

Developing Independence at Home



Enfield NHS Children's
Occupational Therapy Service
0208 702 5630

Before we start...

- Questions & Break





Overview of the Training

1. What is independence?
2. How can I develop it at home? - Child, Environment, activity
3. Summary and Questions answered

Referring to Enfield NHS OT

HOW

Special school: Parents to ask school to refer to school OT (as some schools have their own)

Or

Mainstream school: 0-18 years can be referred via

- Health professionals
- Schools
- GP

REFERRAL DIFFICULTIES

The reason for referral to OT must specifically identify what **everyday activities** the child is having difficulties with i.e., self care tasks, leisure/play activities and/or school skills.



**What is Independence?
And why do we want it?**

Independence....

Saves time

DEVELOPS SKILLS

Improves quality of life

(Eriksson et al 2007)

**Builds
self-esteem**

Reduces care needs

**Increases
confidence**

**Increases
opportunities**

Independence
verses
Participation?

Participation

Participation has a positive influence on health and well-being (WHO)

Participation and involvement in everyday occupations is vital for human beings.

“Through participation, we acquire skills and competencies, connect with others and our communities, and find purpose and meaning in life” (P640)

Research supports that its true it's the ...

“taking part which counts”

(Law 2002)

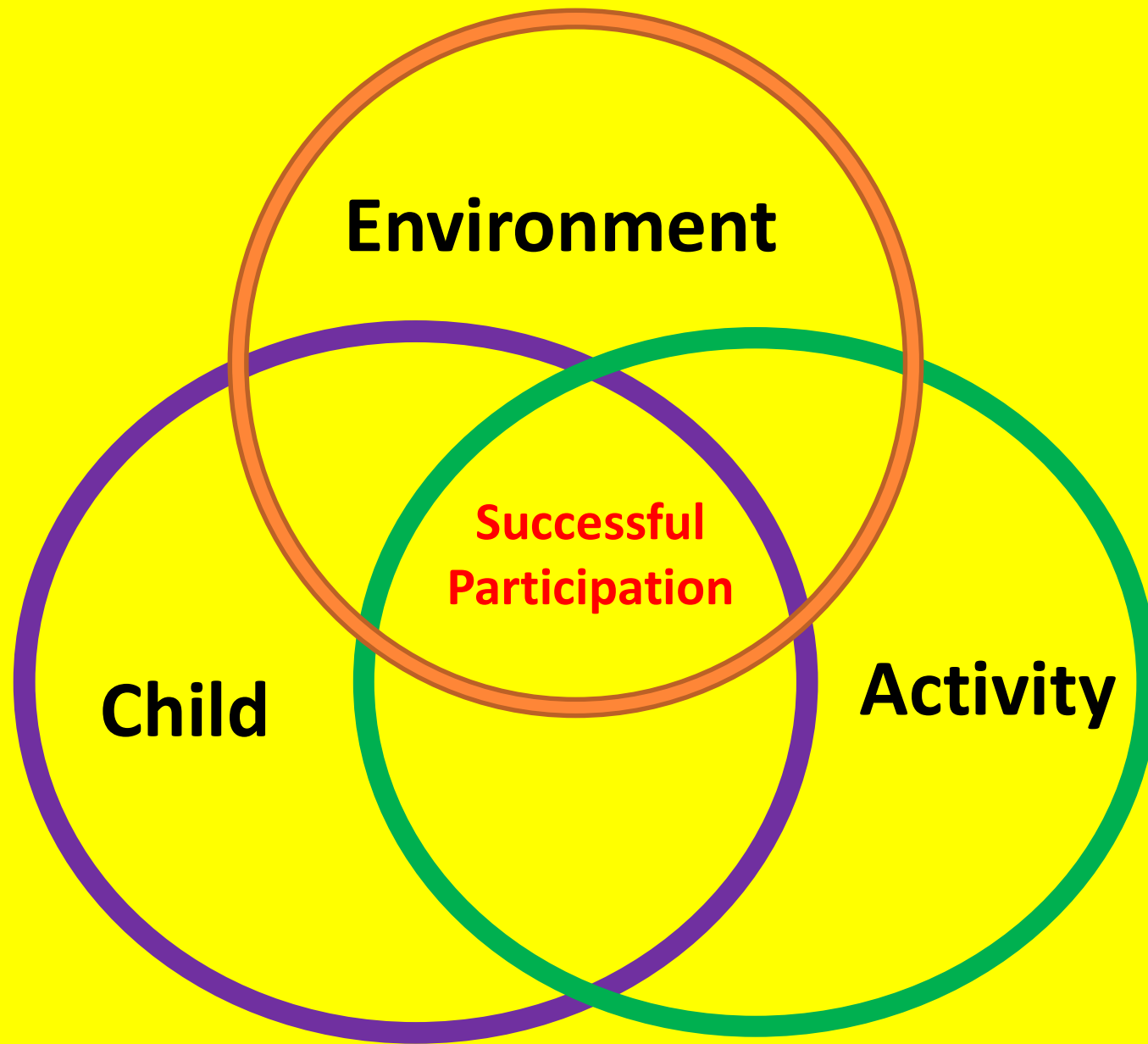
What can stop
a child being
independent/
Participate at
home?



