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IS YOUR OPINION VALUED AT IEP MEETINGS?

Do you go to IEP meetings and leave feeling like your opinion was heard and valued? Or perhaps you leave feeling defeated and that no one listened to you. For the past two months, we asked the question is your opinion valued at IEP meetings? Two hundred fifty of you responded so thank you!

Results of the Survey Question – Is your opinion valued at IEP meetings?

The first question was to report your title i.e. occupational therapist, parent, special education teacher, etc. Here are the results:

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Second question: Read and respond to this statement – My opinion is valued at IEP meetings. Responders could choose from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

There were a few groups that had enough responses to separate out the data i.e. COTAs, OTs, PTs and Parents.

For the OTs: 55.2% agreed that their opinion was valued.
For the COTAs 37.9% agree that their opinion was valued.

For the 36 PTs 50% of you agreed that your opinion was valued at IEP meetings.
For the 7 parents: 28.6% agreed but 28.6% disagreed with the statement My opinion is valued at IEP meetings.

I was pleasantly surprised to read that most felt their opinion was valued at IEP meetings. I have found that one of the most effective ways to have productive IEP meetings is to have open lines of communication. Read 5 steps to increase communication here.

If you need ideas to help you get started with improved communication, check out the School and Home Communication Forms for Therapists.

**Summary:** Therapists, school staff and parents are all so busy it can be hard to communicate. Therapists can review schedules, report on daily or weekly progress, track behavior, review IEP goals, track communication and more. It is suitable for all school-based therapists. FIND OUT MORE and download a sample form.

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VISUAL DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Visual discrimination skills are the ability to determine differences and similarities between objects to help us to understand and interpret the environment around us. Visual discrimination is especially important when learning reading, writing, and mathematics. Here is an assortment of visual discrimination activities for children.

Children need adequate visual discrimination skills to function properly in school and at home. If you have concerns about a child’s visual skills, be sure to start out by having the child undergo a thorough vision examination by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist (medical doctor).

**Suggested activity ideas:**

Here are activity ideas that will help a child to develop visual discrimination skills:
- start with the basics such as sorting for one attribute (i.e. sort cube blocks by color, sort same size beads by color, sort wooden blocks by size, etc.)
- progress to sorting objects with two attributes (i.e. sort different sized blocks by color, sort pens and

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pencils, sort objects by shape and color, etc.)
- finally advance to sorting objects of many different attributes (i.e. classify by size, color, and shape, determine differences between letters and numbers)
- gather similar objects from around the house such as a yellow crayon, banana, and a black pen. Ask the child which object does not belong? The answer is the pen since it is not yellow.
- sort objects from around the house (i.e. LEGOs by color, size or type, silverware, playing cards, socks, etc.)
- match up pictures that are the same (i.e. matching games, memory games)
- complete “find the difference” puzzles
- complete puzzles starting with simple one-piece puzzles and progressing to larger puzzles
- using a newspaper or magazine, ask the child to go through an article and only circle certain letters or words (i.e. “the”)
- match up parquetry blocks to pattern boards
- play dominoes
- sort coins
- play lotto or bingo with picture cards
- complete puzzles on paper that challenge visual discrimination skills

If you need ideas for pencil and paper visual discrimination puzzles, check out the Visual Discrimination Collection.

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Embedding motor skill activities into the preschool classroom is so important to help children develop postural control, locomotor skills, and coordination skills. When children are able to maintain an upright posture, participate in physical activities and demonstrate eye-hand coordination skills, it is beneficial for functional learning in school. Sometimes teachers can find it difficult to make time for gross motor skills throughout the day. Here are 5 strategies to support gross motor skills in the classroom.

**Make it Routine**

Add gross motor skills and physical activity within the normal routine of the classroom. A great time to add movement time is during transitions. Classroom jobs can include physical activity. Read more on how to establish a brain break routine [here](#).

**Accessibility**

Follow a UDL approach (Universal Design for Learning) and make sure that the environment is accessible for all children including those with physical disabilities and delays. Teachers and therapists can provide multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression for motor skill tasks.

**Differentiate**

Once the environment is accessible to all the next step is to determine each student’s abilities and alter the gross motor activity as needed. This can be done by modifying the: learning environment (ie change the size, weight, texture, or color of play materials) content (ie using motivational themes), and process (ie use visual supports).
Offer frequent, brief motor breaks

Teachers can provide frequent motor breaks throughout the school day and not limit physical activity time to recess or physical education. Brain breaks are a perfect solution to add throughout the day. Yoga is one of many strategies to support gross motor skills in the classroom too.

