Building Literacy Foundations for Students with Multiple Disabilities

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Outcomes:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

- complete a Literacy Skills Checklist for students with sensory loss and multiple disabilities
- identify three building blocks of literacy
- describe two strategies for developing joint attention and meaningful interaction

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Literacy for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Website

http://literacy.nationaldb.org/

Literacy Skills Checklist

- available from the home page
- appropriate for even the earliest learner
- helps to identify where to start or go next

Building Blocks for a Literacy Foundation

- Trusting Relationships
  - Keep in mind the child’s past experiences
  - Be predictable, dependable, and responsive
  - Warn when you are not going to be predictable or responsive
  - Allow the child to direct conversations about their topic
  - Expect, wait for, and acknowledge child’s responses
• Child Interests
  o Carefully observe to determine child’s focus
  o Bonding in “his/her world” can encourage feelings of safety to explore new and novel topics
  o Child’s interest usually follows this order development (Miles, 1999):
    ▪ self
    ▪ people and objects as extensions of herself or as things to be incorporated (put in the mouth)
    ▪ movements
    ▪ people as distinct in themselves
    ▪ in objects themselves

• Communication
  o Meaningful Conversations/Interactions
    ▪ become aware of, interpret, monitor, and modify your interactions from the student’s perspective
    ▪ use the information you learned through observation to entice the student to initiate the interaction
    ▪ follow the student’s interests and preferences
  o Turn Taking Routines
    ▪ The beginning of conversations
    ▪ Follow the interests of the child
      • Movement
      • Rhythm
      • Vocalizations
    ▪ May require extensive experience with a consistent routine prior to anticipation

• Concept Development
  o **Joint Attention**- Focusing on non-visual interventions and strategies, such as responding more to a child’s gestures and using tactile contact to establish joint attention, can better help a child with visual impairment to expand communicative and social development (Peltokorpi, & Huttunen, 2008; van Dijk, Klomberg, & Nelson, 1997).
• Exposure to Literacy
  ○ (Come to next session! Make it Routine: Connecting Communication, Schedules, and Literacy 3:00-4:30 in Jones Craft)

Additional resources and information available at:
http://literacy.nationaldb.org/index.php/building-a-foundation/

References:


