FINDING JOY IN HOW LIFE “IS”

Being warm and caring towards your children sends them good messages, builds your relationship, and helps children develop. But there are days when being positive can be really tough; smiling, paying attention, or just making eye contact can seem like hard work. A technique called chaining can help.

To parents dealing with tough circumstances, or dealing with little support, everyday tasks like getting dressed, packing supplies for school, preparing for meals, and being on time while dealing with distractions can start to feel like you are dealing with Olympic sized hurdles, not to mention missing things, being late, and general frustration.

Everybody can be a little calmer, saner, and more positive when you establish routines, and they begin to (or occasionally) run semi-smoothly.

When you have a child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), you can help your child develop the skills to do, and assist you, with everyday tasks, by teaching them techniques one at a time. This technique is called “chaining”.

The first step is to choose appropriate goals that work for your child’s level of ability and their age. For example, you might focus on just one item of clothing to put on. The second step is to break that task down into smaller parts.

1. Pick up the t-shirt. 2. Bunch it up in both hands holding the neck hole. 3. Lift the shirt over your head. 4. Put your head through the neck hole. 5. Put one arm in the sleeve hole. 6. Put your other arm in the sleeve. 7. Pull down the t-shirt.

The third step is to teach each step. Teach them the chain of events, that leads to them getting their t-shirt on. When you think of it as the chain, you realize how much information your child is trying to process, and step four is praise and encourage them because it is HARD and they DID IT! During the teaching portion, give them plenty of opportunities to practice, and show them by doing it yourself, talking through the steps. You can give prompts as much as your child needs, pointing, moving them to the correct spot, or helping with difficult steps when needed.

The rewards and encouragement, can be praise, high-fives, stickers on a chart, hugs...the possibilities are endless, and the opportunity to be positive, smile, and be happy just piles up.

FEBRUARY 2016 SCHEDULE

FEB 8 - EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY
FEB 15-16 - STAFF DEVELOPMENT
FEB 19 - CASSP MEETING
FEB 20 - SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
FEB 22 - FACILITATED EIP WORKSHOP
FEB 27 - SENSORY SATURDAY/EFF ADVOCACY