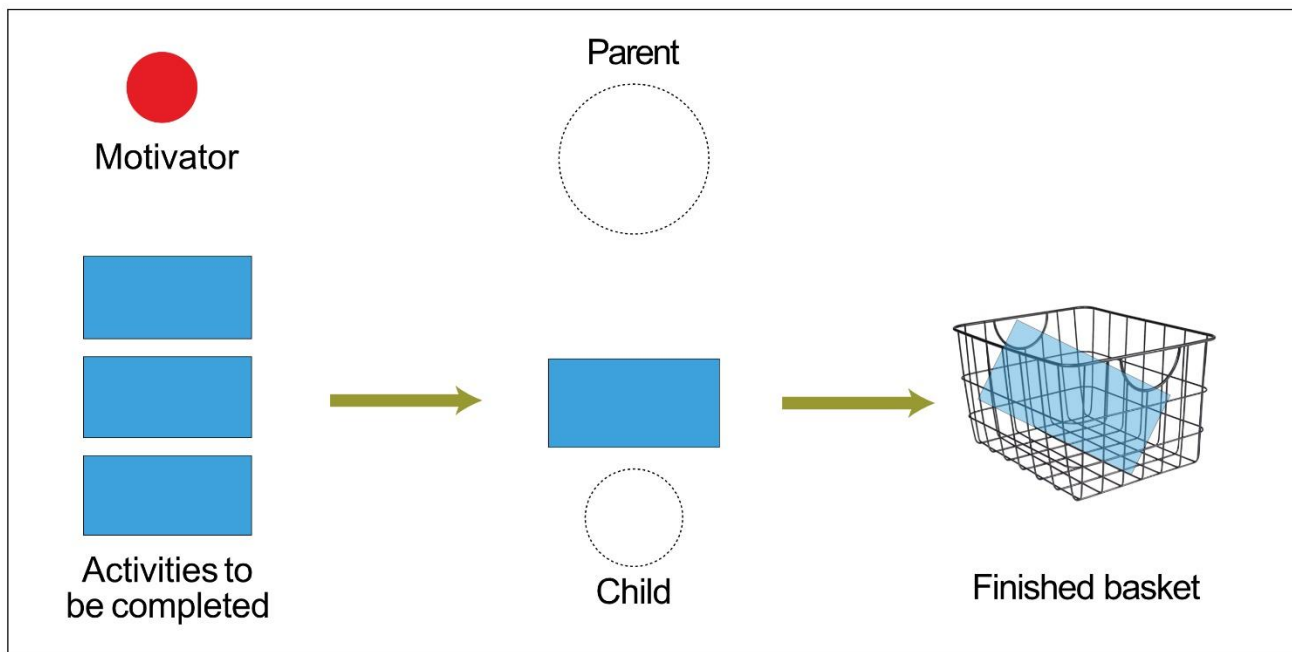


STRUCTURED HOME TEACHING SESSION

by UNC-CH Division TEACCH

The following descriptive offers suggestions on how a parent or caregiver can provide home sessions for their child. These sessions are often recommended to parents by TEACCH therapists as a means of teaching new skills, as well as an opportunity for meaningful interaction with their child within a structured format. This is another example of how the TEACCH program impacts the lives of families with children on the autism spectrum.



PLANNING YOUR WORK SESSION

- If possible, establish a predictable daily routine. This means doing the same type of activity in the same place at the same time each day. Keeping to this routine will help the child anticipate what to expect.
- Set aside 20–30 minutes, several times a day (if possible), when interruptions will be at a minimum.
- Choose an area that is relatively quiet and free from distractions.
- Define the work area visually by arranging the table and chairs in a corner of a room or a corner created by a wall and some high furniture.

- Use the same work area every day so that the child will learn to associate the area with work. It should be located away from the child's routine play areas—a special place for a special kind of activity.
- When the child is sitting at the table, position yourself across from him/her so that you can smile, talk, touch and give praise in a way the child finds pleasing when work is accomplished.
- Use toys or tools you may have on hand. Use discretion with smaller manipulatives to prevent swallowing.
- When it is time for your child to begin work, hand him or her a “transition object” (eg. a Slinky) that indicates “work time.” Designate a place at the worktable where the Slinky can be placed as soon as the child sits down, or have the child put it in the “finished basket” before sitting down.
- Present the work activities so that the child is working from his/her left to right. Place a “finished basket” to the child's right. The finished basket is used to give them a visual cue that an activity is completed. When a toy or activity is put into the basket, it is finished and may not be removed during the remainder of that work session.
- Present each activity in such a way that the ending is visually clear. Place the work on the child's left and encourage them to do it independently. For example, when all of the pennies have been put in the cup and the container that held them is empty, the activity is finished! Offer help when you are sure it is needed, but keep in mind that the goal is always for greater independence in the performance of the activity.
- To clearly signify the completion of an “open-ended” play activity, tap a bell a few times, saying “All finished” and put it in the “finished” basket. If it is an activity that is also used as a motivator during the work session, put it in a different basket that is not bound by the “Never take back out” rule, which applies to the finished basket.
- During work sessions, keep verbal instructions simple, concise, and clear. Use the same words for the same instructions (ie. “take one,” “put in,” “match it,” etc.). Using hand gestures and occasionally guiding the child's hand may help him/her focus on whatever is being asked.
- Typically, 5-6 activities are presented during a work session. A reward can be provided for completing. The activities and the reward (often a highly motivating activity) should be visible so that the child makes the connection of “First work and then play.”
- In the event that the child is visually distracted by seeing all of the activities at the same time, it may be helpful to keep them out of sight/grasp until it is time to present them.
- Most of all, enjoy the work sessions. Make them fun!



