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MindBuilders
Empowering Parents through
Family-centred Intervention

Developmental Activities: discovering how things work**!**

Supporting a child's growth of understanding and the most basic elements of human learning using
The Waldon Approach: www.waldonassociation.org.uk   -   www.autismandunderstanding.com

There are two Kinds of Understanding:

General Understanding	**vs**	**Particular/Cultural Understanding**
= *the foundation of all other learning, cannot be taught, only happens through active movement*	*vs*	= *taught to help child to conform to the rules of the society in which he lives*
Learning from experience: spontaneous trial-error exploration of 'how do things work?'	vs	Teaching by adult of 'this is how we do things', discouraging spontaneous exploration
No right or wrong: before rules	vs	About right and wrong: Rules must be followed
Self-motivated + curiosity to experiment	vs	Told what to do and how
The more effort, the better.	vs	The less effort, the better.
Child does it for his own enjoyment	vs	Child does it for adult's approval

The **Asocial Lesson** allows the child to experience movements/activities that develop his general understanding of 'how things work'.
- The facilitator is behind/beside the child to show, prompt and assist, initially hand-over-hand, - without praise.
- Child may resist at first, because he has never done it before. After a few times, he will begin to understand.
- AVOID talking (too much) as it distracts the child from figuring out for himself how to understand.
- Best progress: up to 1 hour every day.
- The aim is to allow the child to feel and have new experiences about the world, which he may be able to use spontaneously at other times, i.e. avoid testing or teaching.

Primary and secondary impediments
Geoffrey Waldon distinguished between a 'primary impediments', the initial physical/mental problem affecting development, and 'secondary impediments', which are learned behaviours as a result of the primary problem.
- **Avoidance behaviours** such as tantrums, stiffening the body, avoidance/repetitive behaviours, õ
- **Self-delighting behaviours**, e.g. rocking, spinning, head banging and other 'comfort zone behaviours'

Activities (real objects before pictures)**:**
Objects are put down one at a time in front of the child, who picks each one up and puts it into the target container
- **Placing:** picking things up and putting them down, grasping, holding on and letting go
- **Piling:** by piling things up children discover the properties of objects, e.g. weight, size, texture, how things move and fall if put on top of another
- **Banging** is the basis of a child's ability to grasp, hold and make use of tools, e.g. spoon, wiping, drawing
- **Pairing:** recognising sameness/ difference and bringing together objects that are the same
- **Matching:** learning about similarities/ differences, e.g. objects that are similar or belong together
- **Sorting:** recognising that objects can be the same/similar and can be grouped into sets/categories, which requires a firm foundation of placing, pairing and matching, e.g. colours, animals, furniture, vehicles, õ
- **Sequencing:** complex form of thinking with linear movement: stacking, daily routines, action rhymes/songs, rhythm, dressing, speech, e.g. bigger/smaller, more/less, red-blue-red-blue, O+|O+|O+|, õ
- **Brick-building:** understanding of 3-dimensional complex relationships between different objects and forces, i.e. understanding spatial relationships, - requires firm foundation of placing, piling, matching and sorting
- **Scribbling and drawing:** understanding 2-dimensional space, necessary for understanding symbols
- **Coding** is the process by which one thing can be allowed to stand for another. It can only develop when the other learning-to-learn-tools are in place and interconnecting.

  1. **Early stage** understanding will be reinforced by: Banging, Scraping, Placing õ leading to
  2. **Precursor stage**: Pairing, Separating, Sequencing, Piling and Scribbling õ leading to
  3. **Learning-to-Learn-Tools** which are Matching, Sorting, Seriation, Brick Building, Drawing and Coding

Variations:
- Faster - more items - different objects - in different places - objects spread over a wider area
- Containers nearer/further - in a different place - at different angle - left/right - on the floor - in movement
- Different containers: jar, dish, cup, box, bottle, õ (not) transparent - with small hole/slit õ
- Different containers in different positions: some up, some down, some near, some far õ