



LD is what  
I have,  
NOT  
who I am.

## Supporting Children with Learning Difficulties

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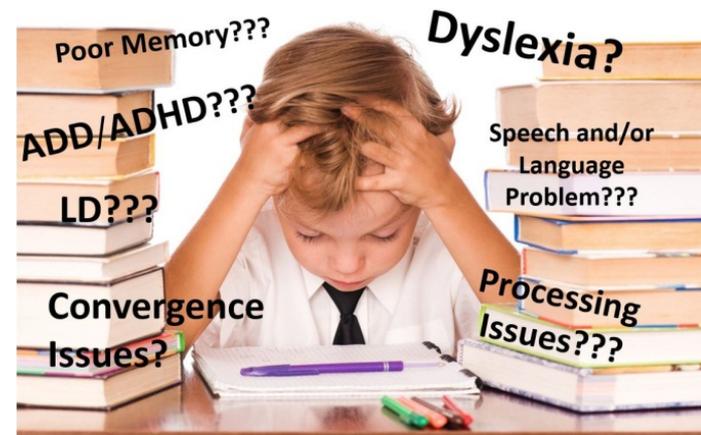
# Overview

This workshop serves to help parents:

1. Identify children who are at risk of learning difficulties
2. Apply strategies to help their children with learning
3. Provide a supportive environment for their children to be confident learners

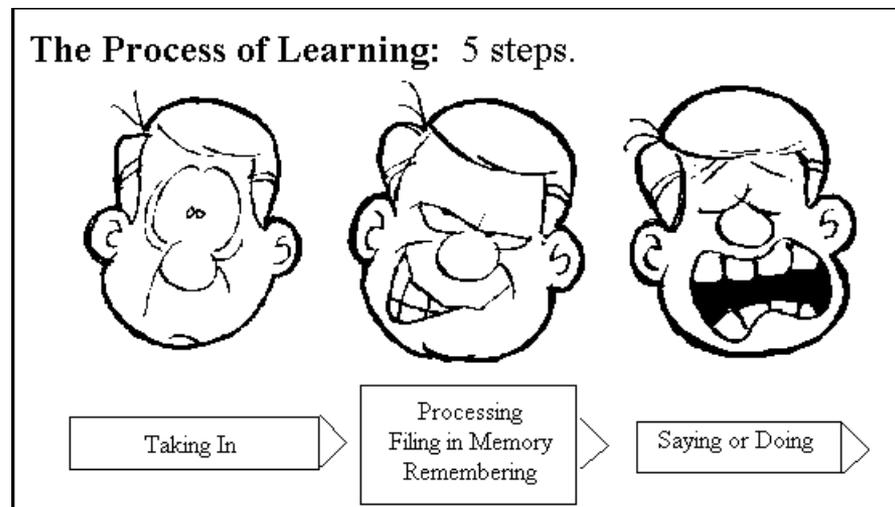
# What is learning difficulty?

“A disorder in one or more of the *basic psychological processes* involved in *understanding or in using spoken language or written*, which disorder may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations  
(IDEA, Sec.602).”



# Why do some children have difficulties with learning?

- Brain *receives and processes information differently* from typically developing children
- Have trouble performing specific types of skills or completing tasks if left to figure things out by themselves or if taught in conventional ways



# What is learning difficulty?

## Inclusion criteria:

- Severe discrepancy between the student's intellectual ability and academic achievement

## Exclusion criteria:

- Student's difficulties are not the result of another known condition that can cause learning problems

"Dys" means "difficulty and  
"lexia" means "words"

*Reading (dyslexia)*  
*Mathematics (dyscalculia)*  
*Writing (dysgraphia)*  
*Motor coordination  
(dyspraxia)*  
*Language (dysphasia)*

# How do I know if my child has learning difficulties?

- Flag out by teachers
- Lagging behind peers
- Takes a longer time to learn
- Avoids academic activities
- Easily frustrated when learning
- Overly active/passive in school
- Appears as 'lazy' or 'naughty'
- Short attention span



# Why should we help these children early?

“School achievement has become equated with self-competency, and the loss of competence has led to feelings of inadequacy, depression, withdrawal and an uncaring attitude.”