RECOMMENDED BEGINNING ACTIVITIES

Use discretion! *There is always the danger of a child swallowing smaller manipulatives. These sessions should be supervised accordingly.*

Language should be kept to a minimum, using simple, concrete instructions on a consistent basis.

2-Way Sorting Task

- Place 2 empty containers in front of the child.
- Demonstrate by placing a different object in each container, then match one of the objects, saying, "Match." Use hand-over-hand guidance, if necessary.

Stacking Beads on A Dowel

- Place the wooden dowel that is set upright in an inverted shoebox in front of the child.
- Handing the child one bead at a time, say "Put on" (demonstrate, using hand-over-hand guidance, if necessary).
- When all of the beads are on the dowel, the work is finished and goes into the finished basket.
- Progress to stringing beads for a greater challenge.

Clothespins on Coffee Can

- Place a coffee can in front of the child.
- Put one clothespin on a highlighted area (an outline of the clothespin) on the edge of the can.
- Hand the child a clothespin and have him/her do the same.
- As always, use the "finished" basket when work is completed.

Film Canister Sort

- Place two coffee cans in front of the child, one with a round hole cut in the lid, the other with a slit in the lid.
- Take one film canister, remove its lid, and put the canister and the lid in the appropriate cans.
- Then have the child match the part to the opening in the lid one at a time.
- When the Task is completed, work goes in the "finished" basket.

Pop Bead Pull Apart and Put In

- Have the child pull apart two large pop beads and put the single beads in a large, open container. As always, finished work goes in the "finished" basket.

Take Apart and 2-Way Sort

- Place the box with a round hole and narrow slit cut in its top in front of the child.
- Hand the cardboard square, with the clothespin attached, to the child and say, “Pull apart” and then “Put in.”
- Hand the child the card in such a way that the clothespin is on the same side as the round hole.
- If necessary, use hand-over-hand guidance to ensure success, working toward the goal of the child accomplishing the Task independently.

One- and Two-Piece Insert Puzzles

- Place an empty puzzle board in front of the child.
- Handing the child a puzzle piece, say, “Fix it” or “Put in.”
- When all the pieces are in, the puzzle is finished.

Color Match

- Place two trays in front of the child, each with a different colored disc attached.
- Hand the child a colored disc and say, “Match it.”
- When all the discs are matched, work goes in the finished basket.





ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Simple Put-In Jobs

- Drop foam cubes through a large slot into a container.
- Put pennies, keys, or other favorite objects into a slotted container.

Take-Apart and Put-In Activities

- Use whatever manipulatives you have on hand. Take apart two segments of Legos, for example, and put the single pieces in an open container.
- Pull large wooden beads off a pipe cleaner and put them in a container.
- Take apart Tinkertoys, for example, and put the single pieces in an open container.

Take-Apart Activities

- Uncover objects by grasping and pulling off the cover (eg. socks over bottles).
- Remove big beads from a spindle (one at a time).

Pegboard

- Take plastic pegs out of a rubber pegboard and put the pegs in an open can.

Stacking

- Stack six rings on a peg (use a simple stack toy and give the child the rings in the right order). Or stack large thread spools.

Clothespins on Box

- Remove old-fashioned wooden clothespins from the lip of a box and drop them into the box. Do the same with plastic clothespins (spring type) from a plastic container.

Play Doh

- Encourage and guide the child to touch, press, pull apart, roll, poke, squeeze, using their fingers in a variety of ways.

Shape Sorter

- Hand the child wooden (or plastic) shapes and have him/her drop them through the matching slots in a sorter.

Block Stack

- Using Mega Bloks or Legos, for example, affix a blue rectangular block and a red rectangular block to a cardboard surface.
- Have the child match and stack other red and blue blocks appropriately as you hand them to the child one at a time.