Research has shown that 5-20 minute movement breaks in the classroom can positively affect the following:

- cognitive skills including executive function, attention span, memory skills and verbal comprehension
- academic achievement on test scores
- attitude changes in motivation and self-concept
- on task behaviors
- organizational skills
- motor planning
- impulse control

Don’t forget to include a warm-up, physical activity followed by a cool down. This Brain Break Poster Set includes 4 easy to implement brain breaks for an individual or a group of students including a relaxation brain break to prepare students to return to school work after a movement break.
Provide movement and learning opportunities

Research indicates that integrating physical activity to facilitate learning is beneficial in the classroom environment. Two recent studies were performed with preschool students to compare lessons with physical activity and without physical activity. Both studies indicated that integrating physical activity to facilitate learning in a preschool classroom resulted in improved learning outcomes versus a conventional sedentary lesson.

Here are 3 evidence-based reasons why teachers should incorporate movement into classroom instruction:

- increases student interest, motivation (Vazou et al., 2012), and learning (Braniff, 2011).
- improves content knowledge, skills, and test scores in core subjects such as mathematics and reading fluency (Adams-Blair & Oliver, 2011; Erwin, Fedewa, & Ahn, 2013; Browning et al., 2014).
- may help children meet the recommendation to complete the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Movement can be infused into language, math, art, science lessons and more.

Settling into a new routine to establish movement in the classroom can be difficult at first for teachers in terms of classroom management. Once the routine is established and students know what to expect, motor skill and cognitive growth will occur.

If you want to get started right away with strategies to support gross motor skills in the classroom check out the resources:

The ABC’s of Movement®- Combine Movement with Literacy – The ABC’s of Movement® is a pdf document of educational flash cards that combine movement with literacy development. Kids love these colorful flash cards that merge learning the alphabet with twenty six fun, noncompetitive movement

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activities. Designed for children of all abilities from preschool through 2nd grade, these flash cards were developed by a physical therapist with learning and physical development in mind. Ideal for home and school use. These bright, bold letters and full color photographs of children make learning easy and fun!

Movement Flashcards – Movement Flashcards digital download includes 10 aerobic exercises with flash cards templates. Students can get physical activity while reviewing material. The 10 aerobic activities include: run in place, jumping, hopping, squats, lunges, skipping, twists, cross crawls, jumping jacks and marching. Each page includes a picture image of the aerobic exercise along with a blank template to type in 18 flash cards. You choose what to work on for academic material.

The ABC’s of Active Learning – Exploring educational concepts through movement and multiple senses give children opportunities to learn in ways they understand. The alphabet activities from A to Z are a collection of activities that can be used with children of all abilities.

References:


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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The association between school based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2010


The *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* published research on physical activity and math skills in elementary school. In the study, a group of eighty-five 4th-grade students were randomly assigned to a physically active group or a classroom group. The physically active group of students participated in moderate to vigorous activity for 20 minutes, 3 times per week for 6 weeks while learning their multiplication tables during the exercise sessions. The control group learned the same material on multiplication but while seated. Data was collected on multiplication accuracy, general numeracy, aerobic fitness, and body mass index.

**Results of the Study**

The results of the study on physical activity and math skills in elementary school indicated the following:

- both groups improved similarly on multiplication tables.
- general numeracy was significantly greater for the physically active group versus the control group.
- there was not a significant difference between groups on improvement in aerobic fitness.
• body mass index was unchanged.

The researchers concluded that combining aerobic exercise while learning multiplication tables was effective. The addition of the aerobic exercise helps to meet daily physical activity guidelines while possibly boosting learning.


**Movement Flashcards** – Movement Flashcards digital download includes 10 aerobic exercises with flashcards templates. Students can get physical activity while reviewing material. The 10 aerobic activities include: run in place, jumping, hopping, squats, lunges, skipping, twists, cross crawls, jumping jacks and marching. Each page includes a picture image of the aerobic exercise along with a blank template to type in 18 flashcards. You choose what to work on for academic material. [FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE MOVEMENT FLASHCARDS HERE.](#)

Read more:

- [Math, Movement, and Motor Skills](#)
- [Movement Activities and Math Skills](#)
- [10 Easy Physical Activities to Get the Brain Ready for Testing](#)
- [Acute Effects of Aerobic Exercise on Cognitive Flexibility in Children with ADHD](#)

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Psychological Science recently published research on interceptive timing, eye-hand coordination, and academic skills in children. The study collected objective measures of interceptive timing, general motor skills, and national standardized academic attainment from 309 school children ages 5 through 11.