# Short Film about Dyslexia (5mins)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaQfuxODpog>

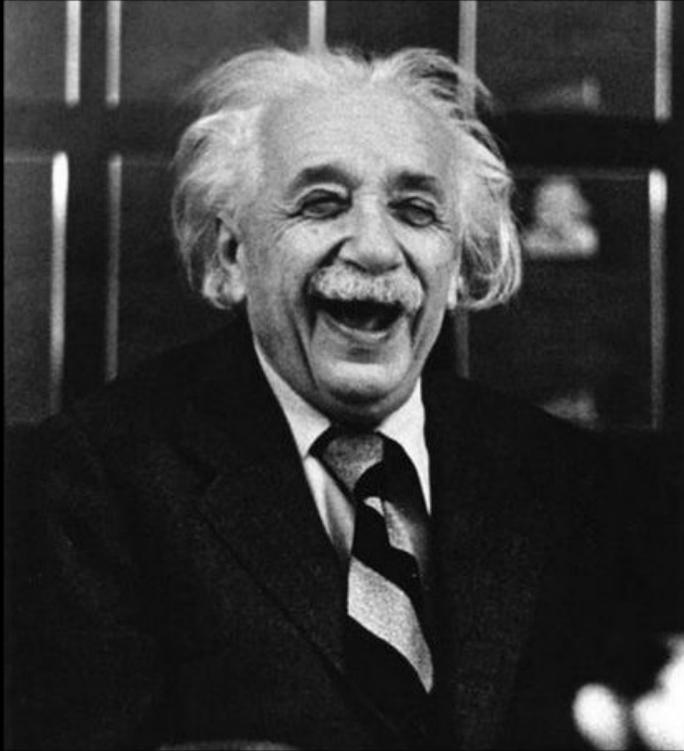
## MYTH

Learning Disabilities can be cured.

