

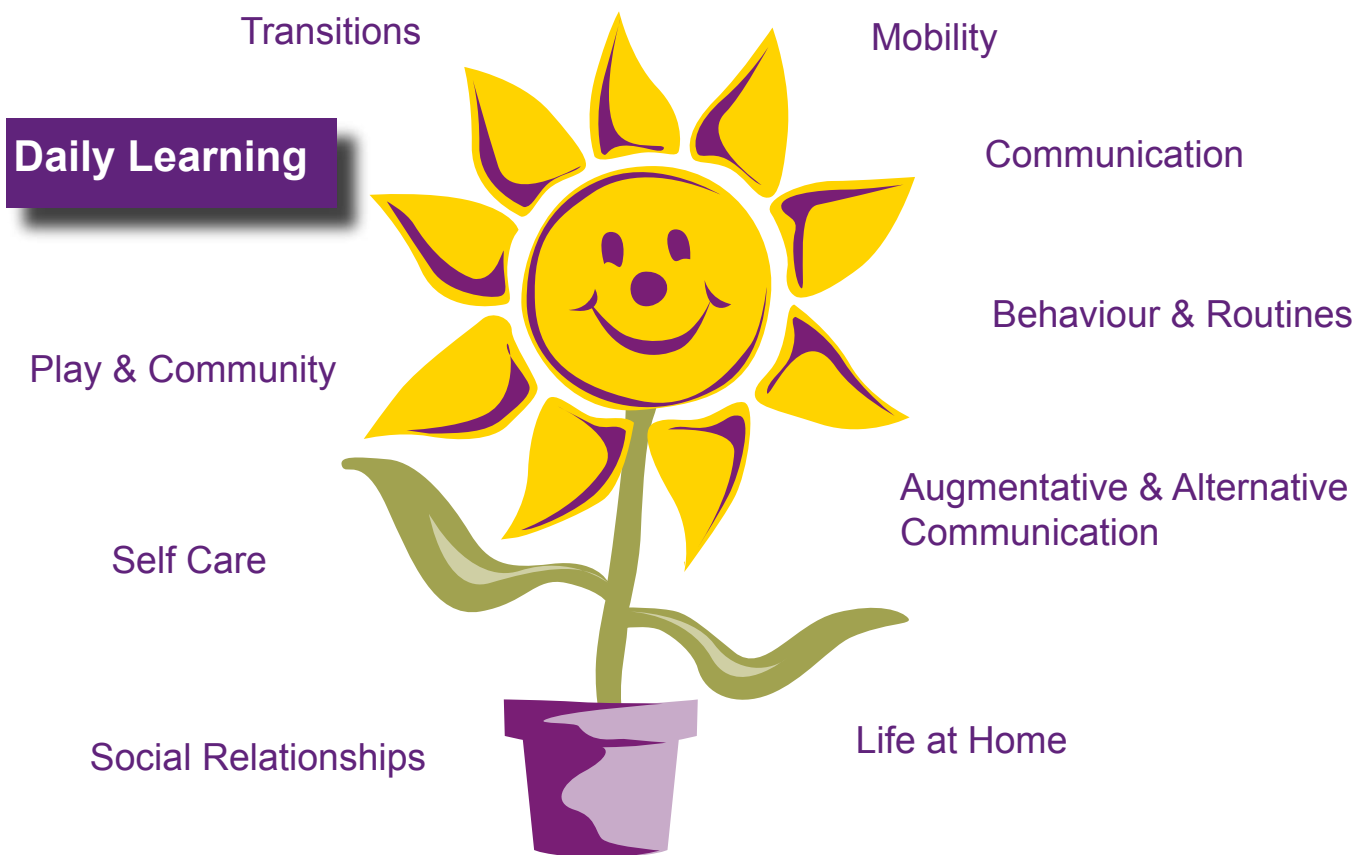
## Helping you set goals for your child

At Therapy Focus, we recognise and value your role as parents being the experts on your child and family.

Our Services are a support to help your child reach their potential and enhance their participation in the community. Educating and empowering you to help your child is

an important part of our holistic therapy services.

This brochure is a starting point for discussion about your child and your family. It offers ideas to create new activities your child is able to do with encouragement and support.



## The way we work

- We recognise that family is central to therapy. Families bring knowledge and expertise about their child to help identify the child's needs, develop goals and practice strategies.
- The family, therapy team and teaching staff work together to identify problems and share ideas. Each has a role to play in developing the child's skills.
- We use every opportunity in the family's and child's routine and environment to develop skills.
- Therapists work as a multidisciplinary collaborative team, sharing skills to meet the needs of the child.
- We recognise the child's strengths and how they can be developed to increase participation in the activities of life.

# DAILY LEARNING

Learning is something we do on a daily basis through sight, imitation, touch and sound. The process of learning involves acquiring a new skill, remembering it and applying this skill to different experiences and environments.

The ability to learn, maintain and apply skills are all very important in functioning well at home, at school, and in the community.

Daily Learning Skills include activities such as:

- Focusing attention
- Thinking
- Watching and copying
- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Calculating/numbers
- Problem solving
- Decision making

We all have different learning methods. Some of us learn through observation, whilst others learn by actually carrying out the task. Learning involves watching, practicing, making mistakes and problem solving. Learning new skills may require your child to copy, rehearse, and learn through play or through reading and writing.