What is interceptive timing?

Interceptive timing is your sensory motor ability to interact with a moving target while you are moving. When you swing a bat at a moving ball you are using interceptive timing. You need to time your swing (you are moving) to hit the ball (the ball is also moving). The ability to use interceptive timing requires spatial and temporal accuracy which developmentally occur later in a child’s developmental skill acquisition after children learn how to interact with non-moving objects.

To run and catch a ball, children’s interceptive timing skills rely on controlling all of their muscle movement while processing information on a nonlinear, moving object in different environments. There can also be additional information to process such as other children around them, verbal directions or background noise that will all influence interceptive timing.
Methodology of Study

The methodology of this study included various tasks for the children to complete. The goal of the tasks was to determine how the brain predicts the movement of objects through time and space. Various skills were assessed.

An **interceptive-timing task** was developed with 54 moving targets that included three target speeds and three target widths were presented. The task involved hitting a moving object with an on-screen bat. The number of targets hit was recorded as the interceptive timing score.

Various **manual dexterity tasks** were completed on a tablet using the Kinematic Assessment Tool to distinguish differences in general motor skills versus interceptive timing ability.

The **steering task** required the children to trace a line while staying in a moving box to measure timing and accuracy.

The **aiming tasks** required the children to make aiming movement towards circular targets. Movement time from circular target to circular target was measured.

**Spatiotemporal accuracy** was measured using a tracking task (of different speeds) in a figure 8 pattern with and without guidelines.

**Postural control** was measured using a Nintendo Wii Fit board center or pressure measurements with eyes open and closed.

**Academic ability** was recorded using nationally standardized academic-attainment scores for mathematics, reading, and writing.

**Results of the study on Interceptive Timing, Eye-Hand Coordination, and Academic Skills in Children**

Data analysis indicated the following:

- interceptive timing may have a specific relationship with mathematics but not educational attainment in general.
- fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination showed a more general relationship with attainment measures: steering fine motor measure scores
accounted for approximately 9 months of difference in reading, writing, and mathematics attainment, aiming had a possible relationship with math, reading and writing and tracking showed a likely relationship between math and writing.

- balance measures of gross motor skills showed no clear relationship with mathematical- or reading-attainment scores, though there did seem to be a relationship between balance with eyes closed and writing attainment possibly indicating why a stable base when performing writing tasks is important.

The researchers concluded that interceptive-timing ability can predict mathematical performance in primary school children. In addition, there was a relationship between fine motor tasks (steering and aiming) and mathematics attainment along with a generalized relationship between fine motor skills and all the educational attainment measures (mathematics, reading, and writing). The results of this study support previous research indicating that sensorimotor systems and cognitive abilities are intrinsically linked.


Do you need help teaching children to catch, throw and kick? Check out Teaching Catching, Throwing and Kicking Skills.

Read more on:

*Teaching Throwing and Catching to Children with DCD*

*10 ways to perform catching and throwing drills in children that they can do all by themselves*

*Predictive Power of Executive Functions, Visual-Motor Coordination and Physical Fitness on Later Academic Achievement*

*Motor Coordination and Academic Achievement*

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Preschools provide many opportunities for play and motor skill development. Recent research attempted to answer the question regarding the outcomes of motor skill interventions versus play-based lessons for preschoolers. The study participants included 149 Hispanic pre-K children from low socioeconomic status. All of the children were evaluated with the Peabody Developmental Motor Scales – 2 prior to the start of the study and after a 16-week intervention. The group was divided into an experimental group with 74 children and a control group with 75 children. The experimental group received 800 minutes of skill-based instruction to target gross and fine motor skills. The control group received 800 minutes of play-based lessons with no instruction provided.

Results of the Study on Motor Skill Interventions versus Play-Based Lessons for Preschoolers

After data analysis, the results of the study on motor skill interventions versus play-based lessons indicated the following:

- there was a significant difference between the experimental and control group children on stationary and visual-motor subtests after the 16-week intervention.

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The researchers concluded that children in the experimental group benefited from a planned motor intervention program on their gross and fine motor skills. It was recommended that educators and practitioners provide structured lessons with feedback to promote the development of gross and fine motor skills.


Read more on:

- Strategies to Support Gross Motor Activities in the Classroom
- Motor Skills in Preschoolers from Low SES
- Movement Breaks and Time on Task in Preschoolers

Looking for activities to encourage graphomotor and fine motor skills in young children? Check out:

*Hands First for Learning Fine Motor Curriculum and Preschool Units*
As school-based therapists, teachers, and parents do you communicate effectively the expectations of goal achievement? This is a difficult skill to master and consistently apply to all students. Writing the goal is only the basic starting point for the overall outcome. There are many steps that need to take place before you begin learning the new skills to help the student achieve the goal.

