

What I learned today

How to use the Helper's Rule

The **Helper's Rule** is a set of strategies which you can use to help your child learn a new skill. The Helper's Rule includes the following steps:

1. **Set your child up for success by:**
 - being Face to Face
 - OWLing
 - Including their interests so they are ready to learn
2. **Use words only:**
 - Say only the direction to your child, do not add extra information
 - Wait to see if they are able to follow through
 - If they don't respond move on to step 3
3. **Use words and add a gesture:**
 - Repeat the direction and add a gesture which will help your child understand the meaning of your direction
 - Again, wait to see if they are able to follow through
 - If they respond appropriately praise them, if not move on to step 4
4. **Use words and help your child follow through:**
 - Repeat the direction again and now use hand over hand to help your child follow through (e.g. guide the child's hand)



Adapted from *More Than Words: A Parent's Guide to Building Interaction and Language Skills for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Social Communication-Third Edition* (Fern Sussman, 2012).

December 2012



DRESSING SKILLS

What affects my child's ability to participate in dressing?

- posture
- balance
- range of motion
- muscle tone
- strength in fingers, hands, arms and shoulders
- co-ordination
- body awareness
- motor planning
- acceptance of touch and textures
- spatial concepts (left/right, top/bottom, front/back)

How can I teach my child to dress herself?

Use **BACKWARD CHAINING**

- Break dressing down into small manageable steps
- You complete all but the last step, allowing your child to complete the task
- Make sure that the last step is small enough that your child will be successful.
- When the child has mastered that step, back it up and allow your child to complete the last two steps.
- Example putting on pants – the adult holds the pants while the child steps into the legs, and then the child pulls them up to finish.

Helpful Hints:

- try undressing first
- leave extra time
- have your child sit down or lean against a wall for extra support
- use a dressing visual schedule
- laying out clothing in order in goes on from left-to-right
- use loose fitting clothing
- try practicing with shorts and short sleeves before pants and long sleeves
- try using a zipper pull



For more information please visit www.earlyintervention.simcoe.ca

Revised 2015



PRE-PRINTING SKILLS

Why are pre-printing skills important?

Before children are successful at writing letters or numbers, children need to be able to copy the basic strokes for drawing.

What are the pre-printing strokes?

Horizontal line	Vertical line	Circle	Cross	Diagonal line	Square	"X"	Triangle	Diamond
—		○	+	↘	□	X	△	◇

How can I help my child work on pre-printing skills?

- Start with imitating horizontal and vertical strokes and follow progression above
- Start with having your child imitate (your child watches how you draw it)
- Once child is able to imitate the stroke have your child copy it (show your child a picture of the stroke)

Activity Suggestions:

- **Finger Paint.** Let your child's fingers do the walking, reducing the confusion of how to hold a crayon.
- **Draw in Sand.** Use a stick or fingers to trace race car paths and winding roads. Then have races with toy cars but be sure to stay on the track! Let your child copy your pattern and then you copy theirs!
- **Trace Stencils.** Buy or make your own designs in cardboard. Let your children trace on paper or the blackboard, and then colour in their designs! Letter stencils can be used to start printing their own name.
- **Chalk on the Sidewalk.** Let the sidewalk or driveway be the paper. Use those big fat pieces of chalk for small kids while bigger kids can use the skinny pieces.
- **Combine the basic strokes to make ladders or railroad tracks, fences, cages around animals.**
- **Have your child add details to drawings.** For example, add the eyes, nose, mouth, hair to a circle to make a face; add circles to a car or truck for wheels; add vertical lines to flowers for stems

Helpful Hints:

- Consistently start strokes top to bottom and left to right
- Use consistent words to describe the stroke. (i.e. "zoom" for horizontal lines and "zip" for vertical lines)
- Trace the strokes with their finger before using a crayon

Revised 2015

For more information please visit www.earlyintervention.simcoe.ca



SCISSORS SKILLS

Why are scissors skills important?

- For successful participation in school
- As a functional tool in our daily lives (e.g. opening packages)

What skills are involved in learning how to use scissors?

- two handed coordination, where one hand is the leader and the other is a helper
- grasp and release
- hand strength
- trunk and shoulder stability
- keeping eyes focused on the task



Progression of Scissors Skills:

Tool Use	Spray bottles, water squeeze toys Tongs to pick up and release small items (i.e. blocks, cotton balls, etc.) One hole punches
Singles Snips	Start with thin strips of paper Straws Make grass, hair for lion, etc
Consecutive Snips	Increase to wider strips of paper Draw thick lines for your child to follow Long grass
Cut Along a Path	draw thick lines for your child to follow Cut out buildings (skyscrapers)
Cut Along a Curve	Start with cutting along simple curves and progress to cutting out a circle

Helpful Hints:

- Use spring loaded scissors which require the child only to squeeze, not squeeze and release
- Use a thumbs up, elbow down position with elbow tucked into side
- Place a sticker or coloured dot on the thumbnail as a visual cue to have thumbs up
- Position scissors in front of child for easy pick up with thumb up
- Tape paper on a vertical surface (such as an easel) and have the child cut a line from the bottom up
- Try a variety of material to cut such as playdoh, cardstock, licorice, construction paper

Revised 2015

For more information please visit www.earlyintervention.simcoe.ca

Revised 2015