



## **Coaching Model Guidelines**

### Strategies to Integrate into Your Child's Daily Routine

The Birth to Three Program is based on an educational model. You are an integral part of your child's program. While you may not be a trained specialist in the area of your child's delay, your team of professionals will demonstrate and show you techniques to use with your child. Your interventionists will coach you and your family on how to implement the following therapeutic strategies into your child's daily routine.

- **Keep your language simple.**

Try to use 2-3 word phrases when communicating with your child. Commenting verses questioning is best when your child has limited language.

Example: Instead of asking your child, do you see that DOG? , simply point and say "look, a DOG."

- **Be especially careful not to ask a question if you can't accept "no" as the answer.**

Example: Instead of saying do you want to eat? Simply say, "time to eat". You can then build in opportunities for your child to make a choice by asking, for example, "do you want juice or cracker? Before you ask your child to make a choice, be sure to first gain their attention. Hold both choices at your child's eye level, one item in your right hand and one in your left hand. Now present your question, "do you want juice or cracker?". As you label the item, draw your child's attention to each one by either moving the item closer to the child or by shaking the item slightly.

Your child may communicate their choice by simply looking at the preferred item, reaching/pointing to the preferred item, or by vocalizing for preferred item. Your intervention team will help you on a continual basis to identify your child's choice making abilities.

Follow the same strategy for all of your child's daily routines including bath time, sleep time, dressing, and playtime.

- **Allow time for your child to respond before repeating a question over and over again**

When you need to ask your child a question, first gain their attention by getting down to their eye level and then ask the question one clear distinct time. Wait 3 seconds for your child to process what you asked and to allow an opportunity for your child to comply. If your child makes no attempt to do what you requested, physically guide your child through the task.

Example: you ask your child to put down an object they shouldn't be playing with. Bend down to your child's eye level, say "put it down", and then wait 3 seconds for your child to act. If there is no attempt noted, simply guide your child hand over hand to put the object down. As you do this, you might say "this is putting down". Provide verbal praise for any level of attempt your child makes with the request even if it is just allowing you to guide them through the motions.

- **Avoid asking your child to do something when YOU can not follow through with physically assisting them to comply if necessary.**

Example: you are in the middle of attending to food on the stove as you observe your child doing something that you know won't cause harm (repeatedly turning a light switch on/off). Avoid asking your child to stop turning off/on the light if you are unable to physically guide them to stop. It is better to ignore the behavior until you are capable of following through.

Provide many "compliance" opportunities throughout normal daily routines. Give simple directions that your child is likely to follow (even if part of a routine) and praise them for the act of compliance!

- **It is important that you try to set time aside daily to play with your child.**

Skills necessary for academic learning are first developed during play. Children learn how to play by imitation as well as by independent exploration. Therefore, it is important to both demonstrate (model) what to do with play toys as well as allow time for independent play. You may want to demonstrate (model) actions with new or unfamiliar toys first, before you verbally request your child to perform a specific motor action.

Example: Putting blocks into a container. First demonstrate putting a block or 2 into the container. Then ask your child one, clear distinct time to "put block in". Again, as previously instructed, wait 3 seconds for your child to process the question and perform the motor action of block in. Provide the least amount of hand over hand assistance that will guarantee your child to be successful with your request. Provide praise for any level of cooperation which includes even just accepting your hand over hand help.

This strategy may be used with a variety of toys. Your intervention team will assist you with identifying your child's play skill/ toy level.