One of the most important steps is to make sure everyone is on the “same page” when it comes to the goal. Does everyone have the same expectations when it comes to goal achievement?

Worksheet to help you review the expectations of goal achievement

At the bottom of the post, you can download your FREE copy of the worksheet to help you review the expectations of goal achievement. It leads you through a series of questions to determine if everyone is on the “same page”.

Start off by writing down the overall goal. Make sure that there are open lines of communication by asking the following questions:

**COMMUNICATION**

Do you know specifically what you expect the student to accomplish towards the goal? Be specific.
Does the student understand the goal or expectation?
Does the student agree with the goal or expectation?
Does the student understand the procedures, routines and/or behavioral expectations?

REVIEW GOAL

Is the goal challenging but achievable?

REVIEW CURRENT SKILL SET

Has the student been provided with previous learning opportunities to prepare to reach the overall goal?

REMEMBER: As you progress toward goal achievement, remind students that effective effort is the key to reach your goals.

If you practice establishing the expectations of goal achievement before EVERY new goal, you may find that students will achieve those goals at a faster pace.

Read more on:

Tips for Positive Communication with Parents

5 Steps to Increase Communication this School Year

DOWNLOAD THE EXPECTATIONS OF GOAL ACHIEVEMENT WORKSHEET

Sign up to receive our weekly email newsletter and other announcements from Your Therapy Source. You will be redirected to download the Expectations of Goal Achievement worksheet. If you already subscribe, just enter your email to view the worksheets.


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Research in Developmental Disabilities published research on action planning and execution in children with cerebral palsy. The goal of the study was to determine the differences in anticipatory visual patterns between 13 children with hemiplegic cerebral palsy (average age 6.8 years) and 15 typically developing children (average age 5.8 years). In addition, visuomotor coordination was assessed in the children with hemiplegic cerebral palsy.

Each child participated in the experimental valid action-planning task, which consisted of initially reaching and grasping an object placed at a fixed position, followed by placing the object in a random target position. The visual patterns and arm motions of the children were recorded using a head-mounted eye tracker system and motion capture.

Results of the Study on Action Planning and Execution in Children with Cerebral Palsy

The children with hemiplegic cerebral palsy had delayed anticipatory gaze time and longer latency than the typically developing children during the planning and execution phases.

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The children with hemiplegic cerebral palsy also had a higher frequency of gaze shifts, longer reaction times and movement times than the typically developing children.

The researchers concluded that impaired anticipatory visual control potentially affects the planning of goal-directed action in children with hemiplegic cerebral palsy. This impairment is also related to deficits in the integration of vision with motor output. The researchers recommend that visuomotor coordination should be considered when assessing and treating motor impairments in children with hemiplegic cerebral palsy.

Read more:

Motor Planning and Cerebral Palsy

Hand-Arm Bimanual Intensive Therapy and Motor Planning

50 Bimanual Activities of Daily Living and get a FREE Printable!

Research Review on CIMT and Bimanual Therapy for Children with Cerebral Palsy

CIMT, Bimanual Therapy, and OT Home Programs

Move Like Me

Therapeutic Play Activities for Children digital download includes 100 play activity pages and 12 tip sheets. The play activities encourage the development of fine motor skills, bimanual skills, rolling, crawling, tall kneeling, standing balance and cruising with a strong focus on children with cerebral palsy. FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION.


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Research indicates that the core cognitive deficit in dyslexia involves language (phonological) processing. Since reading is also a visual task, researchers explored the potential role of visual deficits in children with dyslexia.

In order to evaluate the frequency of visual deficits in children with dyslexia (vergence, accommodation, and ocular motor tracking) an observational study was performed with 29 children with dyslexia and 33 typically developing children. To determine visual deficits the following measures were used:

- Vergence was assessed for amplitudes, fusional ranges, and facility
- Accommodation was assessed for amplitude, facility, and accuracy
- Ocular motor tracking was assessed with the Developmental Eye Movement test and Visagraph eye tracker

**Results of the Study on Visual Deficits in Children with Dyslexia**

The results of the study on visual deficits in children with dyslexia indicated the following:
accommodation deficits were more frequent in the dyslexia group.
for ocular motor tracking, 62% of the children with dyslexia scored in the impaired range (in the Developmental Eye Movement test, Visagraph, or both) compared to 15% in the typically developing group of children.
vergence deficits occurred in 34% of the children with dyslexia and 15% in the typically developing children.
overall 79% of the children with dyslexia and 33% of the typically developing children had deficits in 1 or more domain of visual function.