Factors influencing Independence

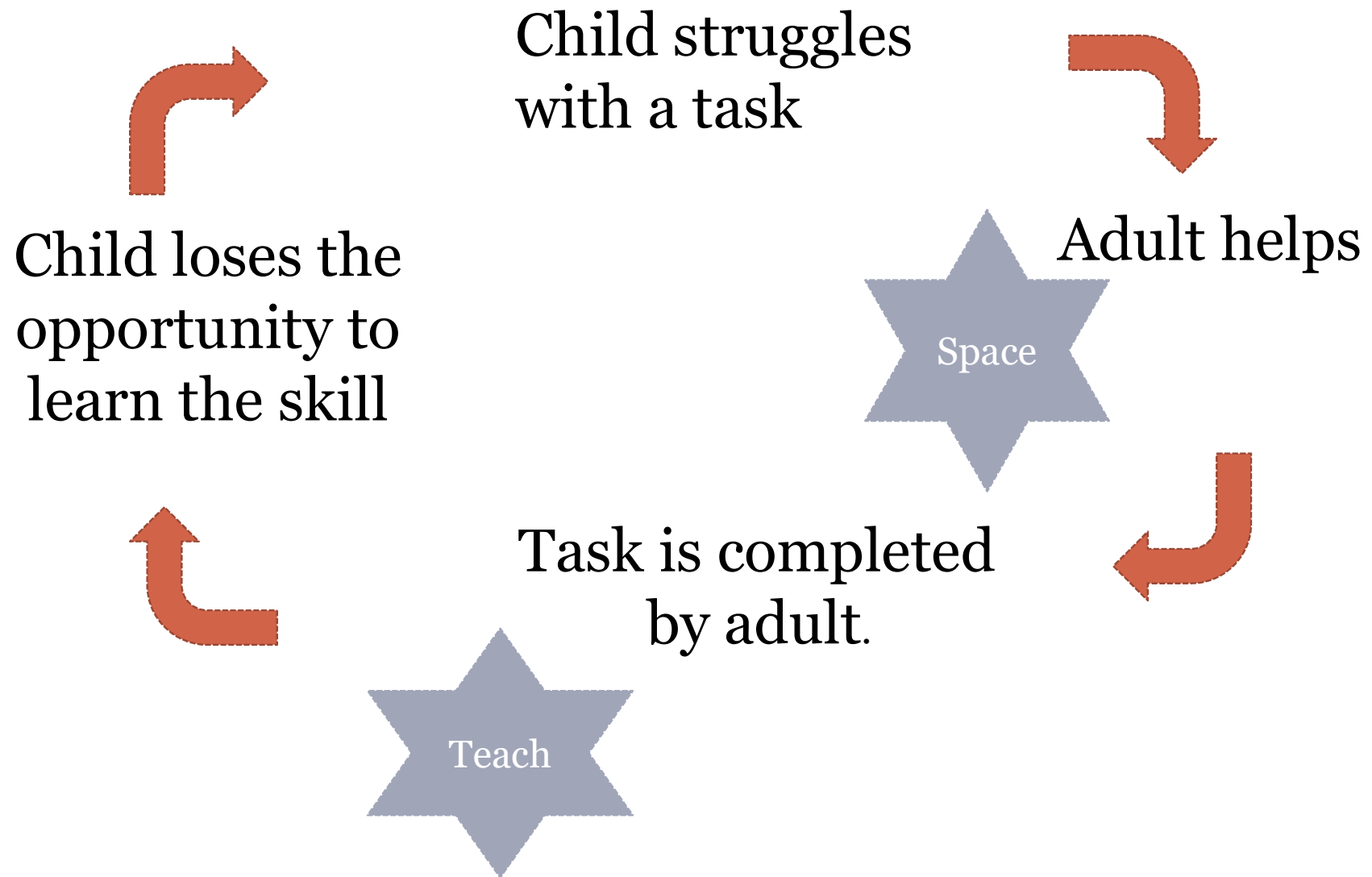
- Child's skill/developmental level
- Child's interest/motivation/internal drive to be independent
- Our expectations
- Time: Busy lives/siblings/working parents
- Established family routines
- Current Social Norms/Cultural Norms
- Our emotions/feelings : providing care
- Adults Over helping!!
- Safety
- Physical Environment
- How the activity is done

