

## SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS AND SUMMER SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Swedesboro-Woolwich SEPAC Workshop, May 2, 2013  
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Gloucester County Special Services School District

### TONIGHT'S AGENDA

- ✧ Addressing day-to-day transition
- ✧ Preparing for transition to new school year
- ✧ Structuring the long, hot summer.....
- ✧ Handling the unexpected

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- ✧ Morgan is a 4-year-old girl with speech and communication delays. She does well in school with a structured environment. At home, she likes to play with her kitchen set. When her parents tell her to clean up for dinner, she gets upset, cries, and lays on the floor. Mom or dad normally carry her to the table, where she sulks for the first few minutes of dinner.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

- ✕ Philip is a 12-year-old boy with a learning disability. He is in an inclusion class at school and works with the special ed. teacher for reading and writing. He is pleasant at home, but struggles when the family goes on outings. He constantly asks where they are going, how long it takes to get there, what is coming next, and when they will be going home. If mom or dad ignore him, Philip yells until someone answers his question.

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**TRANSITIONS**

- ✕ Refers to a change
  - + Between activities
  - + Between settings
  - + Among people in the environment
- ✕ Research indicates that children may experience 15-20 transitions between activities *per school day* (Olive, M., 2004).
  - + Up to 70 minutes of instructional time
  - + 25% of school day (Sainato, Strain, Lefebvre, & Rapp, 1987)
  - + What about at home??

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**WHY ARE TRANSITIONS TOUGH?**

- ✕ Child may lack the required skills
  - + Receptive language
  - + Understand why the activity is over
  - + Follow multi-step directions
  - + Compliance
- ✕ Child may not be able to predict when activity will end/what will come next
- ✕ Child may not know what to expect
  - + What will be expected
  - + Others' behavior
- ✕ Moving to non-preferred activity
- ✕ Attention received during transition may be reinforcing

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### TRANSITIONS BETWEEN ACTIVITIES

- ✱ Important to address as a skill
  - + Teach your child how to clean up
  - + Practice the transition: Role play
  - + Reinforce! Praise specifically when child transitions with ease.
- ✱ Minimize waiting
  - + Can quickly lead to frustration or anxiety
    - ✱ Which can quickly lead to problem behavior

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### PREPARING STUDENT

- ✱ Give a 'heads up' that an activity will be ending soon
  - + Verbal or visual
  - + Know your child's processing needs. Don't expect him/her to respond to direction to transition without warning if he/she requires extra time to process information

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### USE A TIMER

- ✱ Visual timers are helpful for most of us
  - + Concrete way to present info
  - + Tell the child that you're setting the timer
  - + When it goes off, initiate transition
  - + Great for children who need predictability or have difficulty transitioning away from preferred activities




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**FIRST/THEN**

- ✖ Can be helpful for children who become overwhelmed by too much information
- ✖ Present the info proactively as "first you will \_\_\_\_\_, then you will \_\_\_\_\_"
  - + Non-preferred activity to be followed by preferred
  - + Good strategy for appointments, nonpreferred outings
- ✖ To present visually:
  - + For readers, write in notebook or on whiteboard
  - + Take pictures of various activities, ask teachers/speech therapists for pictures, download from Google images
  - + Card is mobile!

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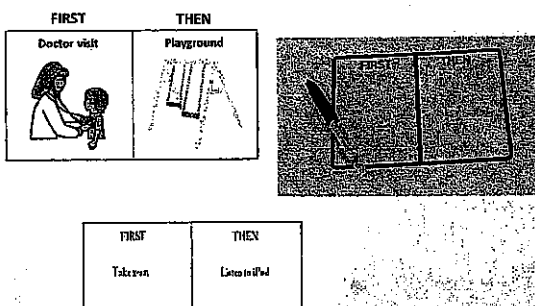
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**FIRST/THEN**


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**VISUAL SCHEDULES**

- ✖ Allow children to see the sequence of events for the day
- ✖ Requires adults to plan and structure the day's activity.
  - + Nothing positive can result from extensive down time!
- ✖ Increases predictability
- ✖ Gives us something to refer to when child says, "But I want to...."
  - + "Check your schedule!"

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### VISUAL SCHEDULES

- ✗ Can be as simple or elaborate as necessary
  - ✦ Step by step (clean up toys, go to bathroom, wash hands, dinner)
  - ✦ General (play in the morning, go to store in the afternoon)
- ✗ Can be posted on the wall or in a central location
  - ✦ Can also be mobile
- ✗ Require child to check schedule prior to transitioning to next activity
- ✗ A weekly or monthly calendar can be used for children who are looking forward to an event

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### SOME POINTERS FOR SCHEDULES

- ✗ Maintain consistent wake-up and bed times.
- ✗ Be specific about activities
- ✗ Use times if appropriate
- ✗ Can be set up like a checklist/to-do list
  - ✦ Check off, cross out, or take away completed activity
- ✗ Allow child to help develop day's schedule
  - ✦ Add 'Choice' times and consider their current interests
- ✗ Follow the schedule
  - ✦ If you're not going to follow it, change it!
  - ✦ Make it a part of daily routine

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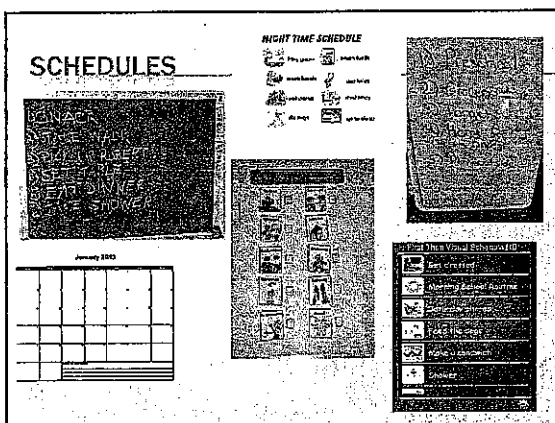
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## REINFORCEMENT

- ✱ IF transitions are difficult for your child, reinforcing appropriate behavior during these times is **CRUCIAL**
- ✱ Target and teach expected behavior
  - Follow direction to transition
  - Follow the schedule
  - Respond to timer
  - Transition to next activity *without incident*
- ✱ Provide feedback using child's motivation
  - Praise
  - Token or tangible reward

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## PREPARING FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

- ✱ Primarily a concern for children with transition difficulties or anxiety
- ✱ Start planning now!
  - Begin talking about it with your child ("You're going to the Harker school in September. All of your friends are going, too!")
  - Get your child acquainted with the driving route, even if you don't know the exact bus route

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## PREPARING

- ✱ Attend any offered event at the school
  - Allow your child to tour the building and see the general layout
  - Remember that classroom locations may be changed!
- ✱ Talk to your case manager this summer
  - Visit the school before September: take pictures to review
  - May be possible to tour new classroom\*
- ✱ When you get the information, contact the teacher
  - Ask questions you have about classroom routine, rules/expectations, behavior management, curriculum, etc.

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## SOCIAL STORY

Example

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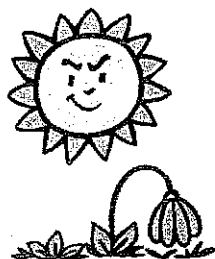
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## THE LONG, HOT SUMMER.....




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## SURVIVING SUMMER

- ✱ Maintain level of structure
  - + Predictable routine
  - + Use schedule and plan the day with your child
    - ✱ Include activities for him/her to do alone and things to do with you
    - ✱ Down time.....
    - ✱ Plan level-appropriate educational activities into the day
      - ✱ Could be direct practice
      - ✱ Could be computer based games
    - ✱ Try to incorporate physical activity
      - ✱ Get out child's energy, teaches good health habits, breaks up the day
  - ✱ Include in daily chores!
  - ✱ Check your child's IEP—anything you can do to work on therapy goals?

