

KEY CONCEPTS OF MEANINGFUL ROUTINES

Repetition

A routine is something we do on a regular basis. This allows for repetition on a frequent, perhaps daily basis, for maximal learning. As your student's skills improve we find ways to continue to encourage them to use those skills within their routines as well as increase the demands to work on new skills. Practice is the key!

Meaning/Motivation

Routines must be meaningful for your student. There must be a pay-off that has value to the student and not just one that we feel is appropriate. 'Real life' situations with peers are usually meaningful to the student.

Prompting and Fading

To promote the student's increased participation in an activity, we need to be aware of the level of prompts we provide:

- **Verbal** prompt, (e.g., say "Hook")
- **Gesture** prompt, get eye contact and then point to the coat hook
- **Physical** prompt, give hand over hand guidance
- **Peer** prompt, have peers engage in the same activity (enhances motivation !!!)

Start/Middle/End

All activities have an element of start or set-up, middle where you are doing the activity, and end or clean-up. Often the end of one routine is the beginning of the next. This applies to all of the routines we carry out on a regular basis during our day.

Mealtimes, for example, include preparation (beginning), eating (middle) and clean-up (end).

The concepts of start, middle and end also apply to the students we work with. Often the richest time for repeated practice of gross and fine motor and communication skills comes in the start and at the end of a functional activity - the set-up and clean-up (going and getting, reaching, grasping etc.)



Here our student is being prompted to open her lunch bag zipper, rather than having someone else do this for her. She is participating in the beginning of this lunch activity.



Here our student is finishing the sorting activity, by helping to wash the pieces. This allows him to practice his hand skills in a functional way and to experience the end of this activity.