How to develop
independence?



The Child!

Continual help is not helpful!



Giving Space & Opportunity

- Wait, wait and wait some more!
- If a child has a level of skill at a task: just give them time and space to do that task themselves.
- Don't provide help until its needed
- Watch your child for clues and cues
- Leave extra time for the task (so the child can do it alone)
- If you want to help: walk a way!! (if safe!)

Teaching The Task

- Breaking down the task:
Forward chaining & backward chaining
- The Art of support!
- Use of Routines

Breaking down the task

Each task has a number of steps that needs to be followed in order to achieve it.

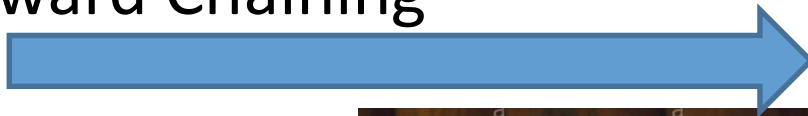


Backward Chaining & Forward chaining Videos

Breaking down the task

- Break down the task into very small steps
- Practise on yourself if not sure
- Teach one small step at a time until you build up to the whole task.

Forward Chaining



Backward Chaining



The “Art” of support



Physical



Verbal

Visual



Physical Support



Physical Prompt



Hand over hand



Guided Movements (Motor Memory)



Starting the activity off

Verbal Support



“Keep going”
Verbal Encouragement



Short instructions

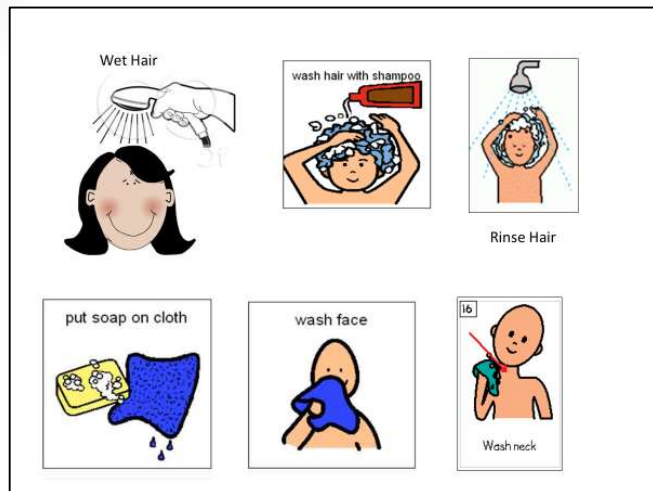


Questions ???