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### WHY IS STRUCTURE SO IMPORTANT?

- \* When environment is organized, predictable, and supportive, children are better able to manage their behaviors.
- \* Most effective when in place *all the time*
  - + Not only when anticipating problem behaviors

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### SAMPLE MORNING ROUTINE

- 1) Play-your choice
- 2) Breakfast
- 3) Brush teeth
- 4) Get dressed
- 5) Go for a walk
- 6) Books
- 7) Help with laundry
- 8) Snack
- 9) Computer games
- 10) Play outside
- 11) Lunch

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### COMMUNITY-BASED IDEAS

- < Children's events at library
  - vary by branch, activities for toddlers-elementary
  - [www.gps.org/calendar/childrens-programs](http://www.gps.org/calendar/childrens-programs)
- < YMCA
  - [www.youthspace.org](http://www.youthspace.org)
  - Summer camps for elementary kids
  - Child care
  - Martial arts
  - Soccer leagues
- < The Garden State Discovery Museum-Cherry Hill
  - [www.discoverymuseum.com](http://www.discoverymuseum.com)
  - Tuesday mornings: Preschool Power Pals
- < Peter's Family Mount Laurel
  - [www.peterfamily.com](http://www.peterfamily.com)
  - Summer classes for ages 3-5, 5-6
- < Camp Resolutions
  - <http://www.jerseyfamilyfun.com/index.php/summer-camps>
- < FREE Family Activities throughout NJ
  - <http://www.jerseyfamilyfun.com/fiddle-fy-4-4/realize-family-friendly/realize-family-friendly-attractions-in-new-jersey/>
- < Gloucester County Family Activities, Parks, etc.
  - <http://www.jerseyfamilyfun.com/fiddle-fy-4-4/realize-family-friendly/realize-family-friendly-attractions-in-new-jersey/>

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## REFERENCES

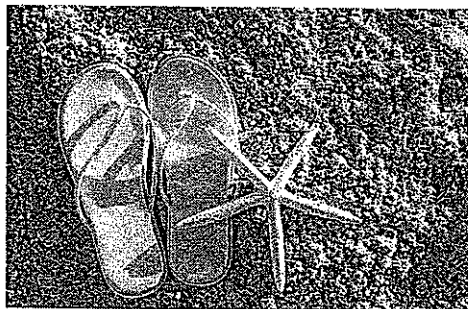
- 1. Fisher, C.W., Berliner, D.C., Filby, N.N., Marliave, R.S., Cohen, L.S., & Dishaw, M.M. (1980). Teaching behaviors, academic learning time, and student achievement: An overview. In C. Denham & A. Liberman (Eds.), *Time to Learn* (pp. 7-32). Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.
- 2. Hume, K. (2008). Transition time: Helping individuals on the autism spectrum move successfully from one activity to another. *The Reporter* 13(2), 6-10.
- 3. Olive, M. (2004). Transitioning children between activities: Effective strategies for decreasing challenging behavior. *Beyond Behavior*, 14, 11-15.

## APPS FOR TRANSITIONS AND SCHEDULES

- 1. Kiddie Countdown- Activity Timer
  - Ordinary Toucan Utilities, FREE
- 2. First Then Visual Schedule
  - Good Karma Applications, \$9.99
- 3. My Daily Tasks
  - Ablevox, \$8.99
- 4. Visual Routine
  - Proteon Software, \$3.99

## EDUCATIONAL WEBSITES

- 1. [www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)
- 2. [www.cookie.com](http://www.cookie.com)
- 3. [www.funbrain.com](http://www.funbrain.com)
- 4. [www.pbskids.com](http://www.pbskids.com)
- 5. [www.jumpstart.com](http://www.jumpstart.com)
- 6. <http://www.uen.org/k12student/interactives.shtml>
- 7. [www.abbya.com](http://www.abbya.com)
- 8. [www.sheppardsoftware.com](http://www.sheppardsoftware.com)
- 9. [www.kidsknowit.com](http://www.kidsknowit.com)
- 10. [www.exploratorium.com](http://www.exploratorium.com)
- 11. [www.mimio.com](http://www.mimio.com)
  - Home-based reading options



## *SUMMER SUGGESTIONS*

*from*

## *OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY*

\*The following is a list of suggestions and activities for you and your child to try over the summer. Please remember that these activities are not specific to any one child's needs or goal areas. Instead, I have tried to cover many different skill areas by grade levels. Always remember that all activities should be supervised by an adult. Suggestions for this packet were taken from multiple resources, including: staff therapists, multiple list serves/websites (suggestions taken from Deanna Iris Sava, MS OTR/L, Linda Cammaroto, OTR/L, Sherilyn Drew, OTR/L, Carrie Lippincott, OTR/L, Take 5- Staying Alert at Home and At School by, Mary Sue Williams OTR/L and Shelly Shellenberger, OTR/L), Riley, Stanley R., Learning Process Skills, Novato, CA, 1992.



Try these ideas to assist in improving hand, arm and shoulder strength:

- Carry buckets of water and help wash the car, deck, siblings outdoor play sets.
- *Sopping Sponges* -Use a half cylinder foam or sponge to sop up water and then squeeze it to transfer the water to another container.
- Help Mom and Dad and carry grocery bags, laundry detergent and 2-liter soda bottles into the house after grocery shopping.
- Help to fold or roll towels and then put away on shelf.
- Use a hammer and pound large headed nails into cork, fiber board, styrofoam or other soft wood.
- Let child spend time playing on playground equipment, the monkey bars, a swing. Anything that encourages gripping by the hands.
- If you happen to have PVC pipe, let child use it to build objects with.
- Cutting with scissors on different thicknesses of paper. Be sure that child holds his/her scissors with the index finger not in the loop, but resting under the loop to better guide the scissors around curves.
- Cutting thin sticks or weeds with garden scissors
- Cooking activities that require stirring with a spoon or mixing ingredients with hands are excellent for developing hand strength
- Screwing and unscrewing jar lids
- Using a hole punch on various thickness of paper
- Playing tug of war with a friend or dog
- Using spray bottles to water plants, clean tub walls
- Games with cards or dice
- Hanging up bathing suits with clothespins

*STEPHANIE SPARKS, OT*



To encourage gross motor coordination, motor planning and sensory processing, try these suggestions:

- Plan outdoor games using large motor skills (soccer, football, baseball, volleyball). Have child keep score and you will incorporate writing and math practice.
- Have family relay races. Create an obstacle course with directions (over, under, around and through). Use cones/weighted 2 liter bottles to manipulate around, pillow cases to put on and hop, use tents/tunnels to crawl through, etc.
- In pool, swimming or imitating movements; splashing using hands, arms, feet, pushing the water away, pulling it towards self.
- Sport activities including fishing can assist with coordination, range of motion and visual motor skills.
- Roll down a hill.
- Play with balloons and try to keep in the air as long as possible.
- During outings and appropriate activities, have your child carry a backpack or tote containing toys, snacks, picnic lunch, clothing, etc. Don't overload it, but slowly increase the weight as your child can tolerate it. This will improve your child's strength and stability, and the proprioception (weight) may actually help him/her feel focused and organized mentally.

### The Sensory Systems



**Taste-Oral:** The body can often crave certain kinds of sensory input to self regulate, in order to perform. Snack time can prepare the body/brain to focus, so it is ideal to schedule tabletop activities after a snack.

