

Role of the Educator

You will:

- need to be present when the children are learning new skills and concepts for greater time periods
- give direct assistance on attention, focus and concentration and provide more structure for behavior guidelines
- provide guidance in selecting and performing tasks and this guidance may not necessarily be verbal
- practice intentional teaching and recognizing teachable moments for mastery of all concepts
- provide multi-sensory presentations
- adapt Montessori materials and environments
- remain calm and supportive and wait for the child to understand or finish work
- require that the child waits when it is the educator's turn to demonstrate activities
- teach the child strategies to recognize triggers for meltdowns
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Adapt Montessori Programs – Additional Needs – Guidelines For Practice

Limiting Choices

Additional needs children are not usually able to choose and complete activities as freely as other children. You will have to provide limits for most additional needs children to assist them to make choices.

Try:

- Limiting choices to one book case , one shelf
- Forced choice – “You may choose the pink tower or the brown stair.”

Outside Play.

Many additional needs children experience great difficulty with outside play. Prepare outside area as carefully and thoughtfully as indoor environment.

Try:

- physically guiding the child to the play activity and helping him/her settle in.
- handing the material to the child to establish physical contact.
- guiding the child's hand with the object, e.g. pegging clothes to a clothesline.

Set Short and Long Term Goals.

Additional needs children can become quite distressed by too much choice or not being clear about what is expected from them and may have difficulty in organising themselves to get tasks completed.

The educator will also have to allow many opportunities for repetition and practice in order that the child consolidates the learning.

Take a slowly slowly approach

Today I will.....



Using Visual Cues Not Verbal Instructions

Make communication cards I want to..... with pictures of curriculum materials for choice (limit choices)

Make filing cards with pictures, preferably photographs of the materials for the child to use to choose an activity.

Teach the child how to choose the front card and then replace it at the back.

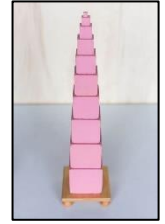
Introduce the index or filing cards gradually to avoid overwhelming the child with too much choice.

The filing picture approach results in less dependent learners as they are not coming to you to find their next task or struggling to interpret your verbal directions.



Adapting Montessori Program For Children With Additional Needs.

Invite the child to put some of his/her choices in the file.
Observe the child for readiness to add to or change the order of the filing cards.
Short term goals with compics or visual cues which lead the child through the steps required to complete the activity are best practice for additional needs children



Use Control Charts

Provide control papers for each activity to assist them with organization and lessen the confusion.
Challenge the child to work without the control some of the time and eventually may remove it all together.
Provide self-correcting materials.
Provide opportunities for 1:1 correspondence & matching.
Place symbols of materials on shelves to assist children who have difficulty remembering where things go and whose fine and gross motor problems in carrying and replacing trays may distract and distress them so much that in their anxiety they forget what they are doing and lose their way.
The symbol on the shelf also assists the child in completing the final step of the work cycle.



Presentations.

The educator may need to give the additional needs children weighted rugs, stimming toys or something to do with their hands during presentations to help the child inhibit impulses.
The educator does not distract the child verbally during the initial presentation except for the first direction "look" or "watch."



Wait for the child's concentration to begin.

If the child is distracted stop, repeat "watch," and wait for concentration to resume.

Teach the language of concentration

'My turn! Your turn!' as you demonstrate activities

Simplify language to avoid confusing children who may not understand concepts of large, larger and largest but may understand the process if the following language is used- "From the blocks which are left please get the biggest one."

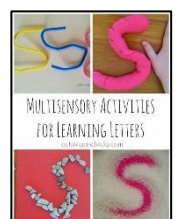
The Importance Of The Three Period Lesson

This technique is very important for additional needs children, particularly those with cognitive problems.
The three periods of the traditional Montessori lesson take the child through the normal language development stages of identity, recognition and recall.

- Identity stage- the educator gives the label.
- Recognition stage – the educator assesses the receptive language. Does the child know it if educator gives the name?
- Recall stage- the educator is checking the child's receptive language. Can the child remember the name and express it verbally?

Use A Multi-Sensory Approach.

The Montessori materials will need to be supplemented for the additional needs child. In addition to tracing the sandpaper letters and numerals the educator will also provide additional needs with many different multi-sensory experiences to enable them to practice the concept.
Examples may include a tray with coloured sand, a light board, plasticine, glitter glue, computer games



Teach Children To Be Aware Of Noise Levels

Teach children about appropriate noise levels in the classroom using grace and courtesy exercises and intentional teaching. Additional needs children may be very sensitive to sensory stimuli and become very anxious or agitated if the sensory input is too high. Teach them to be aware of own noise levels

Teach them what to do to manage stress levels if the noise becomes too distracting

- a safe place or time out area to retreat if the sensory overload is too much
- a pass out card system which gives child permission to leave the area if the stimulation is too great.

Employ Extra Steps (Or Less) In Explaining A Process Or Concept

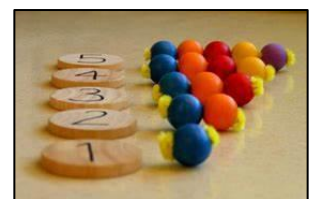
Reduce the amount of material presented to the child.

Determine this by documenting interactions children have with materials

Ten of each material may be too overwhelming and as we wish the child to experience success we can limit to 5 or even 3 pieces when presenting many of the materials.

Make picture books or social stories which assist child with visual cues needed to follow simple tasks & routines and communication.

Teach self help skills using visual cues.



The importance of the Practical Life Curriculum

The importance of this area of the classroom for the additional needs child cannot be overestimated.

It is through these apparently simple work tasks that the child learns how to set up and organise the work environment. Most of the social and behavioural problems children exhibit can be addressed through the direct teaching of the grace and courtesy curriculum.

Social interaction opportunities can be enhanced if additional attention is paid to demonstrating grace and courtesy exercises like greeting a friend, speaking softly and at eye level, learning how to say excuse me, asking permission to join a friend or group and eating manners.

These exercises which form such a major part of pre-school life must be directly taught to additional needs children no matter what their age, as lack of these skills will have major effects on self esteem, friendships and confidence.

The Silence Game.

The playing of the silence game increases self-control, focuses attention, increases concentration skills and helps children feel quiet within themselves & be part of a whole group activity.

Follow these simple steps

- Children cross their legs, Sit up very straight, Place their hands on their knees
- Sit on designated line
- Use a clock or timer is used to help them see how many seconds or minutes they can make silence.
- Repeat the game often

