

Teaching in Small Steps: Shaping

Shaping is when a child is rewarded for doing a small part of a task. The child is expected to do a bit more of that task each time. Slowly, the child/youth learns to do the task independently.

Example: Learning to Walk



This occurs naturally when children learn to walk. In the beginning, parents cheer on their child when he/she starts to crawl. In time, the child learns to be an efficient crawler and parents only cheer when the child starts to stand up. Again, over time, children become very efficient at standing up and parents only cheer when the child takes his/her first steps.

How Do I Start?

1. Know what your child can already do and what your end goal is
 - Think about all the steps between where your child is at, and the end goal
 - Some kids can just jump right in
 - Other kids need more of a process to get used to the idea
2. Make a plan
 - Break down your process into small, achievable steps
3. Reward your child for each consecutive step
 - Start small and reward/reinforce for the smallest achievements!
 - Help him/her move to the next step in the process when he/she is ready

We help kids be kids!

Example: Carving a Pumpkin

Watch

- Watch a video of someone carving a pumpkin
- Watch a family member carve a pumpkin

Help

- Help transfer pumpkin pulp from one container to another using a spoon or cup (example: throwing pumpkin pulp in the garbage)

Motivate

- Make it into a fun activity
- Incorporate child's interests (example: if your child likes letters and numbers, you can hide small toy letters and numbers in the pumpkin and have him/her fish them out)

Participate

Reward each step as your child gets closer to carving the pumpkin. Start small and build from there!

1. Child touches the outside of the pumpkin, feel the grooves, the stem, tap on the pumpkin
2. Child peeks inside the pumpkin
3. Child smells the pumpkin
4. Child scoops some pulp with a spoon or cup
5. Talk about the seeds and stringy bits
6. Child touches the pulp with one finger
7. Child holds some pulp in the palm of his/her hand
8. Child scoops pulp with his/her fingers
9. Child separates the seeds from the pulp

Have fun!

Want to learn more? Call to see how else we can help.

1-866-590-8822, press 1 to book a meeting today!

Services and supports in partnership with:



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Shaping

Autism and Behavioural Services | Bekki Grieve | 1-866-590-8822 ext 53725
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