

# Shoe Tying for Teachers and Parents

Students today have very limited experience with shoe tying. Manufacturers are mainly producing Pull on, Zipper and Velcro shoes for children less than 7 years of age. Daycare and nursery schools teach a very simplified version of tying often called 'bunny ears'. The method does not produce a long lasting tight knot. Students that are in Upper Grades and are still using this method are constantly stopping to retie shoes. The percentage of 8 to 12 year olds that have not mastered this skill has increased dramatically. Think of any youth soccer or basketball game you have attended. How many untied sneakers and dangerous situations did you view?

When you have students that already feel they know how to tie well, sometimes they don't want to learn a new way. Give the method a special name like "The athletes shoe" or - the "sport way" of tying - the "Big Kid Way".

Let the parents of your students know when you begin practicing this skill, so they may practice at home as well. It also helps if parents remove the corded, round, or fashion shoelaces that come with many sneakers and replace them with the traditional flat shoelaces. These shoelaces are easier for children to tie, and they stay tied longer than fashion shoelaces.

Provide some sort of incentive for those who master the skill. An "Official Shoe Tie-er" award, stickers, a ribbon or giving out colorful new flat shoelaces are great suggestions.

A very important thing to remember when teaching a child to tie shoes is for the adult to STOP tying laces for them. If it means that the child takes longer and/or walks around with untied shoelaces dragging, so be it. After being instructed, most children will learn to tie shoes when they see that their adult role model will not do it for them.

Left-handed children may need extra time and help. I have learned the skill with both hands so I can demonstrate it either way. Shoe tying is a developmental skill but most five year olds can manage tying. If a child is really struggling, they may not be developmentally ready to learn. In that case, the adult should go ahead and tie the shoes and wait a few weeks or months to begin teaching the skill again.

The following is a cute shoe tying rhyme that helps K-3 children remember the steps of tying.

Carol L. Coletta

**Build a tee pee, Come inside,  
Bring a friend. Close it tight so we can hide.  
Over the mountain, *And* around we go.  
Here's my arrow, And here's my bow!**

1. Start tying by tightening laces from the toe of the shoe up to the top of the laces.

2. Keep tension on the laces.

3. Cross laces to make an X.



4. Pinch the center of the X.



5. Loop one string over and through the bottom.



6. Bring the same string through again



7. Pull the laces tight & keep tension on the Laces.



8. Keep tension on both laces. Stick out a pointer finger.



9. Loop the lace over the finger, pinch close to the shoe.



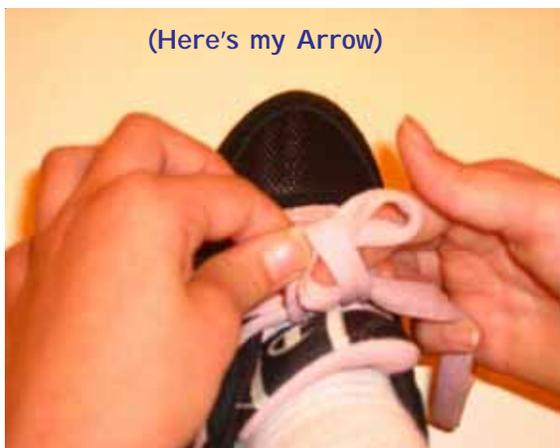
10. Pull pointer finger out.



11. Bring the free lace all the way around the loop.



12. Push the same lace through the hole made close to the loop



## Now Double Knot the laces

Make an X with both bows.



Loop one over the other



Push through the hole at the bottom



Pull both bows until tight