- Alerting foods- cold, sour/tart, spicy, minty, crunchy
- Calming foods- warm, smooth, sweet
- Heavy Work- (give heavy work to jaw and cheek muscles)- chewy, crunchy, sucking (use of sports bottles, straws, gum) Blowing supports self regulation and helps eyes to focus. Try: blowing bubbles, cotton ball /popcorn races blowing through a straw)



**Touch-Tactile:** Many people fidget with things to stay ALERT when seated for lengthy periods of time. When at the movies, concert, long car/plane ride, large crowd, etc. have fidget items available for your child.

- Attach small items or place into a backpack: koosh ball, cotton balls, straws, velcro, rubber bands, bendable animals, bean bag animals



**Movement:** Movement breaks can help to organize and keep child alert and ready for work activities or events.

- Up/Down Activities: jumping to music, hop like an animal, jump rope, play hopscotch, skip, march to music, dunk a basketball, spike a volleyball
- Crash/Bump Activities: Jump into a large pile of pillows, pillow fights, jump into a pool



**Vision- "LOOK":** Visual distracters can affect children's attention and ability to learn. Many children have difficulty attending/functioning in an environment that is too visually stimulating. Many children may be over-stimulated by large, crowded environments (This is when those calming/heavy work foods and fidget items may come in handy). Think about these concepts.

- In general, dim lighting, muted colors and plain walls can be calming.
- Bright lights, lots of color and variety can be stimulating.



**Auditory- "LISTEN":** Let's think about the environments that your child is in. Some of us can focus best in a quiet setting and some of us need an auditorally stimulating environment. Many children get over-stimulated in loud, noisy environments. Have them try cotton in ears, wear headphones, use an ipod.

- Alerting sounds are generally- arrythmical, of short duration and loud
- Calming sounds are- rhythmical (patterns), of long duration, quiet and familiar.

### Some Good Recipes/Suggestions To Experiment With:

- **Sand Spray-** Have your child use colored water to "paint" on sand at the beach .
  - *Materials: Spray bottle, water, food coloring*
  - *Directions: Fill bottle with water and few drops of food coloring. Have child use beach buckets, sand toys to build a castle or animal shapes. Then have them color it by spraying it with the colored water in the spray bottle.*
- **Recipe for Sand Castles at Home-**
  - *Ingredients: 4 cups of sand, 2 cups of corn starch, 1 tablespoon+1teaspoon cream of tartar, 3 cups hot water*
  - *Directions: (All mixing steps completed by an adult)- Mix sand, corn starch and cream of tartar in a saucepan. Stir in hot water. Cook over medium heat until water is absorbed and mixture is too stiff to stir. Cool until it can be handled. Refrigerate and store in an airtight container until ready for use.*
  - *(Children)- Can use to build castles, animal shapes, flatten and write letters, numbers, names, words, with finger, coffee stirrer, stick, etc.*
- **Chocolate Play dough-**
  - *Ingredients: 1-1/4 cup flour, ½ cup cocoa powder, ¼ cup salt, ¼ tablespoon cream of tartar, 1-1/2 tablespoons cooking oil, 1 cup boiling water*
  - *Directions: Mix the dry ingredients, then add the oil and boiling water (to be mixed by an adult). Stir quickly mixing well. When cool children can knead with hands until mixed well. Seal in airtight container.*
- **Cornstarch Dough-**
  - *Ingredients: ¼ cup cornstarch, ¼ cup water, food coloring*
  - *Directions: Pour cornstarch into a large bowl. Tint the water with food coloring before combining it with the cornstarch. Mix by hand to form a soft, velvety dough. This dough does not store well- 1 time use only.*
  - *(Children)- use to make shapes, roll, form shapes, letters, numbers, flatten and press with cookie cutters.*



### Ice Cream in a Bag (serves 1)

(OT goal areas addressed: eye-hand coordination, sensory, motor planning, strength and endurance, fine motor skills)

**Ingredients:** 1/2 c. milk (White or Chocolate Milk)

1 T. sugar

1/4 t. vanilla (or other flavoring)

**Directions:**

1. Place all ingredients into a pint-sized FREEZER baggie and zip.
2. In a gallon size FREEZER baggie fill 1/2 way with ice, and add 6 tablespoons of rock salt on top of ice.
3. Place pint size baggie inside gallon size baggie and seal tight!
4. Shake and shake and shake!
5. It will become a solid in about 4 minutes or less!
6. Eat quickly! Ice cream melts fast.



### Fun Handwriting Activities

1. Tic tac toe
2. Hangman
3. Child throws a beanbag onto footprint letters, or letters written in a grid, in sequence in order to spell a word (or jump on the letters in sequence), then they can write the word on the board.
4. Handwriting Bingo
5. Write a silly story with a child - they write one word or a sentence, and you write the next, etc. Make it up as you go along.
6. Writing a letter to a family member, friend or have a mailbox in the classroom where the students write letters, messages, cards, etc to each other, to teachers, etc.
9. Party "To Do" list - make list of friends, what party games to play, what to make/buy/do, make invitations, place cards, name cards or stickers for party favors. Can even write names with frosting on cupcakes!
10. Have child make up game & write instructions for it.
11. "Boggle".
12. Scrabble - Write the words on a grid, instead of using tiles.
13. Address book (write in friends & family member's phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses, birthdays).
14. Crossword puzzles - solve &/or make up your own, give out in class.
15. Make clues for a treasure hunt.
16. Daily Diary - write at least one sentence a day.
17. Have kids help write shopping list.
18. Have kids take simple phone messages; teach them how to check if message was taken correctly, by reading back what was written.

**STEPHANIE SPARKS, OT**



## Vision

- **Visual Sequencing-** failure to perceive and understand logical visual sequences. Children with this problem often have difficulties; understanding letters or numbers in a series, read and write from left to right and/or read from top to bottom. Symptoms may include: tension signs, guessing at material, reading errors, spelling errors, copying errors, writing errors, math errors

### Things to try:

- o Identify common objects and discuss details
- o Twenty questions game
- o Jigsaw puzzles
- o Complete simple pictures with missing lines
- o Have child describe action scenes in picture stories
- o Cut out comic strips and have child arrange in correct order
- o Paint/color by number pictures

**Visual Memory-** failure to recall what has been seen. Children often have difficulty; recalling patterns, shapes, designs, figures, numbers, letters, words, phrases or remembering details regarding what they have read or seen.

Symptoms may include: errors in copying written work, skips, repeats or omits words, poor spelling, reading problems, failure to follow written directions.

### Things to try:

- o Looks at picture for 15 seconds, and tries to recall the items in the picture
- o Show simple shapes for brief time, then take away and ask child to draw the shape
- o Show several objects to child, have child close eyes and remove an object. See if child can remember the object that was removed.

**Visual Abstraction-** failure to understand the meaning of visual patterns. Children are often unable to maintain attention to visual material, select significant ideas among visual cues.

Symptoms may include: distracting behavior, work avoidance, poor production of work, difficulty following written directions.

### Things to try:

- o Jigsaw puzzles
- o Cubes with patterns
- o Lite brite
- o Word Searches
- o Newspaper reports of current interests (read and discuss)

**Visual Discrimination-** lets us see differences between objects that are similar. When reading.... visual discrimination lets us see the difference between "was and saw," even though they have the same letters.

### Things to try:

- o Matching shapes when given multiple shapes that look similar
- o Picture finds (find the differences between two pictures)

**Visual Closure-** the ability to visualize a complete whole, when only given part of the picture. When reading this skill helps us recognize sight words.

