

What you will learn in this module

How to create environments that help children move and explore

Environmental accommodations that focus on contact, comfort, and positioning help children learn.

How to adapt the environment to meet the needs of young children with disabilities

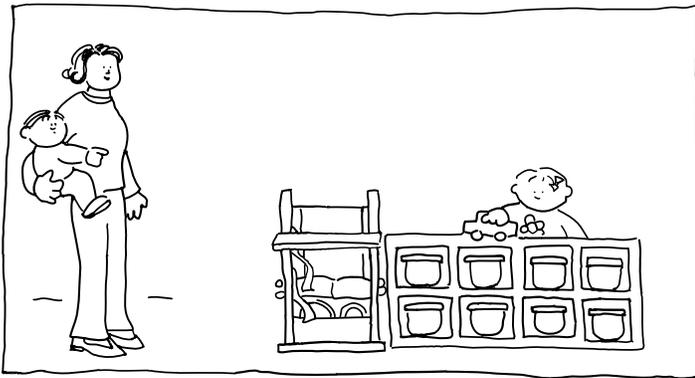
Differences in children's muscle control and tone need to be considered when setting up activities.

How to use everyday activities and routines to meet the therapy needs of young children with disabilities

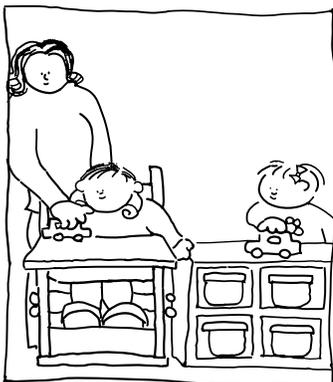
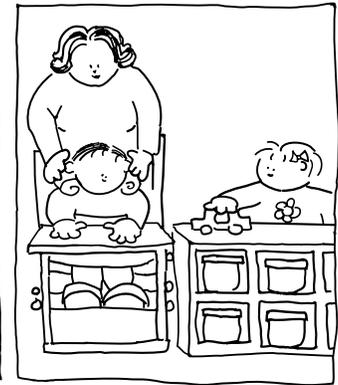
Early Intervention means services and supports that promote participation.

Raoul Drives Trucks

As you read this story notice that when Ms. Rodriguez positions Raoul near another child he is able to imitate how she is playing.



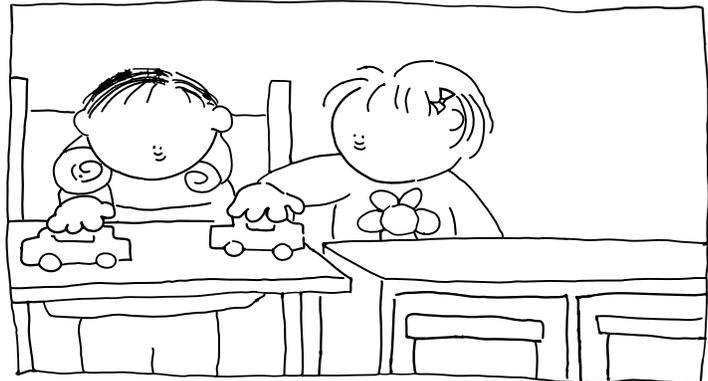
Ms. Rodriguez: "Good idea, Raoul. Let's play with Angie."

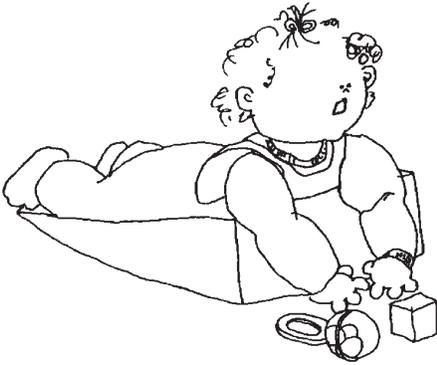


Ms. Rodriguez: "How's that Raoul? This feel OK?"



Ms. Rodriguez: "Angie, want to drive your truck over to Raoul's tray?"





Positioning for participation

Participation isn't just watching; it means doing something. It's important to give a child with a disability as much access to classroom activities as possible. First, research shows that children learn most from other children. Second, identifying with children their own age is important. Children learn more about social skills and independence in a peer group than they do one-on-one with an adult.

Participation means peer interaction

If toddlers are in circle playing a game, a child with a disability needs to play, too. You can position that child with enough support to let him see what the others are doing. Then look to see how you can assist him to move. The best way teachers can assist is to let children do as much as they are able. Step in only when they really need help. If you can get the child moving just by modeling how to move, that's what you should be doing. If necessary, you can walk him through the motions or the routine by doing it hand-over-hand. Put your hands on his to help make the movements with him.

"We use toys for assistance, too," said Ms. Rodriguez. "If we want a child to play with other children on the floor, and she can't sit up, we give her a large toy like a beach ball that she can balance against. That helps her strengthen her muscles. That's good for all the younger babies. At eight or nine months they can all use a few more stomach exercises."

Participation means movement

Children explore what movement feels like, just like they explore other things. The feelings of swinging, jumping, sliding, running, and dancing teach a child what movement is. You can easily help a child experience these feelings by holding her in your arms. Remember to