The researchers concluded that visual deficits in children with dyslexia are far more prevalent than in typically developing readers, but the possible cause and clinical relevance of these deficits are uncertain. Further study is necessary to examine how and if treating these deficits can improve visual symptoms and/or reading parameters.

Read the full-text article here.


Read more on:
link between visual-motor integration and reading.
Fine Motor Skills, Visual Function and Reading in Children
Orthographic Processing and Handwriting

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Ready, Set, Scan encourages:
visual scanning
visual attention
visual tracking
visual discrimination skills
visual motor skills

**Multisensory Alphabet Activities** – digital download includes 26 activity pages for each letter of the alphabet plus a bonus rubric to track progress. Research indicates that children need to master four components in order to identify letters: letter recognition – the ability to recognize the shape and size of the letter, letter naming – recognizing that the shape of the letter is associated with a letter name, letter sound knowledge – determining what sound corresponds to the shape or name of the letter and letter writing – the ability to trace or write the letter with a pen in accordance with its shape and direction (Bara & Bonneton-Botte, 2017). Each worksheet addresses each of these components in addition to movement activities. A font similar to the Zaner-Bloser® font is used with dotted lines.

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Previous research on obesity and self-regulation in children has indicated that poor self-regulation is associated with increased risk of obesity. Recent research examined how varying levels of toddler self-regulation are associated with the prevalence of obesity at kindergarten age and whether the pattern of association is different between boys and girls.

The data was analyzed from 10,700 US children born in 2001 and again during kindergarten entry in 2006-2007 using information from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort. A large subgroup of 6400 children was observed for toddler self-regulation in the home through parent interview and direct assessment. The standardized assessment of the two-year-old toddlers included four dimensions of self-regulation: adaptability, attention, persistence, and frustration tolerance. Obesity was defined as a body mass index for age in the 95th percentile or greater.

**Results of the study on obesity and self-regulation in children**

The results of the study on obesity and self-regulation in children indicated the following:

- Self-regulation scores were lower for boys than for girls.

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• lowest self-regulation quartile comprised more boys than girls.
• prevalence of obesity at 5.5 years was 19.2% among boys and 16.5% among girls.
• association between toddler self-regulation and obesity at 5.5 years was different for boys and girls: for boys, obesity prevalence was lower for those with the most self-regulation, whereas among girls, obesity prevalence was highest for those with the most and least self-regulation and lowest for those with intermediate levels of self-regulation.

The researchers concluded that obesity prevention efforts aimed at improving self-regulation may have different results for girls and boys.


If you need ideas to teach self-regulation skills to children, then check out the [Self Regulation Skills Curriculum](#). This curriculum provides an effective, time-efficient structured system to provide classroom breaks, improve self-awareness and self-advocacy and teach specific self-regulation skills so that kids have tools to use in their classrooms. This system will get kids moving, give them the benefits of a brainpower boost [from getting their heart rate up], give them heavy work and isometrics to help them calm down, and help them learn techniques to quiet and control their bodies in order to return to their academic work. [FIND OUT MORE.](#)

Read more on self-regulation:

- [The Ultimate Guide to Self-Regulation in Children](#)
- [Key Components of Effective Interventions for Self-Regulation](#)
- [Self-Regulation and Early Writing Skills](#)
- [Visual Supports: Schedules, Self-Regulation, & Classroom Inclusion](#)
- [10 Fun Games to Practice Self-Regulation Skills](#)

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Do you provide push-in or collaborative treatment sessions as a school-based Occupational Therapist? Many school-based therapists do provide related services in this manner to help improve carryover of services. Occupational Therapist Ingrid C. King, MScOT, completed a research study on a collaborative model to improve fine motor skills in children.

The Aim of the Study on Collaborative Model to Improve Fine Motor Skills in Children

Young students’ fine motor skills are an important predictor of their future academic success. Yet it is uncertain whether teachers have the means to identify and address students’ fine motor needs. Occupational therapists working in schools have the knowledge and skills to train teachers, thereby improving outcomes for larger numbers of students. This is a suitable delivery method of services considering funding limitations and long waitlists for therapy.

