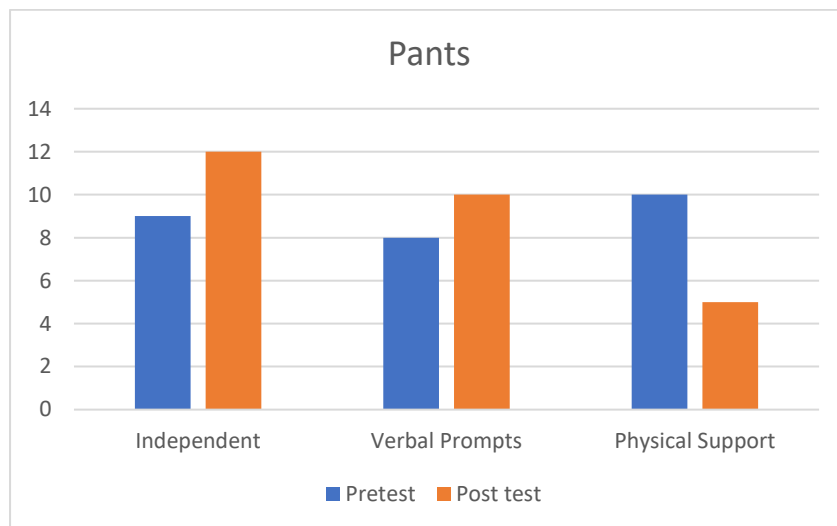
Underwear

Putting on underwear following swimming saw four students increase their independence level. Three students moved from requiring verbal prompts to being independent and one student increased their independence from requiring physical support to requiring verbal prompts.



Pants

Overall, eight students increased their level of independence when putting on pants following swimming sessions. Five students increased from requiring physical support to requiring verbal prompting and three students moved from requiring verbal prompting to being fully independent. Putting on pants was the area that saw the most amount of increase in independence level.



Reflection/Reasons for Variance

It is to be noted that many students involved in the research use continence products for toileting. These are very difficult for students to pull up when the students are damp from swimming and can rip very easily, therefore, no student who uses continence products for toileting increased their independence level when putting on underwear. The students who use underwear were the four students who increased their level of independence.

Putting on t-shirts showed the least amount of increase in level of independence across the three areas. Upon reflection, this is due to the more complex skills involved in putting on a t-shirt as opposed to putting on pants.

Another factor to consider is the difficulty of dressing following swimming. Often after swimming and with towel drying, bodies tend to be damp which can make putting on clothes more difficult compared to when their body is dry. This could reduce the number of students who were able to improve their ability to improve their independence with dressing.

Evaluation/Next Steps

- Improving independence with dressing skills will remain a focus of the pool programme at Ruru School for the junior students.
- Improved dressing resources will be implemented in the pool changing rooms and teachers and teacher aides of junior classrooms will be provided with further professional learning of teaching dressing where needed to increase dressing independence.

Rebecca Brown - Occupational Therapist