

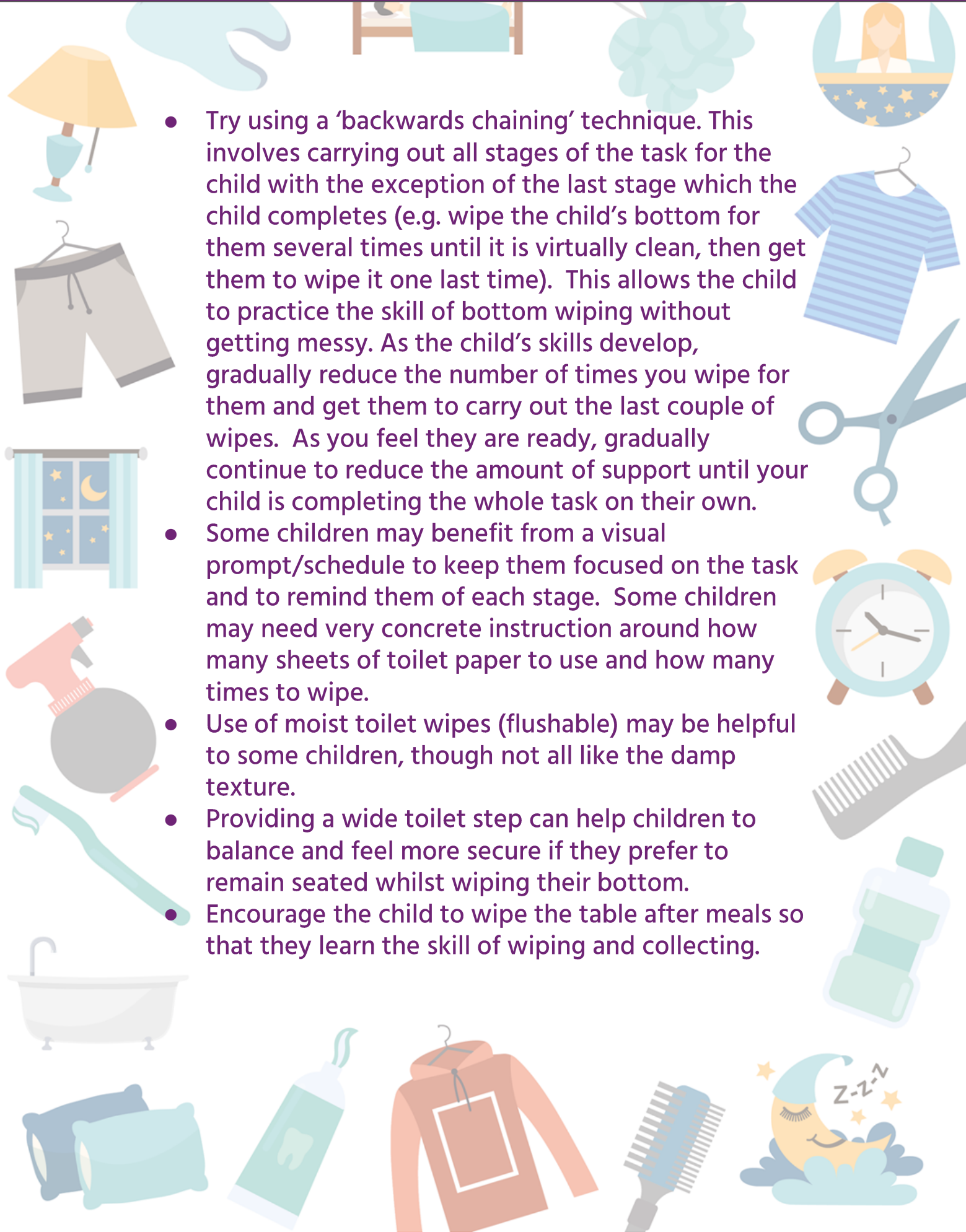
Children can have difficulties with bottom wiping for a number of reasons:

- Some find it difficult to reach far enough and others don't have the hand dexterity to carry out the task effectively.
- It can be difficult to monitor body-position and know how one part of their body is moving in relation to another. This makes it harder to reach behind the body as the child cannot visually monitor how they are moving.
- Some children experience a greater sensitivity to touch or smell which can make them unwilling to attempt the task at all.
- Other children under-respond to touch information so may not be able to feel whether they have cleaned themselves adequately.
- Concentration and getting easily distracted can also be a problem and they may not persevere long enough to be effective.

The following strategies may be beneficial:

- Try placing an angled mirror (preferable a shatterproof or safety mirror) on the floor or low down next to the toilet to enable your child to see what they are doing and check they have cleaned themselves adequately.

- Try using a 'backwards chaining' technique. This involves carrying out all stages of the task for the child with the exception of the last stage which the child completes (e.g. wipe the child's bottom for them several times until it is virtually clean, then get them to wipe it one last time). This allows the child to practice the skill of bottom wiping without getting messy. As the child's skills develop, gradually reduce the number of times you wipe for them and get them to carry out the last couple of wipes. As you feel they are ready, gradually continue to reduce the amount of support until your child is completing the whole task on their own.
- Some children may benefit from a visual prompt/schedule to keep them focused on the task and to remind them of each stage. Some children may need very concrete instruction around how many sheets of toilet paper to use and how many times to wipe.
- Use of moist toilet wipes (flushable) may be helpful to some children, though not all like the damp texture.
- Providing a wide toilet step can help children to balance and feel more secure if they prefer to remain seated whilst wiping their bottom.
- Encourage the child to wipe the table after meals so that they learn the skill of wiping and collecting.



- Try practising wiping whilst the child is in the bath to teach the movement required. Teach the amount of pressure needed for wiping by asking the child to press/wipe the flannel/sponge on parent's arm.

If your child struggles to reach behind, place their hands correctly for wiping, or adjust clothing perhaps try some of the following games:

- Place clothes pegs on their trousers at their bottom and have them remove them without turning around to look. Introduce a timed element for fun!
- Tie an apron around their waist with the apron pocket positioned on their bottom. Place objects in the pocket for them to locate and retrieve, or have them post objects into the pocket. Again, timing the game may introduce motivation.
- Ball games such as passing a ball or balloon around the waist and around the legs can help to develop reach, dexterity and body awareness.
- Playing 'dressing up games' that involve pulling underwear down to the knees and back up again (over the top of underwear already in place!) will help the child learn to manage their underwear whilst toileting. Timing the games will add an element of fun, but also help the child learn to manage their clothing in a hurried situation (such as feeling desperate for the toilet).

Sensory Occupational Therapy Service