### Things to try:

- o Give partial pictures and have child complete the picture (drawing in missing pieces)

## Some Great Websites to check out!

- [www.iqzone.com](http://www.iqzone.com)
- [www.gotofreegames.com/matchgame/free\\_concentration\\_game.htm](http://www.gotofreegames.com/matchgame/free_concentration_game.htm)
- [www.freetypinggame.net](http://www.freetypinggame.net)
- [www.typingtest.com/games](http://www.typingtest.com/games)
- [www.sense-long.org/typing](http://www.sense-long.org/typing)
- <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

# Speech Activities -

Another resource is [www.positivelyautism.com](http://www.positivelyautism.com)



Make word comparisons. Look in the closets in your home and talk about shoes, clothes, and hats that are *big* or *little*. Look at books and find objects and animals that are *big* or *little*.

Use words that build concepts about space and location. *Put your shoe on your foot. Put your arm in the sleeve. Let's pull your shirt over your head. The belt goes around your waist.*

Go on a treasure hunt at home to use descriptive words. Look for and describe objects with different textures. Talk about the smooth table, soft blanket, hard chair, bumpy carpet, rough brush bristles.

Use rhyming words in your own speech as you perform your daily activities. As you do the dishes, say *dishes, wishes*. As you brush your hair, say *hair, bear, wear, scare*. Ask your child to repeat these rhyming words.



Look for animals that are different sizes to help your child learn the concepts of *big* and *little*. Find *big* and *little* birds, dogs, and cats.

Talk about the different blocks you're using while building a tower with your child. Use words that tell about size, location, and color. *Put the red block on top. The green block is next to the red one.*

Talk about the weather. Talk about different temperatures in different seasons. Talk about different activities that depend on certain types of weather.

Trace your hand and your child's hand using sidewalk chalk. Talk about which hand is *big* and which hand is *little*.



Ask your child to point to and say the name for different body parts.

Help your child learn a variety of color names. Ask her to tell you when she sees cars with different colors.

Give your child a photo album to carry in the car with pictures of family members and friends. Talk about the people and his favorite activities with each person.

Build a vocabulary of location words while you are driving. *Look at the car in front of us. Look at the big dog inside the car. Look at the car on the right side. Look out the window. See the sign with the bottle of milk on it.*



Name and describe items as you put them in your grocery cart. Talk about colors (*red apples, orange carrots*), shapes (*square cheese, round tomato*), sizes (*big box, small can*), and how things feel (*soft marshmallows, smooth pears*).

Help your child identify colors. In the produce section, ask your child to point to the *red apples, yellow peppers, purple plums*.

Encourage the use of detail words. In the produce section, ask your child to point to the *long bananas, round melons, crunchy carrots*.

Respond to your child's *what?* questions by providing the appropriate label for the item in the store.



Help your child learn to use words that have the *k, g, f, t, d,* and *n* sounds. As you are setting the table, use words like *cup, family, table, dinner, napkins, dish, time.*

\*\*\*  
Ask your child to repeat what he says when you don't understand him. Model the correct pronunciation in your own speech.  
\*\*\*

Talk about the sounds you hear in the kitchen (*water running, cabinet and refrigerator doors closing, tea kettle whistling*).



Talk about the sounds you hear around you while at a baseball game (*crack of the bat, people cheering*).

\*\*\*  
Listen together to the sounds that animals make. Imitate the sounds and talk about the animals.  
\*\*\*

Help your child hear the differences in sounds. Make different sounds with different parts of your body (*clap your hands, stomp your feet, click your tongue*). Have your child close his eyes and see if he can identify the source of your sound.



Call attention to vehicles and the sounds they make.

\*\*\*  
See if your child can identify familiar sounds. While in the car, clap your hands, whistle, hum, crumple paper, snap your fingers, and see if he can make the same sounds.  
\*\*\*

Ask your child to imitate sounds he hears. When you are visiting the zoo, ask him to say *ssss* like a snake and *grrrrr* like a bear.



Respond to your child even when she does not say all sounds correctly. Give her a drink of water when she says *I want wa-wa*. Model the correct pronunciation in your own speech.

\*\*\*  
Help your child tune into sounds. As you wait in line, show him your keys. Talk about the use for each key. Emphasize the *k* sound. *This key is for mommy's car. This key is for daddy's car.*  
\*\*\*

Help your child remember what he hears and follow two requests. Ask him to *put two red apples in the bag and put them in the cart.*



Help your child answer and ask *who?*, *what?*, *when?*, and *where?* questions. Ask him to pretend to be an animal or object. You guess his identity by asking questions like, *What do you look like? Where do you live? What do you do? Where can we find you?* When you take your turn, encourage him to ask questions to guess who you are.

Turn TV time into a more interactive conversation time. Talk about what the characters are doing. Describe the objects and people on a show. Ask your child, *What is \_\_\_ doing? Who do you see? Where is \_\_\_ going?*

Talk about how important it is to take turns and share. Talk about things that you share with your family and friends.



Help your child follow single-step directions and learn to use *big* and *little*. Ask her to take *big* and *little* steps in the house and outside.

Help your child understand and express past tense verbs in sentences. Ask him to perform a simple action (*clap, jump, hop*). After he performs this action, ask him, *What did you do?* and encourage him to answer, *I jumped, I hopped, I clapped.*

Help your child understand and answer *where?* questions. Ask, *Where is the stop sign? Where are the flowers? Where is the bird house?* Encourage your child to point as well as use words.

Talk about the shape, size, and color of the mailbox at your house or apartment. Talk about the mail carrier's job and the kinds of mail she brings to your house.



Encourage your child to discuss her feelings about a daily activity, upcoming event, or where she is going. Talk about how going to the ice cream store, to preschool, and Grandma's house makes you happy and excited.

Play your child's favorite music on the car radio and sing along.

Ask your child to tell a family member or friend about an interesting experience. Encourage her to talk about what she saw and did following a visit to a park, museum, or the zoo.

Talk about the traffic signals. Talk about the need to go when a light is green, slow down and wait when the light is yellow, and stop when the light is red. Ask your child questions about the lights, *What should I do when the light is red?*



Help your child use a variety of three-word expressions in the supermarket. Describe what your child is doing or ask what she wants. Model a three to four-word sentence and encourage her to repeat the sentence.

- **agent + action + object** (*mommy buy juice, daddy push cart*)
- **agent + action + location** (*I sit cart*)
- **action + object + location** (*take food home*)

Encourage your child to say *please* and *thank you* to the clerk when you are checking out.

Engage in a conversation about items you find in the grocery store that go together (*pancakes/syrup, ice cream/topping, toothbrush/toothpaste*).





Find a special time to read to your child each day (during breakfast, after dinner, at bedtime). Keep books on low, open shelves, or in a box or basket, so that your child can reach them without help.

Choose books with repeated rhymes, words, or phrases. After you have read a book many times, stop before the end of a familiar sentence and encourage your child to fill in the word.

Ask your child questions about the pictures in a book. *What is this? Who is that? Where is the boy going?*

Give your child large pads of paper and large crayons and markers. Save scrap paper and paper bags. Keep them in a place where your child can easily reach them when he wants to draw a picture.



Have your child lay down on a large piece of paper or the sidewalk. Trace his body shape with a marker or chalk. Say and write the names of his body parts.

Find words on signs that have the same letters as your child's name and comment. *Look how Main Street has an m just like Mary.*

Help your child learn how objects are the same and different. Talk about how two flowers are the same or different colors and sizes. Find two rocks that are the same size and shape and two rocks that are a different size and shape.

Make a shopping list while sitting on a park bench. Ask your child to help you make the list.



Encourage word play. Make up rhyming words that go with things you see. As you drive, say *car, far, star, jar. Tree, bee, see, knee*. Ask your child to repeat these rhyming words.

