

A18 – Planning and achieving

Developing the ability to sustain attention to a particular activity or instruction, while watching what is being demonstrated and having the ability to touch and manipulate items in both hands, is essential to to learn new skills.

Initially they may show poor motivation or appear uninterested in the task, requiring repeated reintroduction across different environments, times of day and combined with favoured activities to capture their attention.

They may be very slow or only participate to start or finish off the task and will need time to organise their body position and to think about the necessary movement required for the task.

Over time and with repeated opportunity to practice, they will learn to move and respond more spontaneously, as they begin to master and become more automated in the skills required.

Additional adult support is likely to be required to assist with increasing tolerance and acceptance of unfamiliar/new activities for sensory skill development as some children may have difficulty with developing more refined movement, requiring help in where to start and how to move their body through the different positions required.

They may not be able to 'generalise' these skills to other situations e.g. the set structure with the same person and process may be necessary to complete the task each time.

Aim: to assist with developing eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, pre-writing and increased independence in self led play and conceptual development.

Whole body activities: to explore the different internal sensations felt with each movement.

- **Simple obstacle courses** to explore the concepts of **in, on, around, over and through**. Eg, to sit in a big cardboard box, to climb soft play, to rotate around a person, to walk over a balance beam, to crawl through a tunnel – and use changes in direction to grade up their abilities.
- **Animal walks** to negotiate and plan the movement required of their trunk, head and limbs.
- **Cross marching** with oppositional arm to legs (working left with right side of body). Try this in sitting to touch left hand to right knee three times then swap sides.
- **Balls skills** to organise their body, hands, eyes and the level of force required to respond in throwing with more control and direction. Using a bounce catch method on return will give them some extra time to respond and achieve catching a medium or large ball.
- Try combining throwing beanbags into a hoop while standing on a trampette, to add greater complexity to grasp and sustain their attention.
- **Copying or imitating** static positions during 'simple simon' games or slower repetitive actions to songs.
- **Heel to toe walking** along a low balance beam or tape line.
- **Jumping** down from a low step or short three minute sessions (ideally three times a day) on a trampette to jump and coordinate their body action (working top with bottom half of body)
- **One leg balance** near a wall to stabilise and swap sides and grade up abilities with practice.

- **Yoga** positions to come into four point position on hands and knees, then raise one arm forward and down again, then the other arm – then try to raise each leg.
- **Carrying heavy items** such as books, trays and toy boxes, to put away in set places will add greater physical body awareness to the action.

Hand activities: Ask the child ‘what do we need to do first’ and encourage them to respond in the planning stage to prepare eg, I need to sit down, and build up to include greater involvement to set the task.

Include the child in the tidying up session after the activity, as this forms part of their organisational skills.

- **Large building blocks** to build with initially, before grading up to Duplo size as they achieve skills.
- **Large form board puzzles with handles as an option**, to reduce their need to focus on using a pincer grip pick up and allow them to focus of the shapes.
- **Threading** using large chunky wooden beads with thin rope and a feeder end initially and grade up as skills progress to pipe cleaners with smaller beads.
- **Pre-writing skills** to explore line and shape formations using the properties of touch and multimedia eg, coloured or scented shaving foam on the table or mirror surface, painting at an easel, chalk and slate boards, templates to draw around etc.
- **Big movements:**
 - drawing on the wall in high kneeling or standing
www.magicwhiteboard.co.uk is a statically charged paper. It will stick to most hard flat surfaces including walls, doors, glass and wallpaper without needing tape or bluetac and whiteboard marker ink will rub off
 - laying on their front on the floor
 - across a low height table leaning over to reach across the big sheets of paper
- **Draw around each other’s body** when lying on their backs on the floor – to develop their awareness to the body shape, parts, size etc.
- **Playdough or theraputty** to provide resistive hand work and give stronger sensation feedback to hands, while encouraging oppositional grips (thumb to fingers) and use of both hands together.

Environmental factors: Where all possible:

- choose a time in the day that is likely to be quieter or less busy time and when the child has no other agenda eg, needs food, drink or the toilet or is at low energy state
- help them to identify contained areas by defining the space with sectional dividers or carpets
- tape the surrounding areas of the sand or water tray and encourage play to remain within these confines

- use of a carpet square or floor or chair seat wedge will assist with defining their own space but also assist with prompting more upright sitting (as generally children with poor body awareness may also have low muscle tone and slump in sitting positions)
- if you are moving from room to room, request they open the doors for you to manage the door handle and push or pull action required. Do help them initially to teach concepts first

Activity guidelines

- Introduce the activities at a graded level, within the child's individual level of tolerance and achievement, with fun motivating (multisensory) aspects.
- Use short simple instruction eg, 'Tidy up time', 'Snack time', 'Carpet time' with consistent specific sound associations to initially gain their attention eg, a bell or tambourine.
- Demonstrate new or unfamiliar tasks first.
- Use hand over hand to teach more refined grasps or placement initially.
- Use few words and grade the tone and pitch of your voice, while monitoring the child's responses to you – to determine the best type of approach to use.
- Give positive feedback in praise of their achievements 'good tidying' 'good sitting'.
- Count down toward the end of the session eg, one more activity and '5, 4, 3, 2, 1 finished' or use a large sand timer.
- Always encourage the child's participation and attention during activities, when appropriate, to request they turn the page of the book during story time or to point to the pictures, etc.

Frequency of use: Complete 10-15 minutes sessions every day.