

Child Development And Teaching Autistic Children In The Early Years

By Paul Mackie Most parents ask themselves this question, "What can I do to help my child develop, to grow, to be the best that they can be?" "What should I teach?" "Do I have time to teach?" The answer is a simple one: give your child as much play-based quality time as you can spare.

Teaching Autistic children on a daily basis, I have found repetitive stories seem to work very well, Most children prefer Robert Munsch storybooks. I find the reason for this is the reader can change voice tones and repeat several keywords in the story that all children and especially Autistic children seem to like.

In my quest to help child development, I have found that a good way to do this, is to provide storybooks that are both interactive and fun, storybooks that help both parent and child share a "quality time" moment. Not only that, but storybooks that provide the child's growing brain with sensory input can help create some of the brain's neural pathways essential to early learning. The storybook should activate both sides of the brain (essential for logical and creative thinking), provide quality parental involvement (a key part to a child's early learning) and offer a play-based movement activity (to give sensory input for balanced growth).

Play based activities should be within a child's skill level, yet challenging enough to push the child to do the best that they can. Play based activities should ideally feed the seven senses of taste, smell, hearing, touch, sight, proprioceptive (awareness of where the body is in space) and vestibular (balance).

An Important Child Development Skill Your Child Should Not Be Without. What is this child development skill? Visualization.

Visualization is simply seeing something in the mind's eye; why would that be an important learning skill? In later life, imagination, coupled with visualization, is an important problem solving skill.

In the storybook, "A Walk in the Jungle", the children are asked to close their eyes and imagine that they are the sun, to express what they are feeling, what they are seeing and what shape they are. The children give some very interesting answers, such as, "I am cold?" or "I am hot?"; "I am yellow, or black, or blue?", and a myriad of other colours; "I am big, or small?", and any shape you care to name. There is no right or wrong answers, but it does show how children can see many different things in the mind's eye.

From this starting point, the children go on to become a tree, the wind or the moon and eventually to imagine more complex visualizations such as an adventurous journey smelling flowers or climbing trees.

This opens the door to help children express themselves. Children who are normally quiet will speak, and voice their opinions, yet another amazing effect that Story Books That Teach have on child development.

When teaching Autistic children you may have to work hand over hand (you take their hand and perform the action for them), and repeat the action until they get it.

A good child development storybook activity should be a sensory, play-based activity and above all be fun.

About the Author

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