## Consider the following:

- Does your child understand why they are completing a task or activity? For example, if you are teaching your child to get dressed or undressed, do they understand the why the activity needs to be done?
- Is your child physically capable of completing required tasks or activities involved in their daily routines?

## Strategies to assist in your child's learning

- **Use Every Opportunity** to teach a new skill and try to teach these skills in different environments. The more experience a child has in using a skill within various environments the greater the chance that they will remember them and learn to apply them. For example, if your child is using a communication book, assist them to communicate and use it in various environments such as home, school, the park and friends houses.
- **Practice** new skills or skills you would like your child to learn on a daily basis. The more practice your child has at a skill the greater the chance of them mastering it.
- **Be Consistent** with the words and signs used to instruct your child, and try to keep instructions short and simple. Also be consistent with the objects and activities you use to teach a new skill.

- Ensure that there is enough **Time** available for your child to participate in activities without feeling rushed. Each person has a unique learning pace with some children learning and acquiring skills faster than others. Consider tailoring your teaching methods to your child's learning pace and style.
- Allow your child to **Observe** other family members and children carrying out activities related to skills you would like them to learn. Modelling is a fantastic way to develop skills.
- **Use Encouragement.** An important aspect of learning is your child feeling supported. As you work on your child's skills let them know they are doing a great job. Often learning new skills can be very difficult, praising your child and using positive terms such as "good try" will help them to keep motivated and boost their self-esteem.
- **Be Patient and Calm** when teaching your child new skills. Your child will make mistakes and take a while to complete a task, patience is very important.

**Example**

Ben is a 14 year old youth with Down Syndrome attending a mainstream high school. His parents and teachers are concerned that he does not apply his learning for independent problem solving during break times; such as sharing sports equipment with peers.



STOP



THINK

Ben's therapy team was consulted and his goals were established. Role play and visual

prompt cards were used to assist Ben to problem solve independently.

**Long Term Goal:** Ben applies learning to solve problems independently during break times at school.

**Short Term Goal:** Ben appropriately applies the "Stop, Think, Do" strategy and uses visual supports when playing sports with peers during lunch breaks. This will be achieved by the end of the school term.

**Outcome:** By practicing the 'Stop, Think, Do' strategy and using visual supports, Ben was able to interact appropriately with school peers during break times at the conclusion of the school term.

**Resources to help your child's daily learning skills**

**Visual Schedules:**

A visual schedule provides a visual prompt for your child to follow as a series of steps related to an activity. These may be activities such as getting dressed or making a sandwich. The schedule supports your child's memory and allows them to complete the activity more independently.

**Transition Objects:**

A transition is the time between finishing one activity and moving on to the next. If your child has difficulty with transitions, it may be that they do not understand what is going to happen next.

Transition objects are another strategy that may be useful for children with limited language comprehension who have not yet learned to use the visual supports described above.

A transition object is an item which is necessary in order for the next activity to be completed, for example a flannel, if

the next activity is a bath. The transition object can be handed to the child which signifies moving onto the next activity. If the transition object is paired with a specific key word or visual support, this will help them associate the activity with those cues and use of the transition object can be gradually decreased.

### **Role Play**

Role play can be used to model concepts and sequences of steps or routines. Your child can practice within their own role play. Videotaping successful role plays is useful to reinforce correct learning.



### **Glossary of Terms**

**Attention:** concentrating on some features of the environment while excluding others, e.g. listening carefully to what someone is saying while ignoring other noises in the room.

**Attention Span:** the length of time you can concentrate on an idea or activity.

**Memory:** the power of retaining and recalling past experience and information

**Short Term Memory:** A system for temporarily storing and using information required to carry out tasks such as learning, reasoning, and understanding.

**Long Term Memory:** A system for permanently storing, using, and retrieving information for later use. Items of information stored as long-term memory may be available for a lifetime.

### **Helpful/Useful Services:**

#### **Activ Library**

Address: 41 Bishop St, Jolimont, 6016  
Ph: (08) 9387 0555  
[www.activ.org.au](http://www.activ.org.au)

#### **Disability Services Commission**

Government department providing state wide support and services for people with disabilities.

Address: 146-160 Colin St, West Perth, 6005

Ph: (08) 9426 9200

Web: [www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)

#### **Local Area Coordination**

*Provided through the Disability Services Commission*

Provide support and advocacy for people with disabilities and their families

[www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)

#### **CIS (Centre for Inclusive Schooling)**

*Provided through Department of Education and Training*

Provides specialised professional learning, consultation and direct support services to school and district education staff. These services assist teaching staff to maximise educational outcomes for students with disabilities or learning difficulties.

[www.cis.perthwa.net](http://www.cis.perthwa.net)

#### **Inclusive Education Standards Directorate**

*Department of Education and Training*

Level 1, 151 Royal Street

East Perth 6004

Phone: (08) 9264 5910

#### **CHILD Australia**

A resource for children and families with disabilities. Services include a library, resources and training.

Address: 144 Railway Parade, West Leederville, 6007

Ph: (08) 9478 9500

[www.rucsn.org.au](http://www.rucsn.org.au)