Create simple stories where your child is the main character. The story can be about where you are traveling and about your plans for the day.

Retell a story you and your child have read often as you ride in the car, bus, or train. Ask your child to fill in the blanks and tell what happened next.

Show your child the menu when you are in a restaurant. Show him how the words go with the pictures on a children's menu. Show how your menu is divided into different groups (*appetizers, main course, meats, vegetables, desserts*).



Talk about what you did *first, next*, and *last* in the market. Talk about what you and your child will do when you get home. Use a logical sequence with past, present, and future tense verbs.

Ask your child questions to encourage her to talk about your time in the market. Ask her what you did *first, next*, and *last*.

Ask your child to make a mark on the grocery list as you put food in the cart. Show him the word on the page. He won't be able to read it yet, but he'll be learning more about print.



Help your child develop location words. Look around the room together and ask your child to find three things that are *under*, *on*, *in front of*, and *behind*. Next, ask your child to describe the locations.

...

Discuss the position of the pieces (*next to*, *on top of*, *bottom of*, *under*) as you put a puzzle together.

...

Play a simple board game together and read the instructions aloud. During the game, talk about your location on the board (*ahead*, *behind*, *same space*). Talk about how you move (*forward*, *backward*).

...

Play *Simon Says* with your child to help her learn to follow directions. Explain that she should only follow the directions if you say *Simon Says* first.



Help your child use descriptive words. Look at the sky and talk about the different shapes and sizes of the clouds.

...

Encourage your child to use location words in sentences. Play with a ball and talk about throwing the ball near the tree, rolling the ball on the ground, throwing it up to the sky. Have him tell you where to throw or roll the ball.

...

Blow bubbles and talk about where they go, using location words (*behind*, *next to*, *between*, *above*, *below*).

...

Take a nature walk and collect leaves, rocks, twigs, wildflowers. Talk about how they are the same and how they are different. Use words to describe their shapes, textures, colors, and sizes.



Talk about the landmarks around you and use contrasting words when you park your car. Talk about whether the car is *near* or *far* from the store, trees, or road. Talk about how you will find your car when you return.

...

Help your child learn new words and their functions. After a trip to the hardware store, discuss your purchases (*hammer*, *saw*, *nails*, *screwdriver*), describe the tools and how you plan to use them.

...

Talk about the different times of day and the seasons. Talk about activities during the day and night, and whether it's hot or cold in the summer or winter. Talk about what you like to do in each season.

...

Talk about all the vehicles on the road (*car*, *ambulance*, *truck*, *police car*, *bus*, *motorcycle*, *fire truck*). Find as many different kinds of vehicles as possible.



Help your child identify *hard*, *soft*, *rough*, and *smooth*. Let your child feel a hard carrot, soft bread, smooth apples, and rough pineapple.

...

Help your child learn how items are used. As you pass items or put them in your cart, ask your child to identify, *What do we use to sweep the floor? What do we use to wash clothes?*

...

Set up a store with your child using real and pretend food and containers and create a checkout area. Help your child group objects by size, shape, color, and name. Pretend to be the shopper and the store clerk.

...

Name cleaning items that you see in the store and talk about the way they are used (*broom*, *cleansers*, *soaps*, *brush*, *cloth*, *dish soap*).



Help your child with the *t* sound. Ask her to describe what she did today and what she will do tomorrow. Repeat this phrase often  
Today, we went to \_\_\_\_  
Tonight, we will \_\_\_\_  
Tomorrow, we will \_\_\_\_  
...

Use clean up time as an opportunity to emphasize sounds in words. Talk about *big* toys that go on the *top* shelf, *cars* that go on the *middle* shelf, and *balls* that go on the *bottom* shelf. Stress the first sound as you say the words.

Encourage your child to listen and respond. Call her name from a different room and see if she answers.



Help your child learn the *t* sound when you are outside. Look for tires on bikes, cars, trucks, and other vehicles. Emphasize the *t* sound in tire as you talk about the different sizes.

Help your child with the *k* sound. Play a game of kick ball emphasizing the *k* in *kick*. Say *kick* every time you kick the ball. Ask your child to say *kick* when it's his turn.

Play listening games when you are taking a walk. Use a nonsense word in the middle of your sentence. See if your child notices and laughs. Call attention to the silly word and then repeat the sentence correctly.



Help your child with the *f* sound. Talk about all of the fun things you did today, emphasizing the sound in the word *fun*. Repeat this phrase often when describing the events of the day: *I had fun when we* \_\_\_\_  
...

Sharpen your child's ability to listen and make sounds. Ask her to say *zzzz* like a buzzing bee, *ssss* like a slithering snake, *rrrrr* as an angry tiger, and *vvvv* as a pesky mosquito.

Help your child differentiate *loud* and *soft* sounds. Make the car radio loud and soft. Ask your child to say something loud and then to say it softly. Talk about the soft sound of kittens purring. Talk about the loud sound of a fire engine siren.



Ask your child to repeat or rephrase a word or sentence that is difficult for you to understand. If the word is still not clear, ask, *Did you mean* \_\_\_\_? and say the word with the correct sound.

Say the *k* sounds in the word *cake* as often as you can as you make a cake for a special person together.

Talk about all the different shapes, colors, and sizes of cakes you see in the bakery. Look at the pictures on the boxes in the baking supply aisle.

Help your child listen to sounds in words. Play a slow talking game. As you pass an item in the grocery store, say each sound in a word very slowly and see if your child can guess the word (*ta..ma...to*, for tomato; *ce..ler...y*, for celery).



Encourage conversation and imaginative play. Play make-believe with your child by pretending to talk on a toy phone, feed a stuffed animal, or have an imaginary picnic or tea party in the living room. Build on the conversation by adding details that create more interesting story lines.

...

Use puppets to develop question-asking skills. Encourage your child to have puppets ask each other questions like *who?*, *what?*, *where?*, and *why?*

...

Ask your child to talk about what's happening during a TV show. Name the characters and tell something about them. Describe their clothes. Talk about what they like to do.

...

Encourage your child to talk on the phone to a relative or friend. This will help develop his ability to listen and answer questions.



Take advantage of naturally occurring interactions to help your child learn different language functions. Encourage your child to greet other children at the park, ask peers what they want to play with, and invite friends to play.

...

Talk about community helpers. As you go about your errands, look for community helpers and discuss what they are doing. Talk about the mail carrier, police officer, crossing guard, sanitation worker, fire fighter, and ambulance driver.

...

Help your child learn opposite words by talking about *clean/dirty*, *wet/dry*, *hot/cold*, *before/after*, *full/empty* as you are washing the car.

...

Encourage your child to ask *what?* questions. Model a *what?* question for her. After she answers, ask her to ask you the same question. *What do you see? What is she doing? What is near the car? What's that? What do you want to do at the playground?*



Help your child answer and ask questions. Play a game of *20 Questions*. You think of an object, animal, or person and ask your child to ask you *yes* and *no* questions until she can guess correctly.

...

Talk about your child's daily routine in preschool when you pick him up. Talk about snack time, circle time, nap time, and outdoor play. Ask him to tell you about his favorite activities and why they are favorite times.

...

Encourage your child to answer questions and talk about his experience as you're driving home from a friend or relative's house.

...

Visit a fire station and talk about all the objects, people, and activities that you see. Encourage your child to talk and ask the fire fighters questions to learn more about the fire trucks and equipment.



Encourage your child to use three to four-word phrases. Talk about the macaroni and cheese you will make for dinner, and ask your child what ingredients are needed and the steps to follow. Elicit words and phrases such as, *We need macaroni.*

*Buy some milk. Let's get cheese. Put macaroni in the bowl. Pour milk on macaroni.*

*Put cheese on top.*

...

