

## Supporting Motor Planning Challenges

- When learning new skills provide a lot of visual, verbal, tactile, and auditory cues.
- In order to be able to plan and execute the required movements to perform tasks, step-by-step instructions need to be given and the exact movements that are required for a task should clearly be indicated. The activities need to be broken down into stages. Progress by decreasing the visual cues and giving verbal directions only. When teaching a new skill 6 steps should be followed:
  1. Make eye contact and ensure that child is focused on the task
  2. Provide visual cues by demonstrating the desired action
  3. Provide auditory cue by explaining how the task is being performed
  4. Provide kinaesthetic input by hand-over-hand assistance
  5. Observe the child performing the skill independently
  6. Ask the child to point out and correct mistakes
- Use **backward chaining** to teach new skills: the child receives assistance to complete all but the last step of an activity, which he/she then attempts independently. Once this step is mastered, the child may attempt the last two steps, and so on until the child can complete all the steps of the task. This method is particularly helpful for children with a low frustration tolerance or poor self-esteem because it gives immediate natural feedback in completion of the task.
- Use **forward chaining** to teach new skills: the child begins with the first step of the task sequence, and receives assistance for the remaining steps. The child then attempts the first and second steps, and subsequent steps are added sequentially until all the steps in the task can be performed. Forward chaining can be helpful for children who have difficulties with sequencing and generalizing skills.
- Assess body mechanics. For example, some children cut better when they rest forearms on the desk or table, while others do better when you pull the chair away from the desk so the child can stabilize elbows against trunk.
- Keep language simple and consistent.
- Use sensory “wake up” activities. For example, precede reading and writing with a maze or dot to dot activity. Before starting fine motor tasks, use play doh, rub hands together, wash and dry hands, clap hands together.
- Keep environment neat and clean to avoid visual distractions.