

Growing up...



Developmental Tips

A guide for parents, caregivers, and educators aimed at enhancing children's cognitive, physical, emotional, and general skill development.

**Total Education Solutions**
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About Us

Total Education Solutions (TES) provides innovative, quality educational services to individuals with exceptional needs. In home, community, school, online, and clinical settings, we foster opportunities for success.

Our Services

We provide speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral support, tutoring, physical therapy, intensive academic instruction, psychological assessments, school counseling, social work, compliance/administration, school nursing, and staff training services.

Introduction to our Developmental Tips

There are certain key practices that you can incorporate into daily activities that will help your child's development. All children progress at different rates and their needs can vary from one year to the next depending on their emotional state, physical routines, and intellectual activities. The tips and tools in this booklet are designed to assist you as you support your child and help him/her as they transition into a successful adult.

Below is an overview of specific skill areas that are addressed in our booklet.

Cognitive Development:

- Communication Tips for Parents
- Basics of Cultivating your Child's Intelligence

Physical Development:

- Foster Your Child's Physical Development

Emotional Needs:

- Phrases Your Child Needs to Hear

General Skills:

- Homework Tips from our Occupational Therapists
- Visual Schedules – How to Create and Use Them
- Children's Games and Their Specific Skills
- Home Activities for Common Behavior Challenges



Help Your Child Communicate Better

You can assist your child's communicative development by turning everyday activities into opportunities to learn.

For Younger Children

- Reinforce your child's communication attempts by looking at him or her, speaking, and imitating his or her vocalizations.
- Teach your child to imitate actions, such as peek-a-boo, clapping, blowing kisses, pat-a-cake, itsy bitsy spider, and waving bye-bye. These games teach turn taking that is needed for conversation.
- Talk while you are doing things, such as dressing, bathing, and feeding (e.g., "Mommy is washing Sam's hair"; "Sam is eating carrots"; "Oh, these carrots are good!").
- Talk about where you are going, what you will do once you get there, and who and what you'll see (e.g., "Sam is going to Grandma's house. Grandma has a dog. Sam will pet the dog.").
- Make bath time "sound playtime" as well. You are eye-level with your child. Play with Peter Tugboat, who says "p-p-p-p." Let your child feel the air of sounds as you make them. Blow bubbles and make the sound "b-b-b-b." Feel the motor in your throat on this sound. Engines on toys can make a wonderful "rrr-rrr-rrr" sound.
- Continue to find time to read to your child every day. Try to find books with large pictures and one or two words or a simple phrase or sentence on each page. When reading to your child, take time to name and describe the pictures on each page.
- Show your child that you are interested in what he or she says to you by repeating what he or she has said and expanding on it. For example, if your child says, "pretty flower," you can respond by saying, "Yes, that is a pretty flower. The flower is bright red. It smells good too. Does Sam want to smell the flower?"



Help Your Child Communicate Better (Cont.)

- Ask your child questions that require a choice, rather than simply a "yes" or "no" answer. For example, rather than asking, "Do you want milk? Do you want water?" ask, "Would you like a glass of milk or water?" Be sure to wait for the answer, and reinforce successful communication: "Thank you for telling mommy what you want. Mommy will get you a glass of milk."

For Older Children

- Read books that have a simple plot, and talk about the story line with your child. Help your child to retell the story or act it out with props and dress-up clothes. Tell him or her your favorite part of the story and ask for his or her favorite part.
- Encourage your child to give directions to explain how he or she has done something. For example, ask your child to explain how he made a structure out of Lego blocks. When playing doctor, ask your child to explain what she did to give the baby a checkup. Draw a picture, and write down your child's story as he or she tells it. Your child will soon grasp the power of storytelling and written language.
- Look at family pictures, and have your child explain what is happening in each one.
- Give your child two-step directions (e.g., "Get your coat from the closet and put it on").
- Play age-appropriate board games with your child (e.g., "Candyland" or "Chutes and Ladders").



Some of the information used in this Developmental Tips guide has been adapted from The American Speech and Language Association and other sources.

Cultivate Your Child's Intelligence

- Be sure your home is a place that stimulates the senses: touch, sight, smell, hearing, and taste.
- Find toys or play materials with bright colors, unique textures, interesting sounds, and smells.
- Teach your child colors, numbers, and letters.
- Make sure play materials and toys are age appropriate.
- Encourage exploration while monitoring safety.
- Teach your child how to clean up after play.
- Talk to your child often and in complete sentences.

