

## Occupational Therapy Children and Young People

### Shoelaces



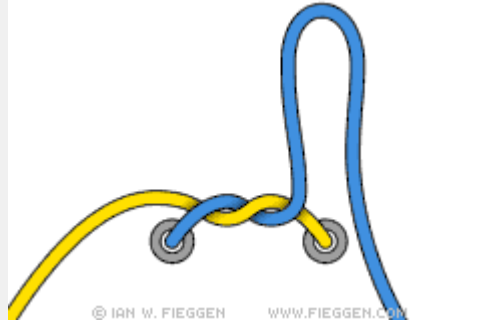
Children learning to tie their shoes laces at a variety of ages. Learning to tie shoes laces is a complex task, which should not be under estimated. Children have to be able to use both sides of their body to do different tasks at the same time (Bilateral Integration.) They require refined fine motor skills, such as a pincer grasp and in hand manipulation.

#### **Top Tips**

- Replace thin shoelaces with something easier to grip. Soft, wide (but not too fat) laces are ideal.
- Thick shoelaces also provide extra friction in the eyelets, which helps keep the starting knot tight while working on the tricky finishing bow.
- Replace slippery synthetic shoelaces with ones made of cotton or other natural fibres, as these provide better grip and also help keep the starting knot tight.
- Use a double starting knot, which keeps things even tighter.
- Make sure the shoes fit snugly. If the shoe is already nice and tight, the shoelaces don't have to be tied quite so tightly, making it easier while learning.
- Sit comfortably and practice with a shoe on a table, or with a shoelace or rope wrapped around the thigh, instead of awkwardly reaching down to tie your shoes.
- Knot the very ends of each shoelace to stop those ends being accidentally pulled through the knot (when tightening) or out of the eyelets (when loosening).
- Make sure the child's shoelaces are untied every night when they remove their shoes. This will ensure that they can't take a shortcut and try to shove their foot into a shoe that's still tied. Besides being better for both the feet and the shoes, the daily ritual of tying also helps them to learn more quickly.

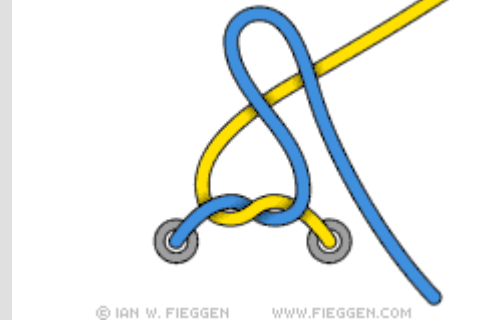
## Teaching Technique

### Step 1:



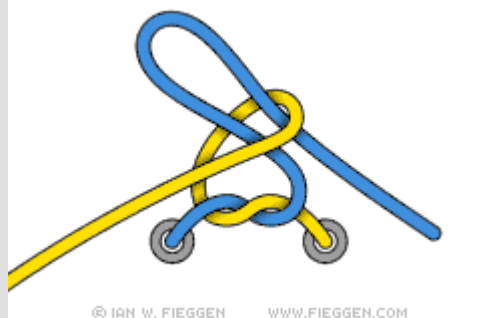
Tie a Left-over-Right starting knot as shown, then make the right (blue) end into a "loop" by simply doubling it back onto itself.

### Step 2:



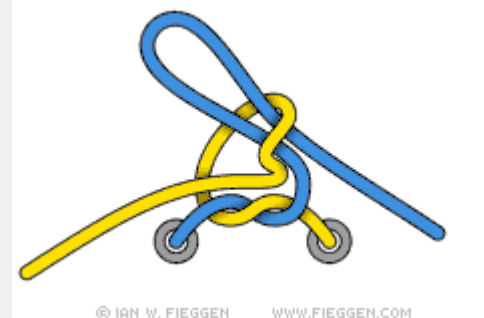
Take the left (yellow) end and pass it around to the right, going **behind** the right loop.

### Step 3:



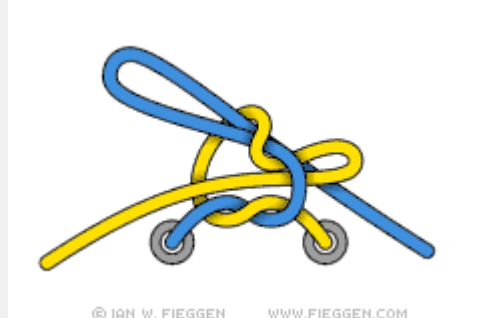
Continue the left (yellow) end **around** the right loop to end up in front.

### Step 4:



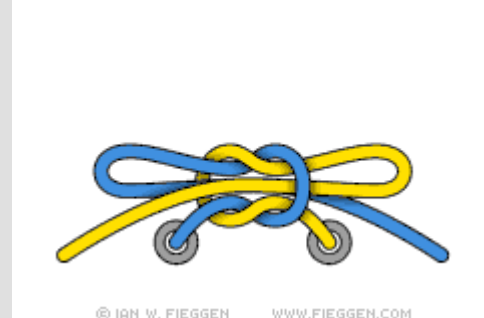
Start to feed the left (yellow) lace into the "hole" that has just been made.

### Step 5:



With the left (yellow) lace now through the "hole", grab hold of both loops and start to pull the knot tight.

### Step 6:



Continue pulling on the loops until the knot is firmly tied.