Backward Chaining

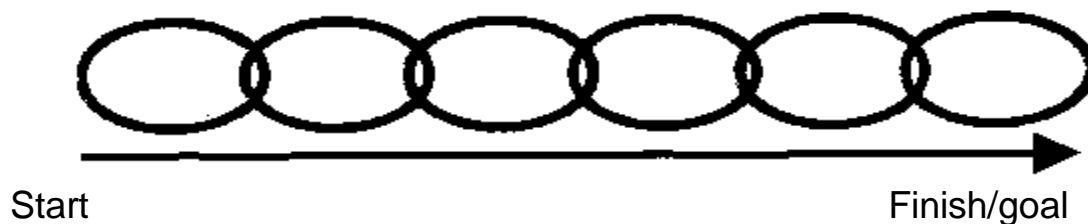"Backward Chaining" is the natural way of helping a child to succeed in completing an activity.

Sometimes when a child has difficulties in learning, it can be easy to make the following kinds of mistakes.

1) Over indulgence: everything is done for the child → Result: no learning

2) Over challenging: the child is "thrown in at the deep end" and is given no help. The child fails→ Result: frustration, loss of confidence, no learning.

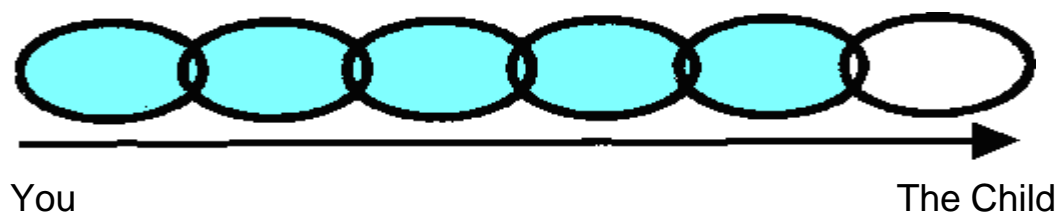**Q: How can this be overcome?   A: By Backward Chaining.**

A way of looking at activities
We can think of any activity we want a child to learn as a series of separate smaller actions. A child joins these together to form a "chain". The "chain" is the total activity.

Start   Finish/goal

What you do:

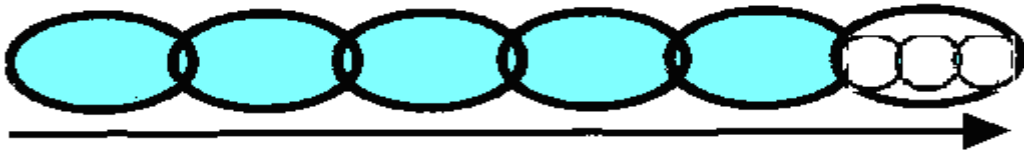1) You do everything but the last bit.

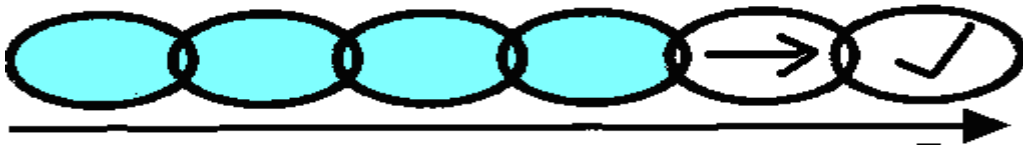You   The Child

This last bit is much easier for a child. He/she can see what needs to be done, so success is more likely → Result: learning, increased confidence, pleasure

For example; completing an inset puzzle, building a tower, putting on a sock, or using a spoon.

But what if he/she cannot do even the last bit? Then you split that last bit up into smaller steps, and you try and think of other ways of making it clearer and easier.
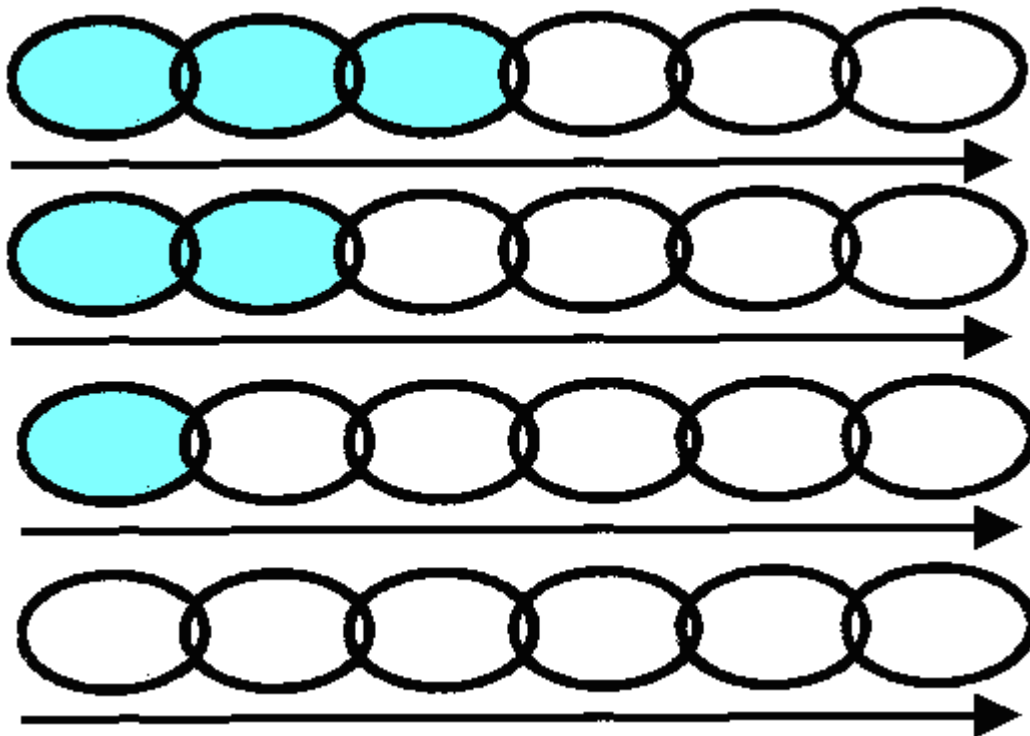
2) When he/she has mastered the final bit, set it all up except the last 2 links in the chain. The second to last step is now easier to master, since the child knows the next (last) bit of the chain.

And then?

3) Continue working back down the chain, until the child has mastered the whole activity.

Mastery!

In other words you SET UP this activity so the child will succeed, and learn and gain in confidence. Remember this technique is also useful in play or when you are trying to get the child to do something he is reluctant to do, like clearing away his toys.

With thanks to Dr John Richer, Paediatric Psychologist, for this helpful technique.