“Pinch & Pull”
Verbal Prompts

Visual Support



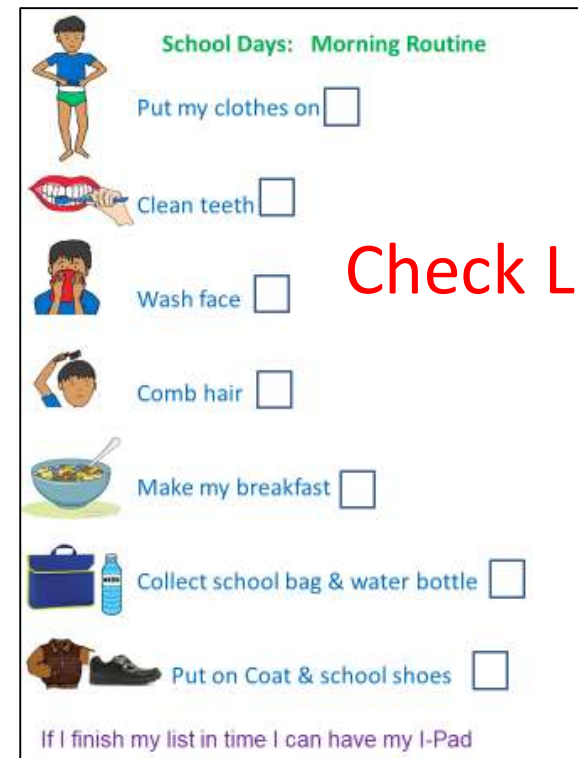
Visual Sequences



Photos on drawers



Visual cues



Check List

REDUCING SUPPORT

The aim is to gradually reduce the amount of support your child needs.



What is the least amount of support I can give my child to be successful?

Independence V Supervision?



Use of Routines

- Where does the task start and end?
- Establish routines early on that you want in the long term
- Consistency = teaching!



Rigidity

(Think about routines that work in the long term)

- Big changes can be easier than small changes
- Warn them
- Expect resistance ? Or not?
- Be consistent
- Build up the change gradually V “Cold Turkey”?
- Rewards for changes