Foster Your Child's Physical Development

- Offer an abundance of love and care.
- Cuddle, hug, and kiss your child daily.
- Make sure your child has plenty of opportunities to run, skip, and jump.
- Play a sport with your child.
- Organize neighborhood games.
- Teach your child healthy hygiene habits.
- Monitor television watching.
- Provide alternate activities.
- Monitor your child's diet so that it is balanced and full of nutrients.
- Cook meals with your child and talk about nutrition.



Phrases Your Child Needs to Hear

- "I am so lucky to have you."
- "You are a great helper."
- "I like it when you try so hard."
- "Let's talk about it."
- "I am sorry."
- "You are very special to me."
- "Thank you for being patient."
- "You're a great kid."
- "I love you."

Study and Organizational Tips

Show Interest

- Show an interest in your child's homework assignments.
- Ask about the subjects and the work to be done.
- Establish consistent communication with the teachers.
- Show appreciation for education.

Be a Role Model

- Take the opportunity to read a book or newspapers while your child studies.
- Reading together helps create a learning atmosphere.
- Model lifelong learning.
- Express positive attitude about learning.

Organization

- Teach your child how to be organized.
- Be sure he or she keeps a homework assignment book.
- Separate subjects using colored folders or binders.
- Designate a homework location.

Eliminate Distractions

- Eliminate as many distractions as possible during study time.
- Turn off media.
- Designate a quiet work area with low traffic and proper materials.
- Good lighting and ample space is key.



Types of Support

- Provide guidance, not answers.
- If teachers ask for parent participation, provide it.
- If assignment is meant to be done alone, stay away.
- Help student recognize hard vs. easy homework. Start with hard homework.

Games to Enhance Specific Skills



Educational Games are a great way to encourage interaction, increase memory, and enhance communication skills with others. These games are also an important step for building fundamentals. Children continue learning at home, practicing what they learned throughout the day.

Visual Discrimination:

- Battleship
- Gridlock
- Guess Who
- Jenga
- Undo

Response to Feedback:

- Jenga
- Win, Lose or Draw
- Battleship

Sequencing:

- Boggle
- Scrabble
- Sentence Scrabble
- Simon

Speed of Information Processing:

- Slapjack
- Boggle

Attention:

- Checkers
- Concentration

Divided Attention:

- Undo

Error Recognition:

- Gridlock

Perceptual Motor Coordination:

- Pick Up Sticks
- Jenga
- Slapjack
- Win, Lose or Draw
- Operation

Planning:

- Battleship
- Checkers
- Connect Four
- Gridlock
- Scrabble

Visual Scanning:

- Guess Who
- Boggle
- Checkers
- Connect Four

Word Retrieval:

- Outburst
- Boggle
- Scattergories
- Scrabble
- Win, Lose or Draw

Spatial Organization:

- Concentration
- Gridlock

Attention Vigilance:

- Slapjack
- Undo

Memory:

- Memory
- Concentration
- Simon
- Who Dun It?

Error Correction:

- Jenga

What is a visual schedule?

A visual schedule is set of pictures that helps children understand what activities will occur and when.

Why are visual schedules important? They:

- Promote successful transitions.
- Establish predictability.
- Identify novel events/changes in the schedule.
- Act as a reference point, helping children to know what is expected throughout the day.
- Help children understand the organization of time.
- Assist in the development of sequential memory.
- Minimize problem behaviors associated with changes in routine and transitions

Creating a visual schedule

Step 1: Identify the routine.

*This may include any routine such as the weekend routine, the toileting routine, or the meal time routine.

Step 2: Break the routine down into steps .

Step 3: Decide what visuals/words you will use.

*Will you use photos, line drawings, or cartoon drawings.

Step 4: Determine where the schedule will go.

*The schedule should be kept in the same spot everyday.

Step 5: Now your ready to put it all together!

Necessary materials to create a visual schedule

- Pictures / written words.
- Board to display the visual cues.

Optional materials

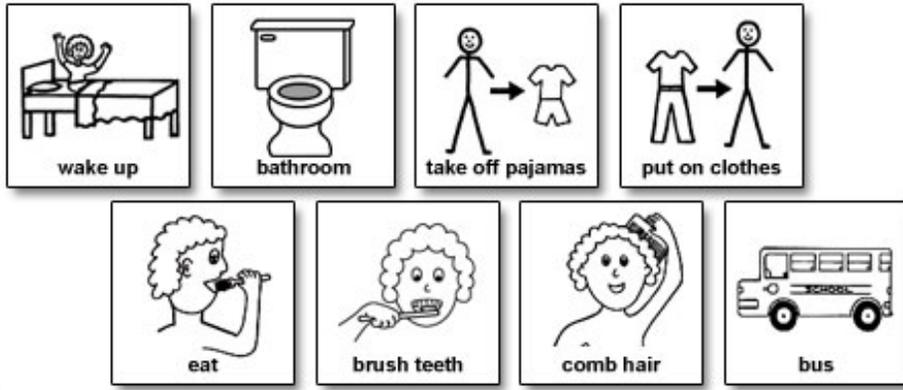
- Velcro to allow pictures to be removed or rearranged as needed.
- "All done" folder where pictures are placed when an activity is complete.