The purpose of the study was two-fold:

- to examine the effectiveness of a fine motor collaborative modeling teacher training intervention on the fine motor task performance of low-income five-year-old students and whether there was a significant difference in their fine motor performance after the intervention.
- to explore whether the collaborative modeling motor training intervention was effective from the teacher’s perspective. Would the teacher continue to use the knowledge and activities acquired after a five year period of time had elapsed, and if so, why?

Methodology - A two-phase mixed methods design was utilized. Changes in students’ fine motor performance were measured using a one group pre-test post-test design. A five-year follow-up interview was conducted to explore the
teacher’s perceptions. The classroom-based training occurred over 20 weeks. One time per week, the therapist demonstrated activities with the students. These were repeated by the teaching staff. The fine motor program ran with the entire class for eight weeks and then with a group of six students for the remaining 12 weeks. The fine motor program was an early Fantastic Fingers™ Fine Motor Program version. The five-year-old New Zealand students were attending a school in a low-income area.

**Results of the Study on Collaborative Model to Improve Fine Motor Skills in Children**

A significant difference was found in the group’s fine motor performance following the teacher training intervention. The teacher continued to use the knowledge and activities after the training was completed. The researcher concluded that training teachers about fine motor skills using a collaborative modeling intervention appears to improve students’ fine motor skills and is likely to benefit future student groups.

The fine motor program used with the collaborative model to improve the students’ fine motor skills was the Fantastic Fingers® Fine Motor Program. It includes ebook, music and instructional videos which is user-friendly, economical and research-based. It helps to improve the development of children’s fine motor skills, pencil grip, and posture. [Find out more here](#).

![Fantastic Fingers® Fine Motor Program](#)

**Reference:** King, Ingrid C. OT (2014) Then and now: Addressing young students’ fine motor needs through a collaborative modeling teacher training intervention. Retrieved from the web [here](#) on 7/25/18. [Read the full study here](#).

Read about [fine motor skills and vocabulary development](#).

Read about [Fine Motor Skills and Reading](#).

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Do you work with young people who want to increase their participation at home, school or work? Maybe you are a parent trying to help guide your young adult while transitioning into adulthood. It is important that these young people set participation goals and advocate for themselves if possible. You can get started with these participation goals and worksheets for young people with disabilities at the end of this post.

Research on Problem Solving Intervention Approach for Participation

*Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* published research on a program (Project TEAM) that teaches transition-age young people with developmental disabilities to identify and resolve environmental barriers to participation. The results indicated that:

- Individualized goal-setting appears to support attainment of participation goals.
- Project TEAM appears to support young people with developmental disabilities to apply an environmental problem-solving approach to participation barriers.
- Parents of young people with developmental disabilities report sustained changes in self-determination 6 weeks after Project TEAM.

Setting Participation Goals and Worksheets for Young People with Disabilities

Young people can work on four different areas to reach their participation goals.

Step 1: Identify ONE goal related to community participation, leisure participation, employment/prevocational exploration, or school participation. What activity would you like to be able to do?
Step 2: List any current environmental obstacles that affect your ability to reach the goal. What is getting in the way when you try to participate?

Step 3: Problem solve and list how you can overcome the environmental obstacles or barriers to reach the goal.

ACTION STEP: Put step 3 into action and be an advocate for the changes you have identified to achieve your goal. Who can you talk to about making changes?

Monitor Progress

Use Goal Attainment Scales to help monitor progress toward the overall participation goal. Young people, teachers or parents can score the outcome based on whether it was much less than the expected outcome all the way to much more than the expected outcome.

Score -2: Decrease in current participation or abilities (much less than the expected outcome)
Score -1: Maintain baseline participation or abilities (less than expected outcome)
Score 0: Increase in participation or abilities (expected outcome)
Score +1: Increase in participation or abilities (more than the expected outcome)
Score +2: Increase in participation or abilities (much more than the expected outcome)

**Download your FREE Copy of the Participation Goals and Worksheets for Young People with Disabilities**

Read more on goal expectations here.

5 Simple Tip to Help Children Reach Their Goals

Encourage students to track their own progress with [My Goal Tracker](#).

Reference:


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Are you familiar with the use of graphic organizers? As students progress through the educational system, academic demands begin to increase with higher order skills and advanced concepts. Students with learning disabilities are at risk for falling behind and may require explicit instruction to assist with comprehending text and producing written work. Here is some information on how to use graphic organizers to help students with learning disabilities.

What are graphic organizers?

Graphic organizers are visual and spatial displays that make associations between related facts and concepts more noticeable. The goal of graphic organizers is to encourage more meaningful learning and promote understanding and retention of new material by making abstract concepts more concrete and connecting new information with previous knowledge.