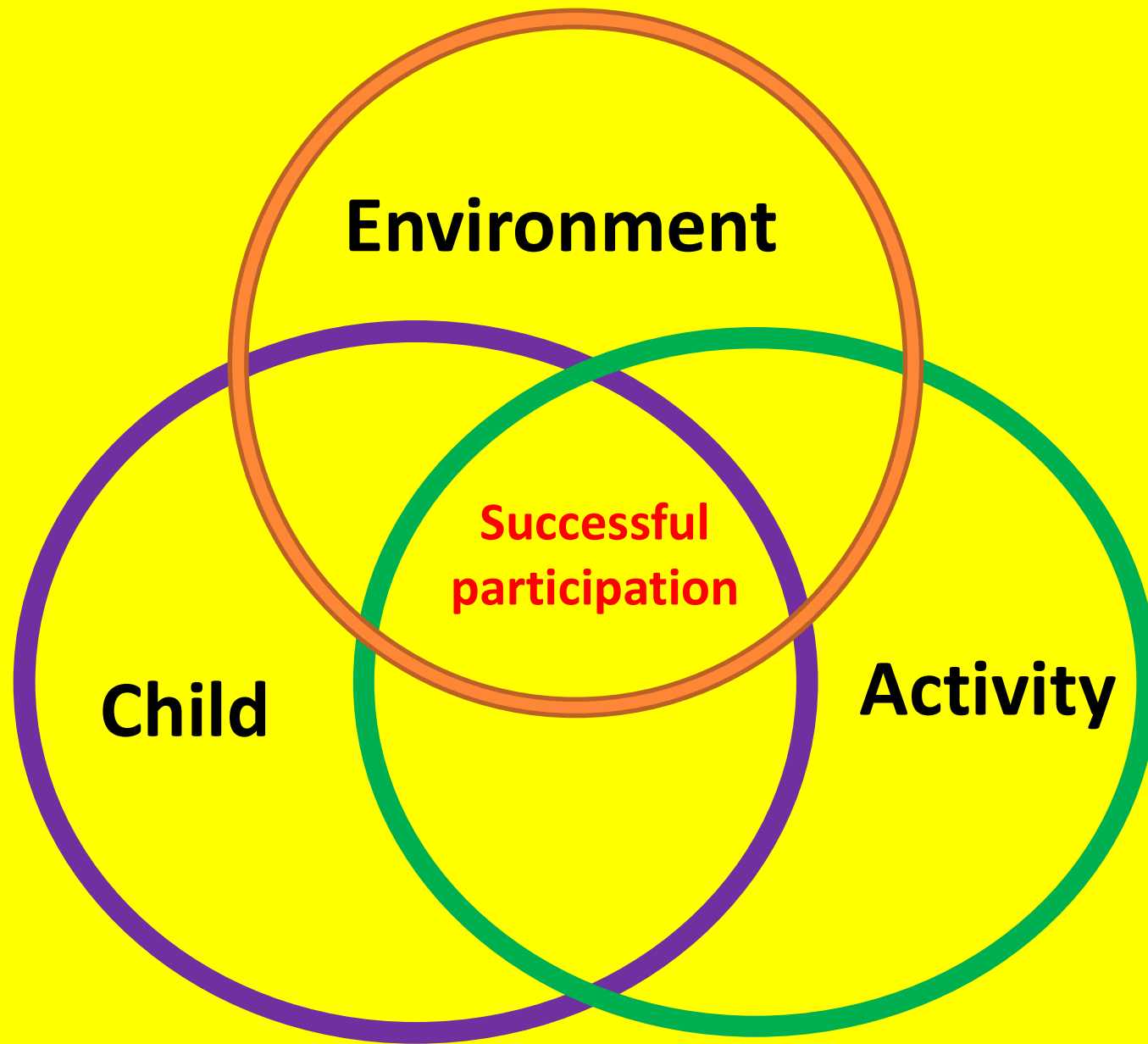
Ability + Practice (Opportunity)
= Embedded skill



Keep going
Be consistent
It will take time

Take a Break & Questions





The Environment!

