

Activity Schedules

Independent Play Skills

02/12/2020

What is an activity schedule?

- An activity schedule is a visual schedule that shows the sequence of steps needed to complete an activity
- It provides structure to a period of unstructured time
- We use activity schedules all the time
 - Timetables
 - Planners
 - Recipes
 - Daily Schedules

Why?

- Activity schedules help children prepare for what is coming up next
- Most of children use visual and textual support to process information better
- It helps children who have difficulties with transitions; it displays a visual representation of when they can transition
- Children with autism often respond well to structure
- Helps build skills that can support them in future employment

How?

- Activity schedules increase on task behavior
- Decrease inappropriate behavior
- Promotes independence and self-management
- Allows parents to do other things while children are occupied

What is independent play?

- Independent play is when a child engages in an activity by themselves for a session
- Children complete multiple activities back-to-back

Why?

- Its promotes independence and self-management
- It teaches your child to occupy their time without the need for other people
- Reduces the need for attention from others
- Increases on task behaviour
- Decreases inappropriate behaviour
- Can build employability skills
- Helps parents as children can be engaged for periods of time
- Can be used to occupy your child's time at home – during holidays or weekends
- Children can engage in these activities while waiting as well

Activity schedules

- They can be visual



- They can be textual. **Puzzle**

- They can be visual and textual



- Depending on the child, the schedule can be designed in the most efficient way for the individual child

Example of independent play schedule

1.  Pin-a-Shape
2.  4 in a box Figure Puzzles

Example of activity schedule

1.  TV
2.  Dinner
3.  Puzzle

Pictures

- Pictures must be clear and identifiable to the child
- Use pictures of the actual activity instead of symbols
- Make sure they are suitable for each individual child (bigger, smaller)
- They can be visual, visual and text or just text
- Depending on your child, the schedule can be designed in the most efficient way for the individual child

What does the child need before they can engage independently?

- Child must be able to:
 - sit at a table for a period of time
 - engage in the activities independently to completion
 - understand the use of visual schedules; has picture to object correspondence
 - manipulate the activities appropriately
- Chosen activities should:
 - have all the components
 - have a clear beginning and end
 - be set up, ready and available

Running the session

- Remember, before the session all activities and visual schedule needed should be ready and available to the child
- If you need to prepare the schedule before time, do so
- When beginning the session, give clear instruction e.g. “It’s time for independent play”
- How you run the session can vary from child to child

Next slide gives generic examples:

Independent activity station

This is where the activities are placed in a drawer or a certain area and the child is expected to go through the activities in order.

1. Sits at table with activity station
2. Pulls out drawer 1
3. Takes out activity
4. Completes activity
5. Puts activity back in drawer 1
6. Pulls out drawer 2
7. Takes out activity
8. Completes activity
9. Puts activity back in drawer 2
10. And so on...

There are different ways in which the station can run

- They could go through the drawers in order; with activities specific to the child
- There could be pictures on the drawers showing which game is where
- Before the session they could use an activity schedule to plan which activities they want to do and in what order

Free flow

Child gets the activities needed where they are kept

1. Sits down at table
2. Takes out activity schedules
3. Orders activities in order
4. Gets materials needed for activity
5. Sits back down
6. Completes activity
7. Tidies up activity
8. Gets materials needed for next activity
9. Sits back down
10. Completes activity
11. Tidies up...

There are different ways in the session can run

- All activity choices could be placed next to the child
- The activities could be where they are kept and the child must get them

Teaching

- Initially you may need to prompt your child through the steps
- Remember they should already know how to engage with the activity
- When prompting your child, as much as possible stay behind them as this promotes independence
- Fade back where possible; if your child can do it by themselves you no longer have to prompt that step
- Vocal prompts and interruptions should be avoided. If the child goes off task, use the least intrusive prompt such as pointing or a gesture to get them back on task

Teaching

- Initially you want to start with one or two activities that are easy and short
- As they master those activities; you can gradually increase the number of activities and complexity
- Once your child has mastered close-ended activities, you can begin to introduce open-ended activities such as play doh, sand play or water play
- With open ended activities, a timer should be introduced to indicate the end of each activity
- The visual schedule could include time allotted for each activity

Tips to remember

- This is independent play; the child should strive to complete the session as independently as possible
- Activities should be set up and ready to go before a session starts
- Your child's activity schedule may be different, and they should be customized for your child

Tips to remember

- If in doubt, discuss with your Childs supervisor or ASP on the best approach
- Include reinforcement time after the session. Depending on your child their reinforcement could be part of an activity during the session or separate after the session
- Your child should enjoy the activities that are engaging with