The five types of graphic organizers

There are 5 different types of graphic organizers that have been researched for students with learning disabilities.

**Cognitive mapping:** helps with making major ideas and relationships explicit by using “lines, arrows, and spatial arrangements to describe text content, structure, and key conceptual relationships”. This type helps to connect ideas and written language. Make sure the students minimize sentences and details for cognitive mapping.

**Semantic mapping:** helps students to recognize key information from class and written text, delete nonrelevant details and highlight important

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concepts. Students and teachers work together to create the visual representation indicating the relationships among concepts.

**Semantic Feature Analysis:** A matrix is used to represent the related concepts to highlight the key information.

**Syntactic/Semantic Feature Analysis:** In addition to using the Semantic Feature Analysis this type of graphic organizer adds fill in the blank type sentences based on the matrix using new vocabulary words.

**Visual Display:** associations between concepts are made apparent and clear by their location on the display using timelines, decision trees, flowcharts, taxonomies, Venn diagrams, etc.

**Research about using graphic organizers to help students with learning disabilities**

A research review was conducted on using graphic organizers to help students with learning disabilities. The results indicated the following:

- there was a large overall standardized effect of using graphic organizers on the posttest performance of students with learning disabilities across all studies in the research review.
- there was a medium overall effect indicating that the effects were maintained over a period of 1-4 weeks following the post-test.
- large posttest effects were found for all types of graphic organizers except visual displays (had a moderate effect).
- large posttest effects were found for all subjects areas except mathematics (moderate effect).
- science had a significantly larger maintenance effect compared to math and social studies.
- graphic organizers were effective for improving factual recall, factual and relational comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge.
- graphic organizers were moderately effective for applying knowledge to situations not directly covered in the text or lecture.
The researchers concluded that graphic organizers are more effective on posttest, maintenance, and transfer measures. Combining the use of graphic organizers will improve the learning process for upper-elementary, middle and high school students with learning disabilities.


Read [how to teach organizational skills to high school students](#).

You can [download worksheets to help support an organizational system for high school and college students here](#).

![Image](#)

Do you work with students who struggle with organizational skills? Do large assignments or projects feel overwhelming and impossible? Some students benefit from explicit instruction on how to get organized. This digital download includes 7 worksheets to help older students learn how to get organized and tackle big projects. [FIND OUT MORE.]

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We asked and you answered. Many of you responded to the question regarding your biggest struggle when it comes to being productive. The majority of you shared that staying on top of documentation, interruptions, and lack of computer access affects your time management and productivity.

Productivity is defined as “the effectiveness of productive effort, especially in industry, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input.” Essentially, it is a measurement of efficiency.

For some people, it’s simpler to view productivity in the currency of time. There are only 24 hours in a day, 60 minutes in an hour, and 60 seconds in a minute. If you live for 60 years, you will have lived 525,600 minutes.

While you can lose and gain money, esteem, friends, possessions and more, the one commodity you can never get back is time. Improving productivity in your
profession helps you get more accomplished in less time, allowing you more time to go about enjoying the 525,600 minutes you have.

Productivity at work and home is not simply doing something for the sake of getting it done. It’s about doing the right things at the right time to achieve maximum efficiency for your effort. Believe it or not, efficiency is sometimes about doing nothing at all: taking a break, recharging your batteries or mentally preparing for what comes next.

The real key to remember is that everyone has unique needs when it comes to maximizing efficiency for optimal productivity. If your goal is to accomplish more in less time, then you need to complete the following eight steps to productivity.

1. Know your productivity type to help you prioritize your work.
2. Discover your peak energy time.
3. Get yourself a simple kitchen timer.
4. Make friends with your calendar.
5. Batch your tasks and plan your weeks.
6. Schedule your downtime.
7. Set goals and monitor.
8. Review, reconsider and rework your goals if necessary.

Each step is essential for helping you learn to manage your time rather than being managed by the lengthy list of items on your to-do list. You know, those never-ending lists that just grow overnight. Doesn’t it seem like you cross off one item at a time but you add 3 more items in its place? This kind of chaos makes it seem like you will never catch up and never have time to relax. But as you learn more about your personal productivity needs, you will find that you are not only able to improve the quantity of work you accomplish in your day, but also the quality of work you accomplish.
How does this happen? You can learn how to make small tweaks to your work habits to improve your mood and your productivity. You need to focus on learning to do certain tasks during the hours when you are most productive, focusing your attention in short bursts of time and scheduling vital downtime on your calendar so you have an opportunity to enhance creativity, boost energy, and get a greatly improved return on investment for your time.