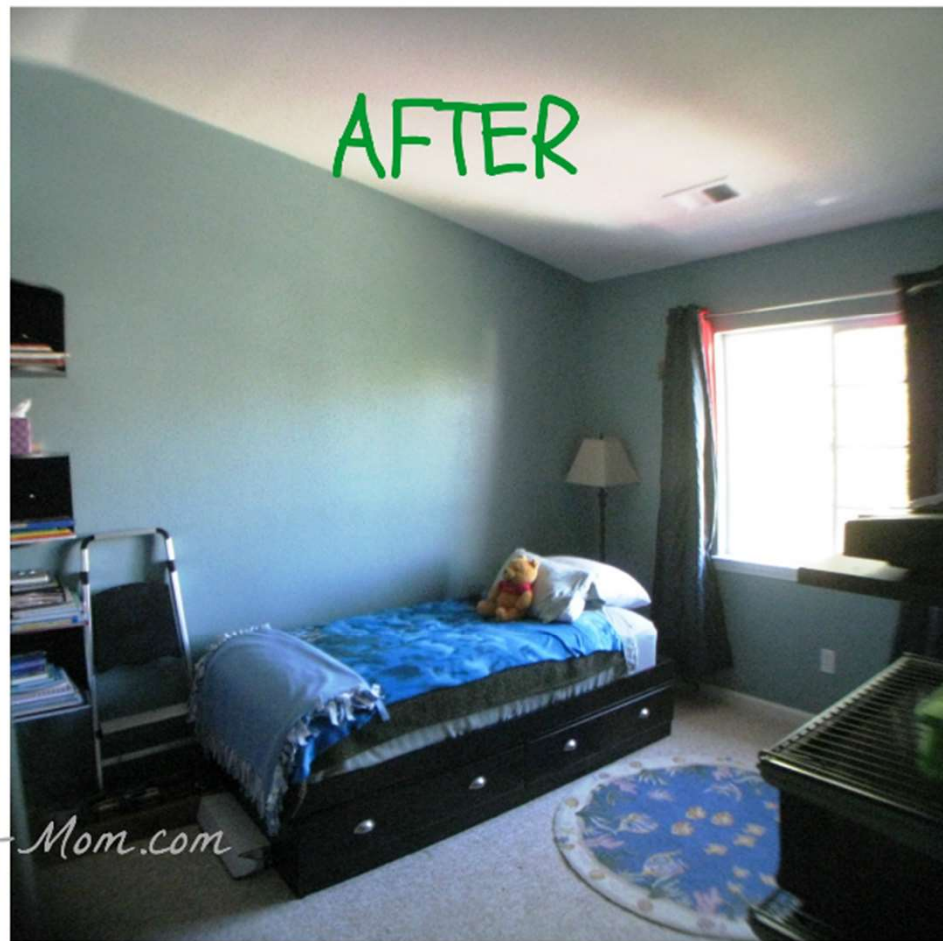
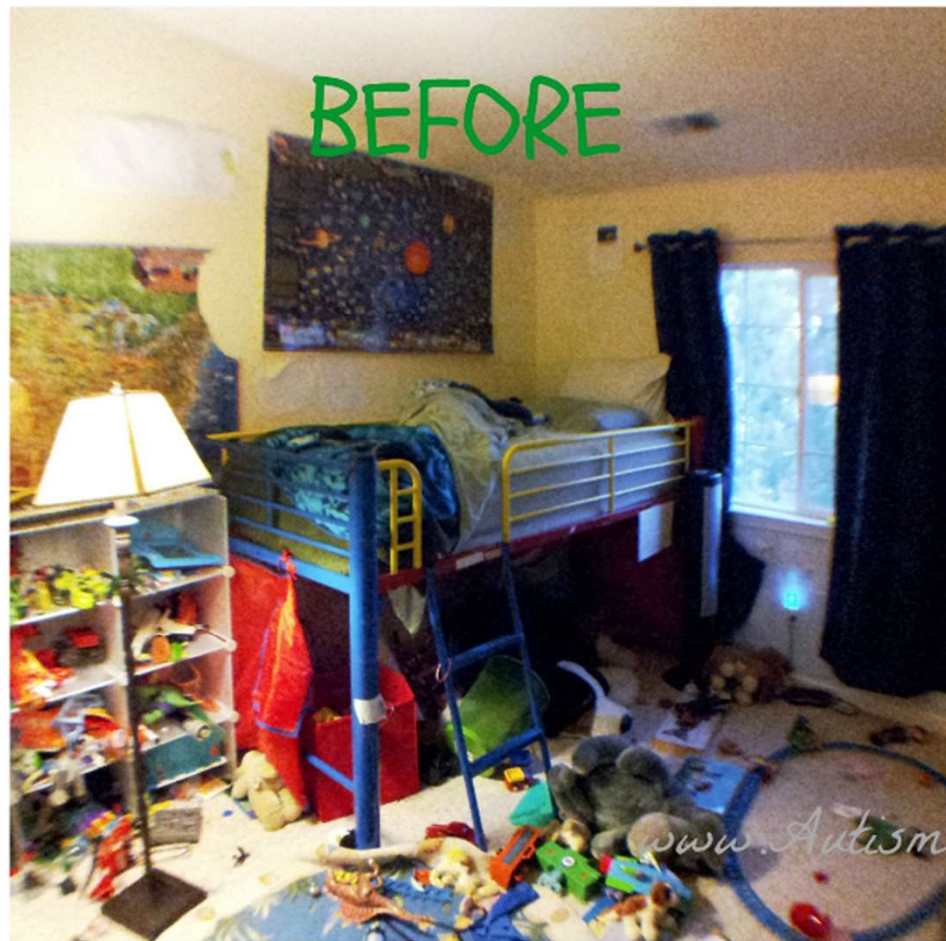
Physical & Sensory Environment



