

Motor planning and Organisational Strategies:

Motor planning is the ability to organise and sequence new activities, it affects the student's independence in self-help skills and motor development.

For the student with difficulty in motor planning, give simple step-by-step directions. Help the student identify the steps needed to accomplish the task. Demonstrate or ask another student to model the motor activity, then ask the student to try.

Asking questions such as "What do we need to do first, now what do we do next...?" can help student with difficulty in initiating and sequencing tasks.

Develop consistent home routines.

Use pictures in a diary to help remember events coming up.

Set clothing on the bed in a row to help with dressing. Have the student take articles from left to right. Label drawers if needed and rearrange them top to bottom in order of first to last items needed.

You can picture code drawers if labels do not work.

Help the student get prepared the night before. Ask: "What do you need for tomorrow?"

Model the thinking process by speaking the stage out loud to help the student incorporate this process into his or her routine.

Teach the student that toys have a place, using labelled bins or drawers. Have him or her clean up one activity before starting another.

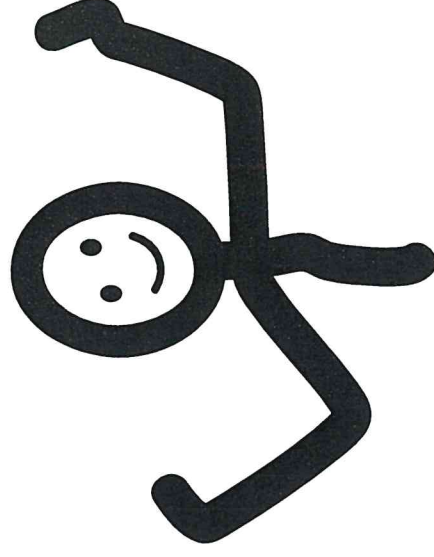
Use see-through containers.

Give the student the option of time out or "quiet time" alone when he or she feels over stimulated.

Other comments or suggestions:

Fizzy's Ideas: Coping Strategies

Home Coping Strategies



A programme compiled by
Occupational and Physiotherapists.

Advice for
parents, carers and education staff.



If you have any comments or queries then please contact:

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Sensory Processing:

At each moment, a person takes in information from the environment, his or her body must screen what is important to organise him or herself to act on the environment.

Keep visual and sound distractions to a minimum to help maintain the student's attention to homework. Have a "quiet corner" with a beanbag chair.

To minimize sound distractions, a room with a rug or carpet would help to decrease noises. Vacuum while he or she is out. Prepare the student for sudden noises if he/she are over-sensitive to noises.

To help a student who is over-sensitive to smells, use unscented detergent and shampoo. Do not wear perfume or use car or air fresheners. Use unscented markers/felt tips.

For the student who has trouble falling asleep, try giving the student flannel sheets and a heavy blanket or sleeping bag to sleep under to provide heavy weight and deep calming pressure. Many students benefit from having a stuffed animal to hug.

For the student who is over-sensitive to food in his or her mouth, try giving ice pops or frozen juice ice cubes to desensitize the mouth. Whistles, party blowers, chewy foods, and making raspberries also provide good input to the mouth.

To decrease tactile distractions, turn socks inside out and remove tags from shirts. Try and find socks without a toe stem. Some students prefer either tight or loose fitting clothes; follow the student's preference.

When cutting hair and nails, give firm pressure to the head, shoulders and fingers. Vibrating toothbrushes sometimes help students who do not like tooth brushing.

To help with showers, try a hand held shower-head to control pressure and spray and keep water out of the student's eyes. Count to 10 while holding a wash cloth over the student's eyes before rinsing hair. This will prepare the student for the water and let him or her know when it will be done.

When getting out of the bathtub, use a large towel to wrap student tightly. Rub the student with the towel or loofa sponge to decrease tactile defensiveness. Do not wash the towel in fabric softener so it is rougher to touch.

For the student who has poor body awareness, give heavy work, such as carrying the laundry basket, sweeping the floor, or pushing chairs under the table. Swimming is a great activity.

To provide more deep pressure for the student have him wear a back pack, hat, or place heavy things in his or her pocket.

To improve self-feeding use a weighted fork or spoon and non-slip surfaces under plates, e.g. dycem mats. The therapist can supply this.

For the student who is over sensitive to movement or fearful of leaving the ground (gravitational insecurity), provide alternative playground activities. For example, the student may be able to walk across a line on the floor but not able to walk on a balance beam. Limit the amount of rolling or twirling - let the student's response be your guide or check with your therapist.

For the student who gets car sick, seat the student in the front seat, give chewy food, such as licorice or gum, try ginger, and give deep pressure to the head. You can also buy wrist bands which are available to avoid travel sickness.

For the student who has poor body awareness, include rolling, swinging or twirling in playground activities. (Ropes, tyre swing, merry-go-rounds).

For the student who seeks a great deal of movement, try providing movement experiences throughout the day. It may help to wake the student 15 minutes earlier before school and allow him/her to jump on a trampoline.

Postural Control and Motor Performance:

Postural stability, or the ability to maintain a stable trunk position, provides background support necessary to develop fine motor skills.

Give frequent breaks from table top work, since this student has a difficult time maintaining sitting positions and fatigues more quickly than other students due to weakness in postural muscle control.

Adjust the chair and table to a height suitable for the student to best perform table top work. (Feet touching the floor, table height just below the student's elbows) The Tripp Trapp chair is a wooden chair adjustable to all table sizes.

During writing, chewing gum or sucking on hard sweets may help give a focal point and increase accuracy.

To increase postural muscle strength and endurance: wheelbarrow walking, tug of war, carrying weighted objects, wrestling, or other resistive play. Jumping, rope and climbing activities are fine! Your therapist can provide you with a programme.

To include the whole family in strengthening, try aerobic exercise tapes, or join a class. Yoga is great for strengthening.

Fine Motor / Visual Motor Skills:

Development of fine and visual motor skills facilitates skills such as writing, keyboarding, and throwing.

Try activities using both hands together for accuracy (e.g. Lego, drawings, bead stringing).

For strengthening hand muscles, use Silly Putty or Playdoh. Pinch, pull, roll, squeeze and cut to work these muscles. Drawing letters in putty with a pencil is great reinforcement for written production.

Rolling pennies is a great activity to promote thumb stability and grasp strength.

Squirt bottles strengthen the thumb and index finger to promote grasp.

Practice cutting different sizes, shapes, and weights of paper to develop accurate cutting skills.

Store clothing as outfits rather than items.

Use hooks instead of coat hangers.

To improve written motor accuracy: colour inside lines, working larger to smaller, use stencils, mazes, dot-to-dots.

Drawing on Ghost Writer Magna doodle or in a tactile medium such as sand or salt may make drawing more motivating.

Writing and drawing on a vertical surface, such as an easel or chalk board, promotes write extension and stability.