Helpful Hints

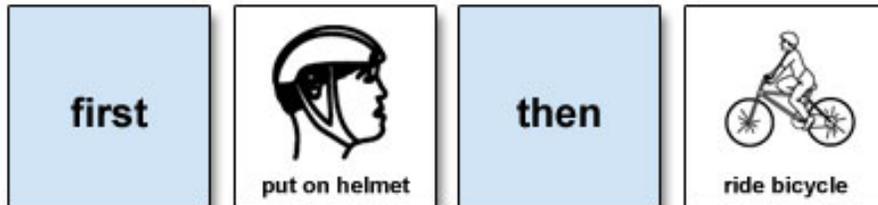
- When possible alternate fun/rewarding activities with more difficult activities. This will reduce frustration and decrease problem behavior.
- Try not to make the visual schedule too chaotic. Keep it simple by using a word or phrase and a picture that corresponds.
- Individualize the schedule by including the child's name and/or favorite characters.
- If your child is using a visual schedule in the classroom try and make the home schedule similar since the child is already familiar with this system.

Examples of Visual Schedules

Morning Schedule:



First—Then Schedule:



Eating a Meal:



Eating a Meal—"Sit in the chair. Now it is time to eat. When you are finished, you can have a cookie!" A reward after completing the expected behavior can be very motivating.

Home Activities For Common Problems Treated in Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy utilizes various treatment methodologies, including Sensory Integration, which is also known as Sensory Processing. The primary goal of Occupational Therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by enabling people to do things that will enhance their ability to participate or by modifying the environment to better support participation. Occupational therapists use careful analysis of physical, environmental, psychosocial, mental, spiritual, political, and cultural factors to identify barriers. The following are activities parents can do at home to increase a child's productivity and focus.

If your child has a lot of energy and has difficulty with attention to activities:

- Fill a small backpack with books/toys and have the child wear it during activities.
- Involve the child in heavy work or resistance activities such as pushing a shopping cart, carrying a laundry basket, helping to move furniture, or climbing on a jungle gym.
- Allow the child to sit on a soft cushion, chair on wheels, or exercise ball during fine motor table top activities to provide movement and help increase attention to task.
- Remove extraneous materials from the child's work space before starting an activity.

If your child has difficulty using hands/fingers to grasp a writing or coloring tool and/or play with objects:

- Play dough: encourage child to roll and mold the dough into different shapes using palms and fingers.
- Have child tear newspaper/tissue paper, crumble into balls, and stuff paper bags to create different creatures or glue onto paper to create tissue art.



- Hide small objects in play dough or silly putty and have child pull them out.
- Break crayons in half or use shorter pencils to encourage a 3 finger grasp and increase control of the writing tool.

If your child has difficulties with handwriting:

- Try Magna Doodle board/ink-stamping activities to promote pad-to-pad grasp of the thumb, index, and middle fingers with the different pieces.
- Use stencils to draw pictures/write letters to help increase confidence, then encourage them to attempt on their own.
- Encourage creative writing about topics of child's interest.
- Use paper with less lines to decrease confusion of where to place letters/words.



If your child has difficulty calming after becoming upset:

- Dim the lights.
- Provide deep pressure hug or wrap tight in a blanket.
- Provide slow rhythmic movements through rocking or swinging.
- Speak in a slow, calm voice.

If your child has difficulty with movement activities such as climbing, running, jumping, swinging, unstable surfaces, etc.:

- Have child crawl/walk over different surfaces (e.g. pillows or sofa cushions to get to toys on top of surface).
- Safely ride scooter/skateboard over different surfaces (e.g. concrete, grass).
- Expose child to a variety of movement opportunities but allow him/her to be in control of how much movement they receive.

If your child doesn't like to participate in craft-like activities involving glue, paste, paint, etc.:

- Begin activities with use of tape, then progress to long paint brushes, then short brushes, then cotton balls to apply the wet-tactile medium.
- Use squeeze bottles to apply wet-tactile media to paper.
- Allow child to engage in heavy work activities prior to participating in crafts involving aversive media.



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