Consider....

- The best location to do the activity? (context)
- Distractions: TV!!!
- Child size equipment
- Environmental cues
- Sensory environment
 - Lighting
 - Noise
 - Smells
 - Visual clutter





The Social Environment

- Us!
- Do we help or hinder?
- Do we facilitate independence?
- Do we ask questions or direct?
- Do we overhelp?
- Does the whole family have the same approach? Mixed messages?

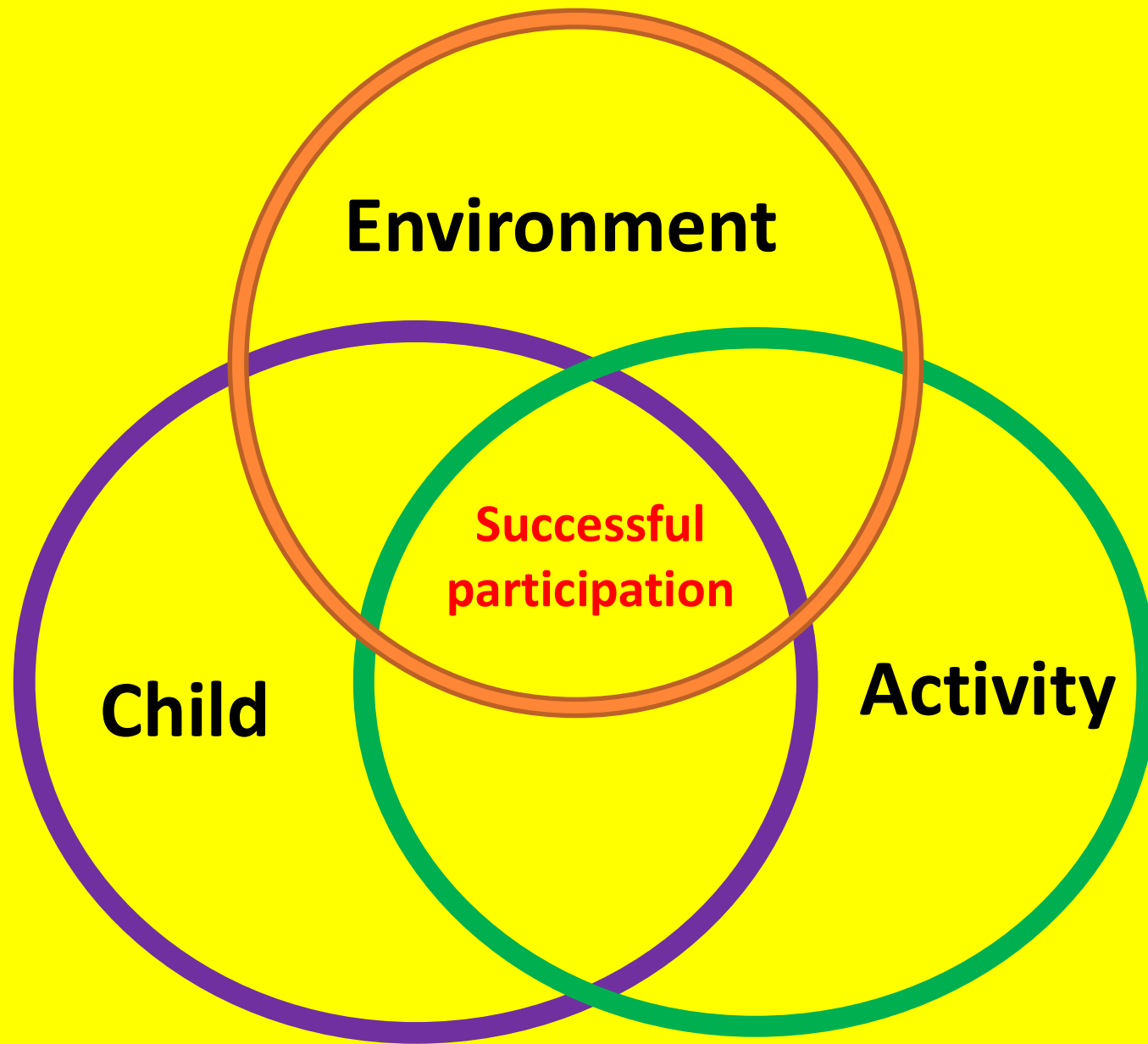
Learnt Dependency

If a child gets a lot of help all the time

The child learns that they can't or shouldn't do a task themselves but that an adult should or will help them.

Leads to passivity and lower sense of self-efficacy (i.e. a child believes they are less able to do a task as that's the message they keep getting from adults).

Child becomes more dependent than they are



The Activity!

Many ways to do one activity!



The Activity

- The right developmental level?
- Try different ways to do it
- Is it *Good Enough*?
- Adaptations: Large handed spoon, T-shirts with prints on one side.
- Sensory adaptations: no toothpaste, different hair brushes, fragrance free shampoo, allowing for movement.

MOTIVATION

Some children may need external motivators to encourage participation in the task.

- External motivators: what is going to motivate your child to do the activity? (not food/sweets!)
- Reward Charts
- Timers
- “Now that your 4, 5, 6years old!” “The Dr says”



When to do the activity?

1. During everyday routines (in context). E.g. cutlery practice during meal times
2. Targeted practice (practising the task out of context of the routine to learn a specific skill without pressure). E.g. cutlery practise with playdough in play



