TETN #20440
Instructional Approaches for VI Students Under the Developmental Age of 3

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Presented by
Kate Hurst, Statewide Staff Development Coordinator
katehurst@tsbvi.edu

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Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Outreach Programs
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TSBVI Outreach Programs
KateHurst@tsbvi.edu

Traits of Children

- Infants and toddlers
- Extensive physical and cognitive challenges
- Fragile health, chronic pain issues
- Limited communication skills
- Global developmental delays
- Reluctant learners (passive / distractible / difficult behaviors)
- Limited interests
- Limited experiences
- May have difficulty working or connecting with peers and/or adults
- Limited concepts
- Limited stamina
- May sleep or retreat a good portion of the day

Learning is Activating Neurology

"We are not teaching skills; we are activating neurology." - Daniel Kish

Aristotle once said, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."
Evidence-based Practices

Figure 1 Photo of Dr. Jan van Dijk.

Figure 2 Photo of Dr. Lilli Nielsen.

Figure 3 Photo of Barbara Miles.

These students learn by their own self-activity

Developmentally these children will only learn by their own self-activity

- They are defining self
- They are learning to manage emotions
- They are developing foundational skills and concepts

We have to view our role in a different light!

Strategies that work

Recognize parents as the experts when it comes to the child and utilize their expertise.

Figure 4 Picture of the Home Talk Cover.

http://www.nationaldb.org/ISSSelectedTopics.php?topicCatID=42
Strategies that work

Conduct thorough and on-going assessment

- Formal – Functional Scheme, Every Move Counts, etc.
- Informal – Diagnostic teaching - independent and interactive sessions

![Functional Scheme](image)

Figure 5 Photo of the cover of Lilli Nielsen’s Functional Scheme.

Strategies that work

Keep stress to a minimum

- Follow the child’s lead
- Don’t make too many demands
- Keep things predictable

Strategies that work

Pay attention to the child’s emotional development

- Is the child able to alter his/her emotional state?
- How does the child contact others?

Strategies that work

Base instruction around THE CHILD’S preferences and interests

- What sensory learning channels are preferred?
- What intrigues or motivates the child?
- What causes an orienting reflex?

Strategies that work

Allow for and encourage self-directed learning

- Adapt environments so the child can access them using the skills he/she currently has
- Exploration and experimentation is essential to developing concepts and skills
- Provide time for the child to move at own pace and repeat movements
Strategies that work

Provide appropriate interactions based on the child’s level of development

• Follow the child’s lead
• Be a good “playmate”
• Use techniques of offering, imitation, interaction
• Build towards sharing the work and consequences

Strategies that work

Develop the tactile sense

• Hand-under-hand
• Provide tactile modeling
• Allow time for tactile exploration
• Provide materials with interesting tactile qualities

Strategies that work

Pacing is everything --- slow it down, way down

• Follow the child’s pace
• Don’t hurry!
• Response times are often very delayed
Strategies that work

Use a predictable schedule and routines
- Develop daily and weekly schedules and stick to them
- Be flexible with time but have a predictable sequence
- Save brain energy
- Build scaffold for future learning

Strategies that work

Focus on THE CHILD’S expressive communication
- Read behavior as communication
- Respond to all communication attempts
- Limit your own communication

Summary

Children under the developmental age of 3 learn differently
- Educators must use different educational strategies with these children
- We do have evidenced-based practices that work with children functioning at this level
- If we utilize these practices that encourage a natural development of foundational skills and concepts, the child may be able to respond to more traditional educational approaches

Summary

1. Recognize parents as the experts when it comes to the child and utilize their expertise.
2. Conduct thorough and on-going assessment
3. Keep stress to a minimum
4. Pay attention to the child’s emotional development
5. Base instruction around THE CHILD’S preferences and interests
6. Allow for and encourage self-directed learning
7. Provide appropriate interactions based on the child’s level of development
8. Use of touch and provide opportunities to development of the tactile senses
9. Pacing is everything --- slow it down, way down
10. Predictable schedules and routines
11. Focus on THE CHILD’S expressive communication
References and Resources

Active Learning webpage http://www.tsbvi.edu/outreach/=3415


Communication for Children with Deafblindness or Visual and Multiple Impairments http://distance.tsbvi.edu/communication/

Design to Learn, www.designtolearn.com


Home Talk, a Family Assessment of Children Who Are Deafblind at http://www.nationaldb.org/ISSelectedTopics.php?topicCatID=42


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Figure 6 TSBVI logo.

Figure 7 IDEAs that Work logo and disclaimer from OSEP.