

Intervention Strategies

Assistance

One intervention strategy is the use of materials or engagement in activities that require adult or peer assistance. To have access to materials or to complete an activity, the child will need some form of assistance from an adult or peer. This strategy can be effective in the development of a range of skills in the adaptive, fine motor, gross motor, and communication areas. Placing a snack in a container with a lid that the child cannot remove independently may set the stage for the child to seek assistance. Once the request is made and the lid is loosened, the child can then practice his pincer grasp and wrist rotation to complete the opening of the container and retrieve the snack. Wind-up toys offer another example of materials that often require assistance from an adult.

Change in Expectations

Omitting or changing a familiar step or element in a well-practiced or routine activity is a strategy known as *change in expectations*. Many changes may appear comical to children. For example, an adult who tries to draw or write with an upside-down pencil using the eraser as the lead may seem silly. The purpose of a change in expectations like this is twofold: children's recognition of change provides information about their discrimination and memory abilities, and 2) such changes provide ideal situations for evoking a variety of communication and problem-solving responses (e.g., the child verbalizes a protest, the child turns the pencil so that the pointed end is down). Children with severe disabilities can often recognize changes such as putting a mitten on a foot, and communicate this recognition. The alert team member can often shape these communicative responses into functional behaviors.

Delay

The delay strategy introduces a pause or small delay in an activity in order to prompt a response from the child. For example, an adult who is teaching a child to imitate a word may pause after saying the word and wait for the child to imitate. Delaying fits easily in increasing the initiation of requests by children.

Forgetfulness

The strategy of *forgetting* can be used by interventionists and caregivers to encourage action and problem solving by children. It is an effective strategy for determining what children know and can do. Forgetting can occur when the adult fails to provide the necessary equipment or materials or overlooks a familiar or important component of a routine or activity. Examples include not having a primary food such as peanut butter for making peanut butter sandwiches at snack time, not having paintbrushes available for a painting activity, or not recalling a word or phrase to a familiar story or song. When forgetfulness occurs, children should recognize the missing element and convey this information by asking questions, searching for materials, or engaging in other appropriate problem-solving actions.

Novelty

Children are generally enticed by new toys or activities. The careful introduction of novelty may stimulate desirable reactions from children. For infants and children with severe disabilities, this strategy may be more effective if the novelty is introduced within the context of a routine or familiar activity; for example, a new action could be added to a familiar game such as Duck, Duck, Goose. The game could be slightly altered by changing the words to Cat, Cat, Mouse.

For older or more capable children, examples include bringing in a classroom pet, taking a new path from the bus to the classroom, or adding laminated shapes on the floor where children line up for transitions. For most infants and young children, the introduction of novelty is most effective if the change is not dramatically discrepant from their expectations. For example, a team member who makes major changes to his or her appearance, such as cutting very long hair to a very short style, may present a form of novelty that is initially reacted to with crying and stranger anxiety. Adding materials to a sensory table that are foreign to children is another example of novelty that may initially be ineffective because the children are not interested or do not understand how to use the material.

Piece by Piece

An easy to execute intervention strategy can be used when activities require materials that have many pieces. The interventionist can ration giving access to something in particular by separating it into pieces so that the child must request materials piece by piece. For example, when working on a puzzle, pieces can be handed out as a child asks for them. Labeling of the piece or action can be encouraged or required. This strategy may be used effectively when children use paint, glue, paper, crayons, blocks, or other small items. Snack time with food such as cereal, raisins, or apple pieces also presents opportunities for employing this strategy.

Team members should be alert, however, to the introduction of too many distractions. For example, having a child ask for each puzzle piece may destroy the continuity of the activity and interfere in the meaningfulness for the child. The interventionist should balance providing opportunities to practice skills with the children's needs to become actively and genuinely involved in the activity.

Visible but Unreachable

A strategy that generally requires only simple environmental manipulation is placing objects so that they are visible but unreachable. Placing objects within children's sight, but out of their reach can facilitate the development of social, communication, and problem-solving behaviors. When using this strategy, it is important that the child is able to see the object and that a peer or adult is available to retrieve the object unless independent problem solving is being encouraged. Placing objects out of reach is often an effective strategy to use with children who are learning communication skills. Preferred foods or objects can be placed in sight but out of reach, requiring the child to use some form of communication to reach them.

Responsive Teaching

Young children learn best when they are interested in and free to explore the toys and materials around them. By observing what children do and following their lead, you can be sure you are providing teaching that is responsive to their needs and that holds their interest. Following the child's lead is not a magic process. There are six basic steps to Responsive Teaching. 1) Let the children select the activity. 2) Pay attention to what the children do with the materials. 3) Allow children time to use and play with the materials. 4) Encourage children to elaborate on or extend the way they play. 5) Give children chances to practice their new skills. 6) Reinforce the skill.

Pretti-Frontczak, K., & Bricker, D. (2004). *An activity-based approach to early intervention* (3rd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Wesley, P., Dennis, B., & Tyndall, S. (2007). *Quicknotes: Inclusion resources for early childhood professionals* (2nd ed.). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY APPROACHES

ONE TEACH, ONE OBSERVE- either the SLP or CT observes, while the other assumes primary instructional responsibility.

ONE TEACH, ONE "DRIFT"- the SLP or CT assumes primary instructional responsibilities while the other assists students with their work, monitors behavior, corrects assignments etc.

STATION TEACHING- the SLP or CT divide instructional content into two parts. Groups are switched so that all students receive instruction from each teacher.

PARALLEL TEACHING- the SLP and CT each instructs half the group, each addressing the same instructional objectives.

REMEDIAL TEACHING- the SLP or CT instructs students who have mastered the material to be learned while the other reteaches those students who have not mastered the material.

SUPPLEMENTAL TEACHING- the SLP or CT presents the lesson using a standard format. The other adapts the lesson for those students who cannot master the material.

TEAM TEACHING- both the SLP and CT present the lesson to all students. This may include shared lecturing or having one teacher begin the lesson while the other takes over when appropriate.