Sometimes it may not be at the time you would want but what works for your child.

Summary

- How we (adults) do things is the key!
- Over helping is not helpful
- Consider **ability** and **Opportunity**
- Consider all 3 elements: Child, Activity & Environment
- Embed within daily routines

Feel free to get a referral to NHS OT for individual support (GP or school can refer)

The background of the entire image is a dense, close-up shot of many colorful M&M's candies. The candies are in various colors including red, yellow, blue, and green, and they are all round and glossy. In the center of the image, there is a large white circle that contains text.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

**All The Cool Kids
Are Doing It**

**Thank
You!**

Questions

REFERENCES:

Dictionary.apa.org. (n.d.). APA Dictionary of Psychology. [online] Available at: <https://dictionary.apa.org/learned-helplessness> [Accessed 31 Jan. 2019].

Eriksson, L., Welanders, J. and Granlund, M. (2007). Participation in Everyday School Activities For Children With and Without Disabilities. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 19(5), pp.485-502.

Law, M. (2002). Participation in the Occupations of Everyday Life. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 56, 640-649

Tamaru, A. McColl, MA. Yamasaki, S. (2007). Understanding “independence”: perspectives of occupational therapist. *15,29 (13): 1021-33*

Who.int. (n.d.). *WHO | WHOQOL: Measuring Quality of Life*. [online] Available at: <https://www.who.int/healthinfo/survey/whoqol-qualityoflife/en/> [Accessed 31 Jan. 2019].