Start a conversation with your child about healthy food. Ask *what if?* questions (*What would happen if you ate candy bars all day?*) Ask other questions (*Are vegetables healthy? What are some healthy foods? Are cookies healthy?*)

...

Talk about different ways we prepare food (*bake, broil, peel, mash, squeeze, chop*). Talk about how you will prepare the food for dinner.



Show your child each day how you read and write to get things done. Look in the newspaper together to find out the weather or select a movie.

...

Label your child's drawings. Ask him to tell you about the picture he made and write the words on the bottom of the paper.

...

Show your child how you read the address label on mail. Let your child deliver mail to family members.

...

Hang letters at your child's eye level on the refrigerator or your child's bedroom door. Name them often.



Give your child a straw or safe stick and practice shapes, lines, or letters in the sand or dirt.

...

Tell stories about the different kinds of jobs people have in your neighborhood. Tell a story about the bus driver, mail carrier, fire fighter, ambulance driver.

...

Before going outside, ask your child to tell you what he likes to do or is going to do outside today.

...

Write three activities on a list. After playing, point to each activity on the list and see how many you did.



Give your child paper and crayons to draw while in a restaurant. Encourage her to tell a story about the drawings and write down the words.

...

Point out familiar logos to your child. Soon he'll recognize the name without your help.

...

Keep a small chalkboard and chalk in the car. As you drive, your child can practice drawing or writing letters and numbers of the road signs he sees.

...

Sing the alphabet song to your child in the car. Ask her to sing with you.



Look at word labels on cans, bottles, and boxes. Ask your child to guess what the words are by looking at the pictures on the products.

...

Show your child how the word on a coupon matches the words on the product. Point out a particular letter, shape, or number.

...

Encourage your child to look for familiar words and logos on products.

...

Talk about how many things you are buying to develop number concepts (*three apples, two boxes of cereal, four cans of soup*).



Look at the mail together to encourage the use of new words. Talk about the person who brings the mail and where it comes from. Talk about the different kinds of stamps.

...

Watch the weather report together on TV to help your child learn about time concepts (*yesterday, today, tomorrow*) and contrasting words (*same/different*). Talk about how tomorrow's weather may be the *same* or *different* from today's.

...

Encourage your child to ask you about new words he hears. Talk about what the new word means. Relate the new word to a familiar word or concept. Use the word in a sentence and encourage your child to do the same.

...

Give your child alternative new names for clothing. Use *jeans* or *shorts* for *pants*. Use *sandals, sneakers, or dress shoes* for *shoes*. Use *short-sleeve shirt* or *t-shirt* for *shirt*.



Talk about the weather conditions to help your child learn about opposites (*hot/cold, sunny/cloudy, windy/rainy, stormy/clear*).

...

Help your child understand and use words that convey spatial relations. As your child is building a sandcastle in a sandbox or on the beach, give directions using words such as *on top of, in front of, and next to*.

Encourage your child to give you directions when you are building in the sand.

...

Help your child learn about comparative words. Look for things that are the *biggest* and the *smallest* (*biggest tree, smallest fence, biggest house, smallest animal*).

...

Play games to help your child learn words that go together. Provide a variety of objects or pictures to sort according to size, color, or category name. Ask your child to group pictures of different animals, flowers, and vehicles. See how many different ways your child can sort the same items.



Talk about word categories as you ride in the car. Find different kinds of stores, vehicles, trees, and animals. Ask your child how the items are the *same* or *different* in each category.

...

Practice your child's full name and home address (*street, city, state*). Put it into a song (*Tommy Parks lives on Elm Street, Elm Street, Elm Street. Where is Elm Street, Elm Street, Elm Street? That's in Detroit, Michigan. Yes it is!*).

...

Help your child respond to *why?* questions. While you are in the car, ask thought-provoking questions. *Why do you need to go to bed early? Why are we going to the grocery store? Why do we need to eat lunch?*

...

Help your child learn about related words while you are traveling on a bus. After you name three colors, ask her to say another color. Continue this game with letters, numbers, furniture, clothes, family members, animals, or any other word category.



Help your child use descriptive words. Visit the bakery section and read the signs aloud. Talk about what a baker does. Use words to describe the smells and tastes of the treats.

...

Help your child to use comparative words like *big, bigger, and biggest*. Compare the items that you see and buy in the grocery store. *This can is big, but this can is bigger. This box of spaghetti is longer than this box of rice. This is the biggest bag of chips.*

...

Help your child use contrasting words. Look at two boxes of cereal and talk about the way the boxes are the *same* or *different*. *This box is big and this one is small. This box of spaghetti is long and narrow and this box of rice is wide and short.*

...

Talk about the food groups or categories you see in the market (*fruits, vegetables, and drinks*). Talk about how they are the *same* and how they are *different*.



Encourage your child to use the *k*, *g*, and *r* sounds, and consonant blends correctly when he talks about his train set (*conductor, tracks, ticket, train, caboose, cargo, riding, station, platform*).

...

Emphasize the correct production of a sound in your own speech if your child has difficulty saying a particular sound. If your child says a word incorrectly, do not ask him to repeat it. Instead, you repeat the word correctly and say the troublesome sound louder and longer.

...

Listen to music and sing songs together. You can sing nursery rhymes, songs with a lot of repetition, or songs that tell a story.



Help your child use some of the later developing sounds such as *sh*, *ch*, and *j*. Plan a picnic together and emphasize these sounds in your speech as you talk about

- **foods you'll eat** (*cheese, sandwich, chicken, juice, chocolate*)
- **things you'll do** (*lunch, share, choose, jump, catch*)

- **things you'll see** (*bridge, sunshine, blue jay, chipmunk, trash*)

...

Help your child listen for important words. Play *Simon Says* and give your child a simple direction. Explain that he can only follow the directions if you say *Simon Says* first.



Help your child with the sounds *s*, *r*, *sh*, *j*, *v*, *l*, and *ch* in all positions in words. Ask questions and talk about objects you see at the gas station and car wash, emphasizing these sounds in your speech (*gas station, change tire, wash, wiper, receipt, cash, price, regular, leaded, unleaded, vacuum*).

...

Talk about objects that you see outside of the car or bus window that include the sounds *s*, *r*, *sh*, *j*, *v*, *l*, and *ch* in any position of a word. Create a game to see who can find an object first and be the first to say it. Emphasize the sounds in your own speech (*van, jeep, sign, shop window, child, lamp, traffic light, railing, fire truck, ambulance, police car*).

...

Help your child listen for details. Ask him to close his eyes and picture what you are saying. Tell him a story using lots of descriptive words. Ask him simple questions relating to the story.



Use words that have the *k* and *g* sounds at the beginning, middle, and end of words. As you buy breakfast foods, talk about *eggs, bacon, pancakes, mango, kiwi, blackberry jelly, and bagels*. Emphasize the *k* and *g* sounds when you say the words. Ask your child to repeat the words with these sounds.

...

Encourage your child to use words with later developing sounds such as *l*, *s*, *r*, *v*, *z*, *j*, *ch*, and *sh*. Stress correct production of these sounds in your own speech and ask your child to repeat the words as you place the items in your cart (*radish, chicken, mushroom, sugar, laundry detergent, shrimp, light bulbs, lettuce, raisins, jelly, jam, soup, celery, vegetables*).

...

Help your child hear differences between sounds. Ask your child if the item you are putting in your cart begins with the same sound as another item you name. *Do pancakes begin with the same sound as pet? Do donuts begin with the same sound as cake?*



Encourage your child to express opinions during conversations. As you do your chores, ask your child to follow you from room to room. Talk together about what you like to do in each room.

