



Ashton's Place

Supporting children with Autism

MOTIVATORS / RELATIONSHIP CONNECTIONS / INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AN ACE OBJECTIVE

Our ACE Programme focuses on relationship connections which we believe foster learning environments that are intrinsically rewarding. If children are immersed in a fun playful world where their curiosity captivates their attention (sensory curiosity) then they will be encouraged to seek out social play, joint attention, and connectedness. This will lead to a desire to learn (cognitive curiosity) because of the positive feelings it evokes.

What brings us joy inspires us to explore more, imagine more, and develop more as positive social beings. Children feel a sense of accomplishment through their own achievements. It highlights the need for children to be encouraged to have an intrinsic desire to learn (cognitive curiosity). Learning is its own motivator and therefore brings its own rewards. Social integration is supported from this form of play.

“The power of Internal Satisfaction - when you pursue an activity for the pure enjoyment of it, you are doing so because you are intrinsically motivated. Your motivations for engaging in the behaviour arise entirely from within rather than out of a desire to gain some type of external rewards such as prizes, money, or acclaim.” ^{1, 2}

Having intrinsic motivation as an objective of ACE is a guideline and does not deter us from utilising motivators as rewards. If we can achieve intrinsic motivation, then I believe we have given children a gift. ACE is led by the needs of the child and their family's goals and will continue to immerse children in a variety of proven early intervention models.

ACE recognises the research that indicates that schedules are important and motivators are sometimes key to achieving positive learning experiences for our children. Step schedules allow children to understand what is coming next, e.g. first painting, then blocks, then dinosaurs (the last being the item they love most, the motivator).



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By participating in play with children and following their lead, it allows us as educators or practitioners to connect and challenge children by intruding in their play and pulling them in to a shared world.

As children with an ASD diagnosis learn to play they do not usually invite their peers or adults into their play. We must gently intrude, once we have gained their trust, to model social interactions during play scenarios. Our aim is to have these children eventually invite you and welcome you into their world of play.

Skills for children to master are:

Relating, communicating, thinking

All of this will be implemented in a holistic living programme that will adapt and continue to develop as we join with and teach children the pure joy of learning, embedded in play.

Our aims for children are to master:

Joint attention, interactive communication, social awareness, development of a need to seek out others;

Independence in: physical activities; play; social situations, and; adaptive skills

Sensory issues and social integration.

Social integration also involves learning from one another – adults from children, older from younger children, those with disabilities from those without and vice versa.³

REFERENCES:

1: "Intrinsic Motivation, How your behavior is driven by internal rewards. By Kendra Cherry updated September 27 2019 approved by wellness board expert Amy Morin, LCSW"

2: "Making Learning Fun: A Taxonomy of Intrinsic Motivations for learning," authors Thomas Malone & Mark Leeper.

3: https://www.salzburg.gv.at/bildung___Social_Integration_-_Land_Salzburg