Ready to get started? Take the time to learn the ins and outs of each of the eight steps in the Productivity and Time Management Planner so you can take your professional and personal life further than you’ve previously dared to dream possible.

Therapists, teachers, students, and parents can potentially reach their goals faster by using the Productivity and Time Management Planner because it teaches how to improve the quantity and quality of work you complete each day.

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Researchers have determined that there is a higher prevalence of feeding problems in children with autism over three years of age. The research has consistently found that more than 50% of children with ASD exhibit limited food acceptance. This can increase stress levels for families, in addition, to put children at risk for decreased intake of important minerals and vitamins.

Feeding Problems in Young Children with Autism

The *Journal of Early Intervention* published research on the prevalence of feeding problems in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Chart reviews were completed to determine the prevalence of feeding problems in children below 3 years of age with ASD compared with those evaluated for non-ASD language delays (LD).

Following the chart reviews, Speech Therapists and Psychologists determined that:

there were more feeding problems for the ASD group than for the comparison group.

the ASD group showed more food selectivity by texture, more food selectivity by type, more new food refusal, and more food overstuffing.

feeding problems were more prevalent for males.
The researchers concluded that feeding problems in children with ASD may be identified at a young age. They recommended additional research to examine the age of onset of various feeding problems in children with ASD (particularly overstuffing) as well as the role early feeding problems may play in detection of ASD.


Read about Food Tactile Play and Food Preferences

Additional resources regarding healthy food choices:

Pre-Handwriting Fruits Vegetables Garden and Snacks

Write the Room Healthy Foods

**Therapeutic Food Survey**: Do you have students who need interventions due to sensory, self-help, oral, and oral-motor problems such as chewing, swallowing, touch, taste, or texture? Do you want a tool to help you work hand in hand with your client’s family to prioritize and set goals?

This Therapeutic Food Survey can be used to:
- Discover what and how much your client is and is not presently eating.
- Interview family members about history and family goals.
- Narrow down vague descriptions and create hard data.
- Use data to establish achievable goals.
- Use data to document progress.

**FIND OUT MORE.**
COLOR THE GEOMETRIC SHAPES FREEBIE

Looking for a quick, no-prep, visual motor activity? This color the geometric shapes freebie is from the Shapes Mini Packet. There are 6 different shapes to find and color. The geometric shapes include circles, squares, triangles, hearts, hexagons, and stars. The colors are yellow, blue, orange, green, red, and purple.

Simply print the black and white page and color the shapes the correct color.

If you need to make it easier, color the key at the bottom of the page if the child can not read color words.

DOWNLOAD YOUR COLOR THE GEOMETRIC SHAPES FREEBIE HERE.

This Shapes Mini Packet includes 16 visual motor geometric shape activities. Practice shape identification, pre-writing skills, counting, visual motor, figure-ground, visual memory, and visual discrimination skills. FIND OUT MORE.
If you are looking for some quick, multisensory prewriting practice, download this ice cream cone letter freebie from the Ice Cream Multisensory Prewriting Practice packet. This one-page black and white PDF includes the letters A through L in a dotted font.

**Here are a few multisensory activity ideas for the ice cream cone letter freebie:**

**Tactile Letters** – have the child practice putting small glitter glue dots on each letter dot. Once dry the child can practice tracing over the bumpy letter for additional feedback. This activity teaches children how to use a proper amount of glue, provides hand strengthening while squeezing the glue and the end result provides multisensory feedback for letter recognition.

**Sensory Bin Letters** – cut apart the ice cream cone cards. Place them face down. Provide the child with a paper plate with sensory materials on the plate such as colored rice, sprinkles, shaving cream, etc. The child turns over a card and “writes” the letter with his/her finger on the sensory tray.
Q-Tip Letters – encourage fine motor and visual motor skills while reinforcing letter recognition by providing the child with a q-tip and various colored paints. The child can dab the q-tip on each letter dot.

Poke Letters – work on hand strengthening and visual motor skills by using the dotted letters for poking. Provide the child with a thumbtack (ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED) and heavy duty cardboard. Place the ice cream letter card over the cardboard. The child can poke each dot with the thumbtack to make the letter.

DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY OF THE DOTTED ICE CREAM CONE LETTER FREEBIE

Get the rest of the alphabet including lower case letters plus numbers, lines and shapes in the Ice Cream Multisensory Prewriting Practice packet. This includes a 33 pages PDF digital document delivered electronically following payment. All pages are black and white (except cover page) for economical printing. Find out more here.