...

Make specific facial expressions and ask your child to tell you the feeling shown on your face. Talk about what makes you feel happy,

sad, angry, excited, or afraid.

...

Help your child convey information in a logical order when speaking. Before dressing, talk about the clothes she is going to wear. Ask her what she is going to put on *first*, *next*, and *last*. When baking, talk about how you are going to follow a recipe—what you will do *first*, *next*, and *last*.

...

Help your child answer questions about time. Ask him questions about commonly occurring events. *When do you put on your socks? When do we sleep? When do you go to preschool?*



Ask thought-provoking questions as your child plays with toys to encourage the use of four to five-word sentences with a lot of detail. *What would you do if you didn't have any toys? How would you create a new toy? How is your toy hammer like your dad's real hammer?*

...

Build a story together. You start and have your child add the next sentence.

...

Talk about what you are doing and ask questions. When you are outside watering the plants, ask *Why do we water the plants? What would happen if we forgot to water them? How do I know it is time to water the plants?*

...

Ask questions to help your child use future tense in sentences. *What are you going to be when you grow up? How do you want to celebrate your next birthday? Where would you like to go this weekend?*



Help your child use words to describe a sequence of events. Talk about what will happen *first*, *next*, and *last*. *First we will go to the supermarket. Next we will go to the post office. And last, we will go to the park.*

...

Help your child use new words in conversation. Take a trip to the post office and talk about what you will see and do when you arrive. Role play the conversation you will have with the postal worker to buy stamps, send, or pick up a package.

...

Point out how we talk differently in different places. Talk about using inside voices at home, at the library, or in the preschool classroom and outside voices in the park or yard.

...

Role play greetings you use with different people. Show the difference between talking to an authority figure (using *Mr.* or *Ms.*) and talking to a playmate (using *first name*).



Ask cause and effect questions. *What do you think would happen if...? What would happen if there were no grocery carts? What would you do if you didn't have enough money to buy all the groceries?*

...

Develop the use of present, past, and future tense in sentences. Ask your child questions about what he ate yesterday, what snack he is eating in the grocery cart, and about what he will eat for each meal tomorrow.

...

Engage in conversation about different ways to prepare food you are buying. Talk about *baking*, *broiling*, *frying*, *grilling*, *toasting*, *blending*, *mixing*. Talk about the food and utensils you'll need and the steps you will follow.

...

Discuss manners when you are eating. Talk about how you can eat some foods with a fork or spoon and others with your fingers.





Help your child learn time concepts. Display a large calendar in your house and talk about *yesterday*, *today*, *tomorrow*, *last month*, and *next year*. Talk about your activities and write them down on the calendar and cross off each day as time goes on.

...

Ask your child to act out or retell the plot of a favorite TV show. Encourage her to tell you what happened *first*, *next*, and *last*. Ask her to tell you more and ask for more details to help her develop a long story.

...

Show your child the cover of a book and talk about what the book is about. Point out the name of the author and illustrator and explain how they created the book.

...

Write your child's name on her drawings and call attention to each letter. She may be able to print her own name.



Find numbers and letters that are important to your child on road signs, store fronts, addresses, and billboards. Pick out numbers that match his age, a number in your phone number, a beginning letter in his name.

...

Ask your child to look outside for an object that begins with a letter you've given. Make it a game. *I'm thinking of the letter b. Can you find something that starts with a b or buh?*

...

Play rhyming games using the names of objects and people you see. See how many words your child can think of that rhyme (*tree: bee, see, he, free; boy: toy, joy*). Talk about things that rhyme with things that you are seeing and doing.



To develop number concepts, count the number of stop signs you see as you travel.

...

Listen to stories on tape in the car and ask your child *who?*, *why?*, *where?*, and *how many?* questions to encourage conversation related to the story.

...

Help your child learn the alphabet. Find objects that begin with different letters of the alphabet. As you ride down the road, see how many objects your child can find that start with each letter of the alphabet.

...

Look for letters on signs outside of the car, bus, or train, and say the sound of the letter. *The letter b makes the sound buh. The letter m makes the humming sound.*



Encourage your child to help you sort and categorize groups of food items (*vegetables, fruits, cleaning items, meats, bread, and beverages*) as you create a shopping list.

...

Point to the word on your shopping list and ask your child to cross off the items as you put them in your cart.

...

Ask your child to find the food item that matches a coupon. Ask her to find a specific letter or number on the coupon.

...

Talk about the number on your ticket at the deli counter. Let your child hold the ticket and listen for the number.

## 10 Fun Activities for Children with Autism



Craft activities are fun for everyone, but for children on the autism spectrum, the opportunity to explore color, shape, and sensory experiences can stimulate attention, foster calm, and create loads of fun! Here are 10 activities that teachers and parents love to do with their special needs children.

**1. Create a Shredded Flower Bouquet.** Who knew shredded paper could be so beautiful? This creative activity involves ripping and shredding paper to create a colorful composition that makes for a great gift or decoration. Kids with special needs will especially love the sensory experience of handling paper and manipulating colors and shapes!



**2. Underwater I Spy Alphabet Bottle.** Sparkly, glittery water is sure to attract curious eyes! This alphabet bottle is fun to make and a great activity to keep your child engaged and focused. The craft helps kids recognize letters in a creative way while enjoying the beautiful shine and sparkle of floating sequins!

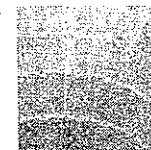


**3. Paint with Ice.** Kids love to swirl the melting paint over paper, creating beautiful designs. They'll practice their color recognition and observation skills while observing paint go from a liquid state to a solid state, then back to liquid again!



**4. Explore the Senses with a Sensory Table.** A sensory table is a place designed for squishing, sifting, sorting, digging and pouring! Children will relish the opportunity to get messy, discover, and play freely with engaging their sense of touch, hearing sight.

**5. Practice Paint Chip Storytelling.** Telling a story is like painting a picture, using words instead of paint. In this imaginative activity, your child uses paint chips and words to tell a story! Alter the activity according to the level of your child, and you can spark his imagination and narrative abilities while having a colorful good time!



**6. Play the Matching Halves Game.** This matching activity is a great way to introduce children to the concept of puzzles, and to satisfy many special needs kids who crave order and simplicity. Each craft stick will have only half a shape: find the stick with the missing half and place the sticks side by side to complete each one!



**7. Sculpt Clay Snowflakes.** You don't have to brave the chill to enjoy the beauty of winter. Make sparkly snowflake sculptures and experience winter from the comfort and warmth of your home! Sculpting clay is a great way to boost fine motor skills, and kids with special needs will love the sensory experience of squishing, pulling and kneading as they work.



**8. Set Up a Smelling Station.** With the help of some small containers, rubber bands, scraps of fabric and lots and lots of fragrant ingredients, your child can create a whole collection of smells to tease his nose. Smell is one of the five senses, and kids will love learning about what role it plays while exploring the breathing and relaxation associated with good scents.



**9. Oobleck Science: Solid or Liquid?** Can something be solid and liquid at the same time? Experiment with this classic science activity that introduces kids to the mysteries of states of matter.



# Summer Activities

Get outdoors as much as possible since the weather is so nice. Don't forget the park early morning or in the evenings when it's too hot! Biking, skating, walking and going on a nature hike in your own back yard are great pick up and go activities. Swimming is a great activity not only is it fun but it works all of your muscles. Look for a swim program or team to join or make your own group! The library is a great cool place to meet, get some books and participate in community activities.

Scheduling a picnic and helping to prepare and pack up and set-up are fun activities for children as well as assisting with organizational skills. Having different times of the day planned out will help any anxiety or boredom from taking over have a reading time, computer time, yoga time and ball play times daily. This can help get extra energy out while working on maintaining skills over the summer break.