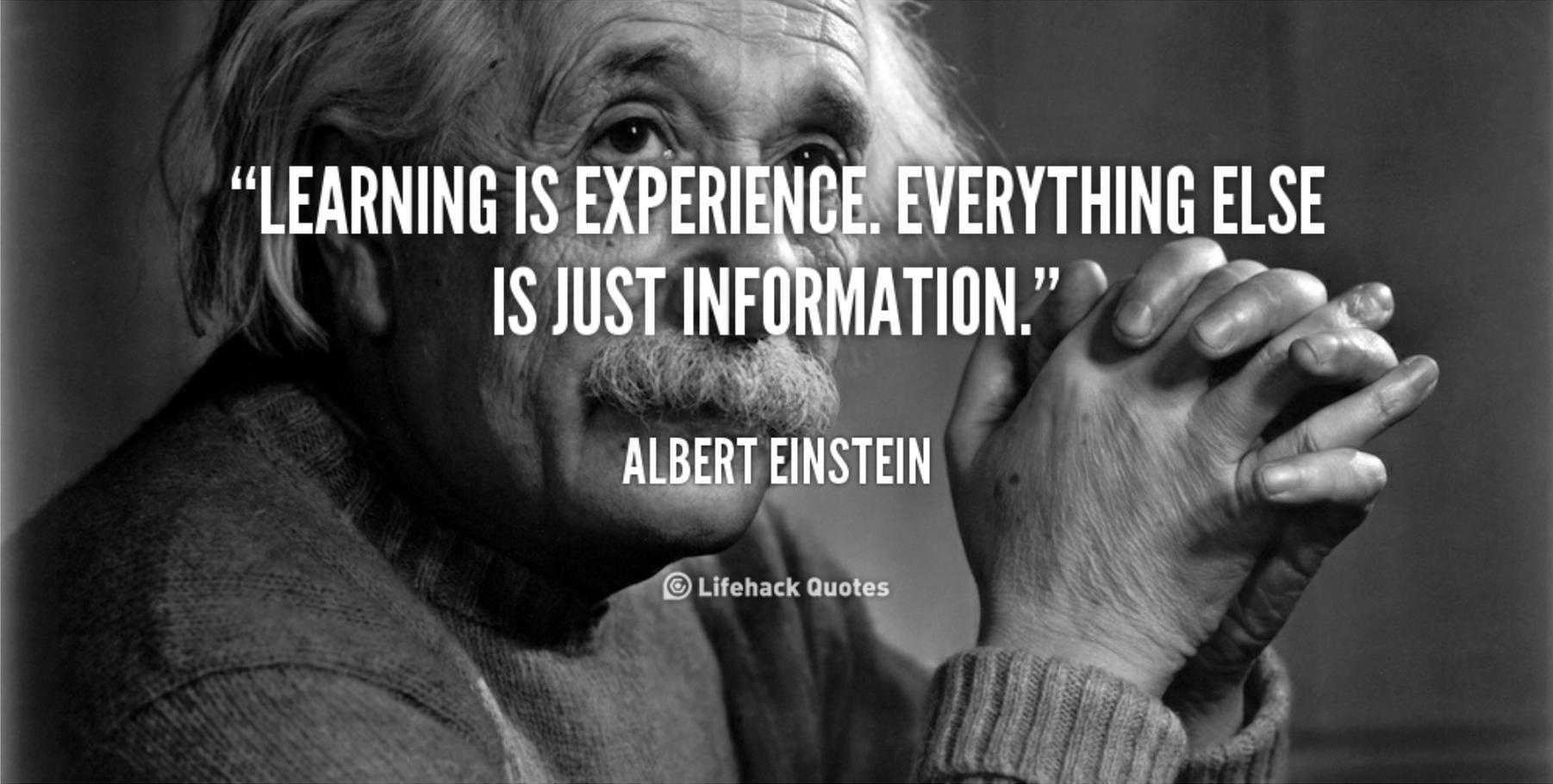


## REALITY

Learning disabilities cannot be cured. However, with proper intervention and support, persons living with learning disabilities can succeed in school, work and life.



"Everybody is a genius.  
But if you judge a fish  
by it's ability to climb a tree,  
it will live its whole life  
believing that it is stupid."  
— Albert Einstein



