Promoting Early Concept Development

Through adapted books

IDEAS – June 2015
Christine Spratling
“For people who can see and hear, the world extends outward as far as his or her eyes and ears can reach. For the young child who is deaf-blind, the world is initially much smaller.”
“If the child is profoundly deaf and totally blind, his or her experience of the world extends only as far as the fingertips can reach.
Such children are effectively alone if no one is touching them. Their concepts of the world depend upon what or whom they have had the opportunity to physically contact.”

Barbara Miles
Overview on Deaf-Blindness DB Link October 2008
“Concepts are the ideas that give meaning to our world.

We develop concepts based on our particular experiences.”

Barbara Miles
Developing Concepts with Children Who Are Deaf-Blind
DB Link 2008
Promoting Early Concept Development
What happens to concept development when we have limited experiences:
What does the literature say about concepts:

Three groups of concepts:

1. Concrete (tangible things)

2. Semi-concrete (something that can be demonstrated but is not tangible, such as colors, actions, positions)

3. Abstract (feelings, thoughts, etc. )
Types of concepts:

1. How the world works (what things are used for, routines, cause and effect)

2. How the physical environment is arranged and how to navigate it (O&M)

3. Where things come from (the natural world and its cycles and laws)

4. How things are sequenced (time, order of activities)
6 Areas of concept development:

1. Objects exist
2. Objects have permanence
3. Objects differ
4. Objects have names or labels

crystal ball, moth ball, meatball, eyeball, gumball, fire ball, snowball, football, eight ball, golf ball, spitball, oddball, goofball, sleaze ball, ball bearing, etc.
5. Objects have characteristics:

* color
* size
* texture
* weight
* smell
* etc.
6. Objects have functions or use
O&M Concepts

• Body Image Concepts
• Spatial Concepts
• Environmental Concepts
Difference between concepts and skills:

• Skill - the ability to do something

• Concept – the ideas that help us understand “why”
How to choose a concept to work on:

• Start with the child in mind.

• What is meaningful to the child right now?

• What is something that might help the child participate in day to day life?

• What is something that would help the child understand the world around her/him better?

• Remember, this should be a team approach 😊
Strategies that help with concept development:

• Choose activities that happen regularly and are meaningful, such as daily living
• Activities that the child enjoys
• Attach language to all experiences
• Build on language the child already knows
• Remove confusing variables
• Generalize the concept across various situations
Concept book for “on top”
Concept book for “up and down”
Concept book for “rolling”
Resources:

1. Concept Development
   [http://www.sparkle.usu.edu/Topics/concept_development/index.asp](http://www.sparkle.usu.edu/Topics/concept_development/index.asp)

2. Developing Concepts with Children Who Are Deaf-Blind
   Barbara Miles, M.Ed. & Barbara McLetchie, Ph.D.
   DB-Link  February 1, 2008

3. Early Concept Development
   by Holly Cooper, [http://www.tsbvi.edu/preschool/1117-early-concept-development](http://www.tsbvi.edu/preschool/1117-early-concept-development)
More Resources:


5. What a Concept!
   Jim Durkel, CCC-SPL/A and Statewide Staff Development Coordinator (with help from Kate Moss, Stacy Shafer and Debra Sewell) Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach

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