Indoor activities for a rainy day or when it's way to hot out: bowling, movies, indoor bounce park, aquarium and the please touch museum. Make your own bowling game for indoors with empty plastic soda bottles, treasure hunt indoors, tea party or picnic with your stuffed animals, practice tossing with pitching into a bucket, basket or paper bag.

Websites for summer camps are listed below; check it out and see if any look like a good fit and contact them for specific information:

1. [www.kidsguidenj.com/special\\_needs/specneeds\\_camps.html](http://www.kidsguidenj.com/special_needs/specneeds_camps.html)
2. [www.southjerseymom.com](http://www.southjerseymom.com)
3. [www.jcccampsatmedford.org/special\\_needs](http://www.jcccampsatmedford.org/special_needs)
4. [www.mysummercamps.com/camps/special\\_needs\\_camps/](http://www.mysummercamps.com/camps/special_needs_camps/)
5. [www.friednshipcircle.org](http://www.friednshipcircle.org)

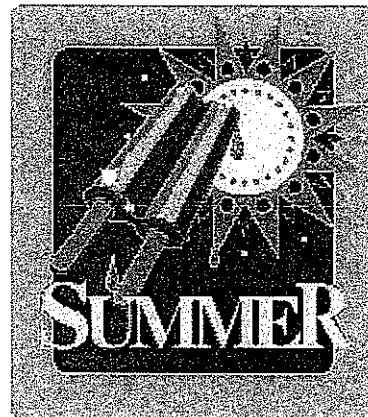
Have a pick your activity party with options written or pictures upside down on and let the children choose different games or activities.

Have a great summer!

Laurel Delmar, PT (40QA00985100)

# Fun Physical Activities for the Summer

**Go to the playground** - go visit a local playground and explore all the climbing equipment, swings and slides. Supervise and assist your child as necessary. Sometimes all a child needs is some verbal reminders of how to use the equipment such as "try moving your foot to the next ladder". If your child is fearful of movement, let him explore at his own pace. If your child has decreased safety awareness, review all playground rules before play and supervise closely.



**Hit the pool or lake** - Swimming is a wonderful fitness activity for all levels. It is a great way to strengthen muscles and improve overall endurance. Practice balance and jumping skills in the water, it makes it fun if you do fall!

**Take a hike** - Go on an adventure in the woods. Look for hiking trails appropriate for children - level and smooth. Many trails that are handicap accessible are perfect walking trails for younger children. Create a list of things to look for on your hike such as three birds, one squirrel, turtle, yellow leaf, etc. See how many you can find.

**Play games in the yard** - Here are several fun games for the backyard:

Scavenger Hunt - ask your child to find three things in the yard such as brown leaf, green leaf and white rock and bring in back within one minute.

Green Hunt - cut up green construction paper into one inch by 8 inch strips. Hide the green paper strips in the grass. The child must find all the strips that you have hidden.

















Bubbles, Bubbles, Bubbles - practice blowing bubbles and chasing them. Blow bubbles, catch it on wand and child can clap or kick the bubble to pop it.

Sidewalk Chalk Games - Hopscotch is always a great physical activity to practice jumping, bilateral coordination and motor planning. Draw long, twisty lines with the chalk and child can try to walk on line without stepping off.

Ball games - play catch with a different sized balls, beach balls or even better water balloons. Practice dribbling a ball with your feet - use a beach ball or balloon for easier control to start.

**REMEMBER - HAVE FUN AND BE SAFE!!!!**

# OUTDOOR BINGO

frog 	pile of dirt 	pine cone 	bird 
brown leaf 	acorn 	yellow flower 	two pebbles 
butterfly 	red leaf 	rock 	pine needles 
fern 	grass 	stick 	green leaf 

















## Directions for Outdoor Bingo:

Cut out the two bingo cards. Go outdoors. Mark off each box with an 'X' when you find that object. First player to find 4 objects in a row is the winner.

## Directions for Scavenger Hunt:

Cut out the two bingo cards. Go outdoors on a nature walk. Every time you find an object mark an 'X' in the box. See if you can find all the objects on the card.

**Directions for Outdoor Race:** Cut out each small square from the bingo card. Go outdoors. Try to collect each item (except the animals) and match the card to the item. Time yourself to see how long it takes. Try playing the game another time in a different location and see if it takes you longer or shorter.

pine cone 	rock 	brown leaf 	red leaf 
pile of dirt 	bird 	green leaf 	grass 
two pebbles 	fern 	pine needles 	butterfly 
frog 	yellow flower 	acorn 	stick 

# Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities

## HANDOUT

(4)



### ***Prepare children to move from one activity or setting to another.***

Provide verbal cues before transitions (e.g., “5 minutes ‘til snack,” “it’s almost clean-up time”).

Use nonverbal cues (e.g., showing pictures of the next activity, ringing a bell).



### ***Plan your daily schedule to include transition times, and consider what the children and adults in the setting will do during these times.***

Sing songs, play word or guessing games, recite rhymes, or do finger plays with children so that the time passes more quickly when they have to wait for long periods of time for new activities to begin.

Plan a gradual increase or decrease in the level of activity (e.g., outdoor play followed by snack) and a good balance of active and quiet play (e.g. center time followed by story time).

Limit transitions between activities.

Allow children adequate time to finish projects or activities.



### ***Individualize transition strategies.***

Provide support or different types of support to children during transitions (e.g., photos to help anticipate what activity is next, directions given in a child’s home language or sign language, an individual warning to a child that soon it will be time to clean up and begin a new activity).



### ***Help children become more independent across the year as they make transitions from one activity to another.***

Allow children to move individually from one area to another area when they complete an activity (e.g., as children finish snack, they are encouraged to go to the carpet and choose a book).

Teach children to help others (e.g., have children move as partners from one activity to another or ask one child to help another child gather his/her back pack).

Help children self-monitor during transitions (e.g., children can be asked to think about how quietly or quickly they moved from one activity to another).



### ***Provide positive attention to the children following the transitions that go smoothly (e.g., the times that children pick up the toys without much prompting).***

Give very specific positive feedback after transitions (e.g., “Nicholas and Jorge did a great job cleaning up the block area and moving to the carpet.”).

# Helping Children Understand Routines and Classroom Schedules

## HANDOUT



### **Schedules and routines are important because:**

- ✦ They influence a child's emotional, cognitive, and social development.
- ✦ They help children feel secure and comfortable.
- ✦ They help children understand the expectations of the environment.
- ✦ They help reduce the frequency of behavior problems (e.g., tantrums).
- ✦ They can result in higher rates of child engagement.



### **Remember:**

- ✦ A schedule that is followed consistently helps make settings more predictable for children and adults.
- ✦ When planning activity schedules, caregivers should consider the balance of activities (outside vs. inside, active vs. passive, teacher directed vs. child directed, the pace of activities, and the length of young children's attention span).
- ✦ Longer play periods can result in higher levels of play behaviors.
- ✦ Teachers and caregivers should include blocks of time where children have choices between different activities and materials.
- ✦ At the beginning of the school year, caregivers should discuss the classroom schedule using a picture or object chart to help children understand what will come next.



**A routine is an event that is completed on a regular basis, frequently involving a series of responses (such as a bedtime routine involving having a snack, bathing, reading a book, and cuddling).**

- ✦ During routines children learn about the sequence of activities, they begin to anticipate what will happen next, and they work on becoming more independent (e.g., learning to dress and undress).
- ✦ Children are less likely to engage in challenging behavior when they are aware of and can anticipate changes in the routine.