**“LEARNING IS EXPERIENCE. EVERYTHING ELSE  
IS JUST INFORMATION.”**

**ALBERT EINSTEIN**

© Lifehack Quotes

# So...what can we do?

1. Observe

2. Adapt

3. Demonstrate

4. Practice

Pause  
Prompt  
Praise

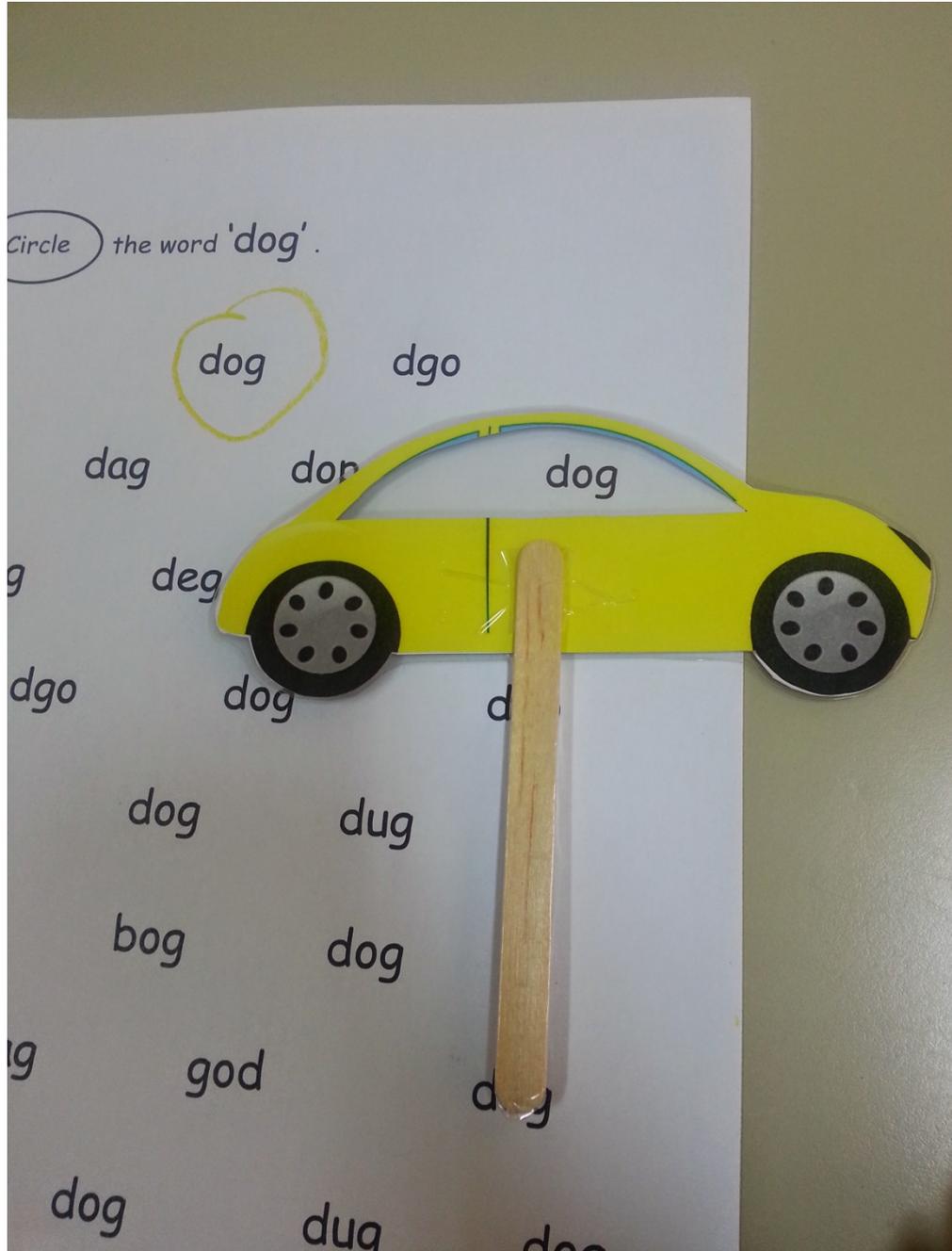
# 1. Observe

- What can he do?
- What strategies / skills does he use or try?
- What is he learning?
- How does he learn best?

If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.

## 2. Adapt

- Start with what the child already can do to build his confidence
  - Words that he can read already
  - Sums that he can do already
- Start with things of his interest
  - Cartoon characters?
  - Cars?
  - Animals?
  - Dinosaurs?



**Learning through things that he likes!**



## Learning through play!



## Learning through play!

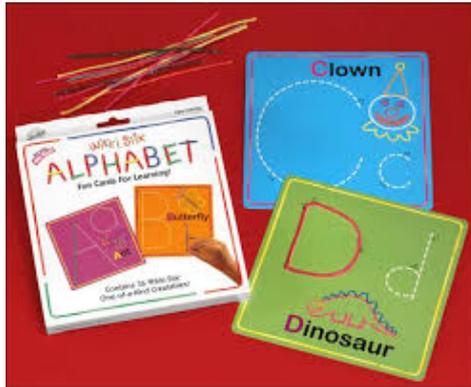
### 3. Demonstrate

- Introduce new learning by demonstrating clearly and slowly
- Break down to small steps and teach one step at a time
  - E.g. spelling – learn 1-2 words a day before teaching another word
  - E.g. teach easy letters in his name first
- Use all senses: see, hear, feel
- Give him time to learn

# Early childhood reading strategies (3mins)

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xsl\\_sf4DoRo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xsl_sf4DoRo)

# Learning through different senses...



Wikki Stix



Salt/Sago tray



Sandpaper/Embossed letters



Alphabet letter playmat



Unlocking the potential in every child!

Great for Early Childhood,  
Special Education, and  
English Language Learners

Textured  
Touch and Trace Cards

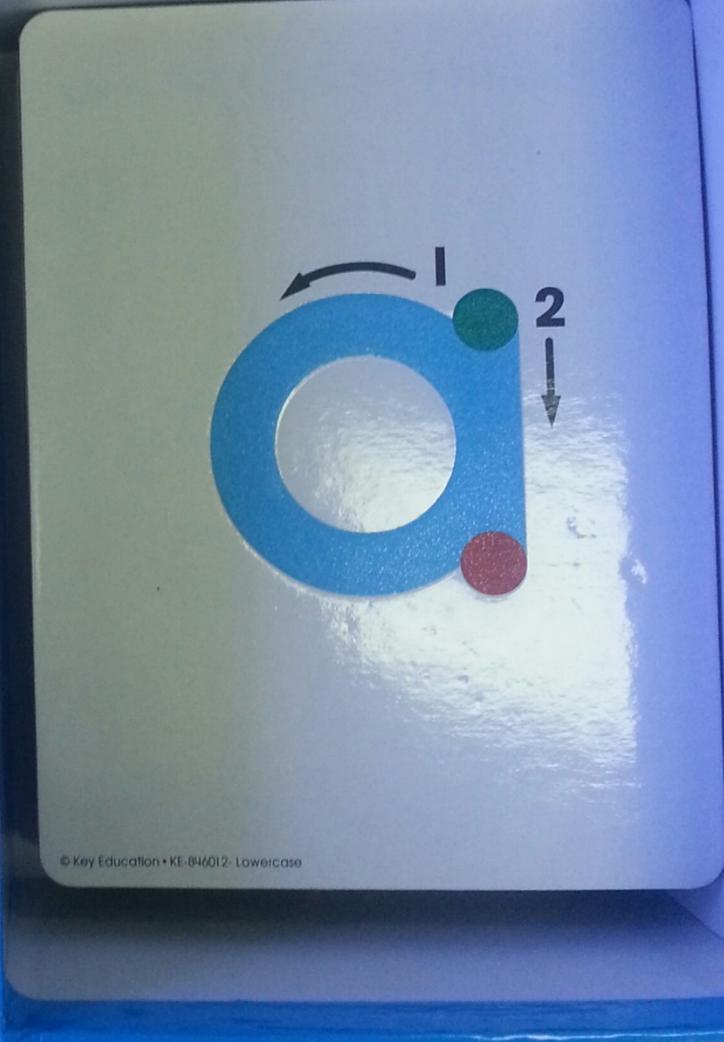
# Lowercase Letters

See it! • Say it! • Touch it! • Trace it!

The Best Multisensory Experience for Learning  
Alphabet Letter Recognition and Correct Letter Formation



- Twenty-six 4.25" x 5.5" (10.8 cm x 14 cm) lowercase alphabet cards, each with a smooth beaded texture
- Green dots indicate where to begin tracing each letter and red dots indicate where to stop
- Directional arrows are included to teach correct letter formation
- Directions in English, Spanish, and French



© Key Education • KE-846012 - Lowercase

## 4. Practice

- Use everyday opportunities for the child to use the skills
  - E.g. books, signs, outdoor, in the car, on the MRT/ bus, in the market

# The Story of Clara

Clara is 5 years old and she loves princesses, especially princess Anna from the movie Frozen. Her teachers told her parents that she is slower in her learning at school. She is unable to write her name independently, unlike her peers. She can recognize letters 'a' in her name but not the other letters. She can hold the pencil well and likes drawing. She dislikes tracing or copying her name repeatedly because it is boring.

As a parent, what can you do to help Clara enjoy the experience of learning to write her name?

# The Story of Clara

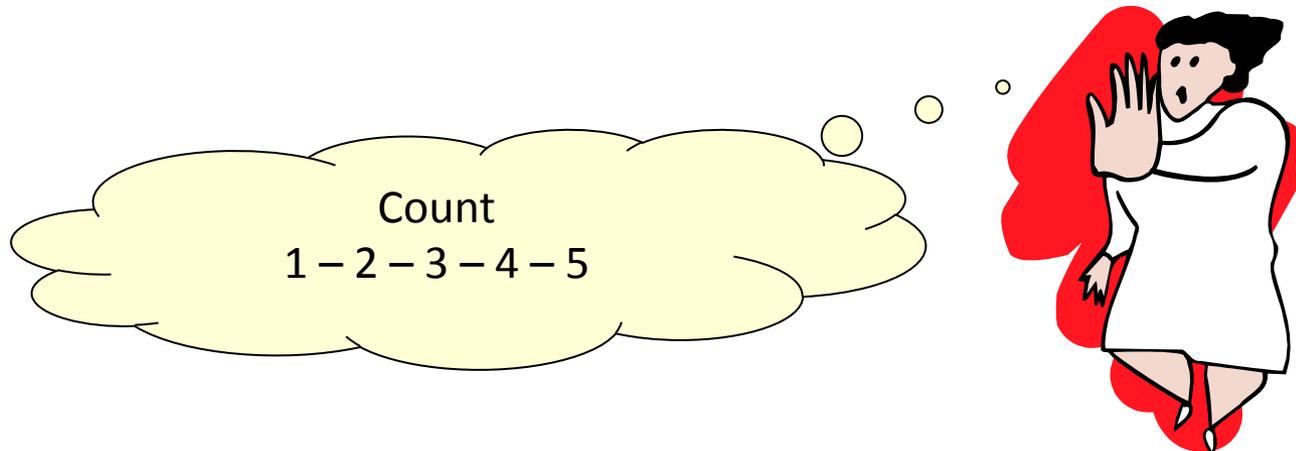
O.A.D.P	What can we do?
<b>Observe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Likes princess</li><li>• Can hold the pencil well and draw</li><li>• Can recognize letter 'a' in her name</li></ul>
<b>Adapt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start from letter 'a'</li><li>• Teach letter 'l'</li><li>• Identify letter 'l' from all the princesses' names</li><li>• Use sensory strategies to learn how to write 'l'</li><li>• Recognize, name and write</li></ul>
<b>Demonstrate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate writing 'l' slowly and say out the stroke</li><li>• Master letter 'l' before teaching letter 'c'</li></ul>
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize letter 'l' on magazines, signs, while waiting for MRT</li><li>• Write name on own belongings</li></ul>

