# LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE

**WHAT?**

* This information has been devised in order to support children with functional difficulties such as ball skills, handwriting, doing/undoing buttons, using cutlery etc. to develop their skills. Specialist Occupational Therapists from Trafford Children’s Therapy department have worked together to develop these strategies which can be used by parents, preschool and school staff.

**REPETITION, REPETITION, REPETITION!**

* Recent evidence and research has proven that children benefit from repetition when learning and developing skills. Through consistent repetition, pathways and connections in the brain which control learning and development are strengthened leading to improved speed, accuracy and confidence in tasks.
* For example, it is unlikely that anyone has passed a driving test after their first lesson! We need to repeat actions over and over again strengthening our brain connections through repetition.

**WHY?**

* You may know a child who has difficulty with certain activities such as dressing or holding a pencil. The information provided in this pack can be used to support children with difficulties in some areas of daily activities to develop these skills. The strategies should give guidance of where to start and some ideas for practice.

**HOW?**

**In order to ensure sufficient repetition for the development of skills, activities in this pack should be carried out for at least 15 minutes, 5 times per week, over a 4 month period.**

You should select a combination of activities from the ones provided overleaf which are most appropriate for the child. For example activities to consider are ones which will motivate the child to participate, i.e. they are sufficiently challenging and enjoyable. If you find a chosen activity is too difficult for the child, revert back to the list and choose a slightly easier activity with a view to building up to the more challenging activities.

If you wish to refer to Occupational Therapy following trial of these strategies, we will require you to evidence the effectiveness of your chosen activities with the child. The information gathered should include the activities chosen, their frequency and effectiveness and will be needed to support a referral for more direct assessment if this is required after the 12 week period.

**WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED?**

The activities included in this pack will be of benefit for children who are identified with difficulties in a particular area e.g. buttons, use of pencil, toileting etc. In addition, particular advice sheets may be highlighted or sent to you as these areas were identified in a child’s referral to OT. For this reason, it is important to include as much information as possible in the referral. As these are generalised advice sheets for practice, if you feel that they are not relevant or not meeting the needs of the child you are thinking about or feel there is additional information that we need to know, then please contact us at the above number.

**WHAT IF NO POSITIVE CHANGE IS SEEN AFTER THE 12 WEEK PERIOD?**

If you do not feel that the child has made progress with regular practice after the 12 week period (and this is evidenced on the activity sheet) please contact the OT department to discuss further support such as training, attendance at an advice/assessment clinic or a telephone discussion.

**Contact Details: Please phone us on: 0161 912 4495**