# Pause, Prompt, Praise (3mins)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0YTFevd-cE>

# Pause

- When?
  - When a child makes an error or hesitate
- Why?
  - To give child a chance to correct the error



# Prompt

- When?
  - When the child did not respond or give an incorrect response after the PAUSE
- Why?
  - Increase awareness of thinking processes, encourage thinking and problem solving
  - Prompt can either direct the child's attention to either the meaning of the story or the way the word looks and sound

What word might make sense?

What would sound right?

What does it start with?

# Praise

- When?
  - Praise for correct response
  - Praise for attempts for correct response
- Why?
  - Serves as feedback
  - Ensure that praise is **SPECIFIC**



Good Try on the word “grace”!!

I like the way you stop and look at the word!

Wow! How did you figure out the word “mat”?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Give Me Five 5

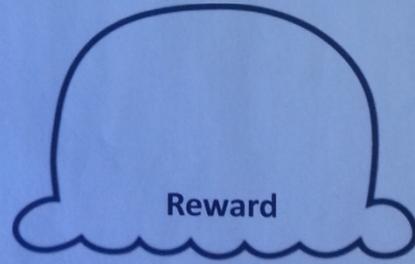


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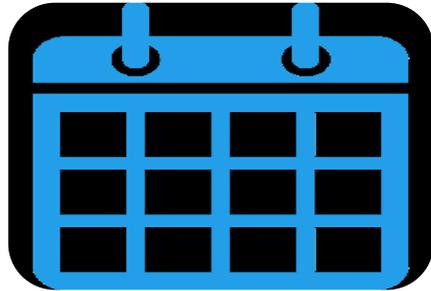
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# How to build a supportive environment for learning?



Structure



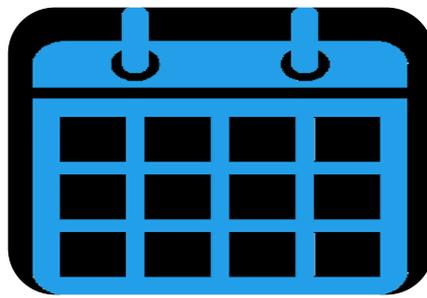
Play



Rest

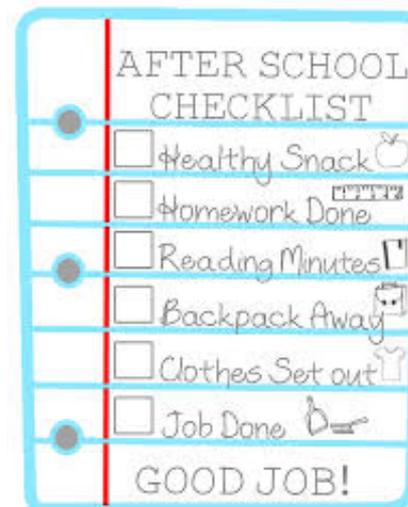


Encouragement



## Structure

- Specific learning time in a day (1 year = 5 mins)
- Specific learning corner in the house
- Time table on the wall
- Visual check list





## Play

- Children need time to unwind and relax
- Play is essential to development
- Play offers an ideal opportunity for parents to bond with their children
- Spend time with your children away from academic activities



# The importance of play (5mins)

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-1O\\_rBLPU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-1O_rBLPU)



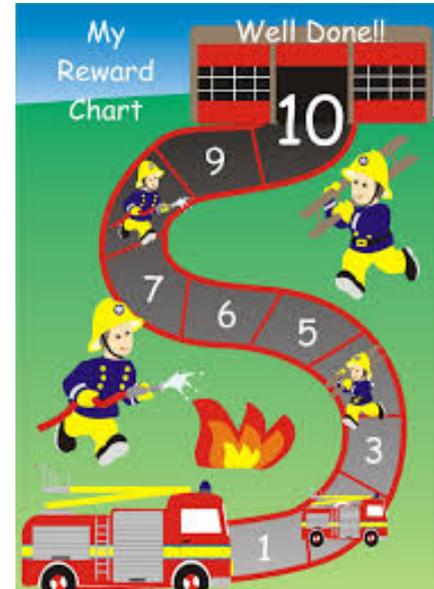
## Rest

"Sleep is the power source that keeps your mind alert and calm. Every night and at every nap, sleep recharges the brain's battery. Sleeping well increases brainpower just as weight lifting builds stronger muscles, because sleeping well increases your attention span and allows you to be physically relaxed and mentally alert at the same time. Then you are at your personal best."



## Encouragement

- Praise the effort and not the results
- Use reward charts and be consistent



# Technology: does it help with learning?

- Yes but in moderation!
- Content should be educational (Stories, documentary, learning words etc.)
- Pace should be slow and not over-stimulating
- Technology use guidelines – recommendation from American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

Developmental Age	How Much?	Non-violent TV	Hand held devices	Non-violent video games	Violent video games	Online violent video games and/or pornography
0-2 years	none	never	never	never	never	never
3-5 years	1 hour/day	✓	never	never	never	never
6-12 years	2 hours/day	✓	never	never	never	never
13-18 years	2 hours/day	✓	✓	limit to 30 minutes/day		never

# How TV affects the brain of a young child

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2SdEpHjrjw>

5.13 – 11.20

TED Talk by pediatric researcher Dimitri Christakis



# Implications of excessive technology use

## Cognitive

- ❑ Lower reading, recognition and comprehension scores
- ❑ Language delay
- ❑ Reduced ability to communicate

## Social

- ❑ Reduces parent-child interaction
- ❑ Rapid attention shift in child
- ❑ Less time spent with sibling and other activities

# Implications of excessive technology use

## Emotional

- Attention deficit
- Aggressive behaviour



Nadezhda1906 via Getty Images

## Physical

- Obesity
- Myopia
- Sleep issues –  
negative impact on  
growth, behaviour and  
cognitive development

# Guidelines for parents from AAP

- Younger than 2 years old: no screen devices
- Older than 2 years old: limit the amount of screen time to <1 to 2 hours per day
- Keep TV and electronic devices out of child's bedroom
- Monitor what media children are using and accessing
- Co-view TV, movies and videos with children and use this as a way of discussing important family values
- Establish family home use plan – curfews at meal time, bedtime
- Establish reasonable but firm rules about cell phones, texting, Internet and social media use
- Encourage other interactive activities which promote proper brain development e.g. playing, reading

# Conclusion

- Children with learning difficulties are prone to socio-emotional issues
- Use the strategy:
  - *Observe, Adapt, Demonstrate, Practice*
  - *Pause, Prompt, Praise*
- Create the environment:
  - *Structure, Play, Rest and Encourage*
- Use technology in moderation
- Embrace and enjoy the journey of learning with your child!



“ All kids need  
is a little help,  
a little hope  
and somebody  
who believes  
in them. ”

- Magic Johnson

[LearningStationMusic.com](http://LearningStationMusic.com)

quarterly  
Magazine

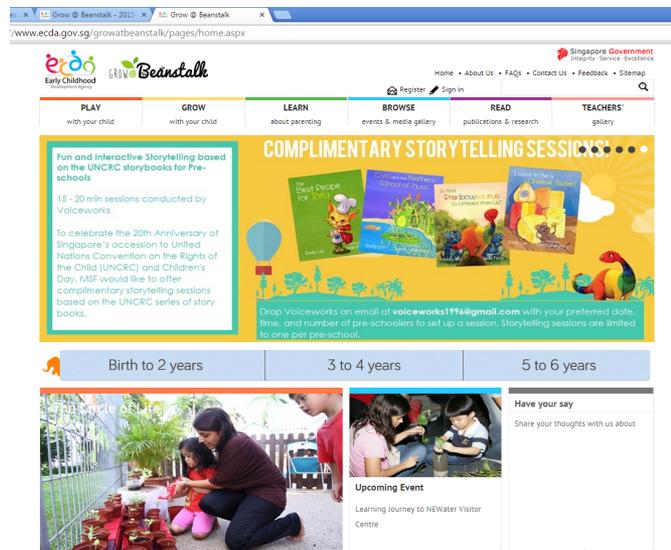
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