

ESDM Tips & Procedures

1. Recommended readings
 - a. "An Early Start for your Child with Autism" (parent book) – all
 - b. "Early Start Denver Model for Young Children with Autism: Promoting Language, Learning, and Engagement" (text book) – pg. 12, 259-272
2. ESDM Curriculum Checklist completed at the start of service and every 12 weeks ongoing. ST writes learning objectives and teaching steps and creates a data sheet (2-4 objectives per domain).
3. Program binder sections:
 - a. Learning objectives and teaching steps
 - b. Blank data sheets
 - c. Completed data sheets
 - d. Communication notes
 - e. Behaviours
4. Prepare Daily tracking sheet:
 - a. Highlight current target
 - b. Previously mastered step now becomes maintenance target. It does not get highlighted by does get run, where applicable (not if fading prompts)
 - c. Data is taking every 15 minutes
5. Set up environment:
 - a. Toys/activities in bins controlled by therapist. Only have a couple out at a time. Therapist selects what toys/activities are available for child to choose from
 - b. Different locations for activities e.g. crafts at table, balls on floor, chair for SSR, etc.
 - c. Can post list of targets on a white board to help cue the therapist what learning targets are
6. Teaching Procedure: Joint Activity Routines (JARs- with objects & SSRs)
 - a. Set up/opening
 - b. Theme
 - c. Elaboration/variations
 - d. Closing transition
7. Go back and forth between JARs with objects and SSRs
8. Other types of JARs:
 - a. Hello & goodbye
 - b. Snack/meal times
 - c. Clean-up
 - d. Transitions
9. Least-to-most prompting
10. Use 1 up rule e.g. if child speaks in 1-word utterances, therapist should speak in 2 words
11. Treatment Fidelity/Staff training
 - a. 80-85% or higher
 - b. Consistent scores of 4 or 5
 - c. No scores lower than 3

Sample schedule:

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|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Hello greeting/routine | Motor activity on floor e.g. balls | Books | Object 5 |
| Object activity 1 | SSR 2 | Snack | SSR 4 |
| SSR 1 | Object 3 | Object 4 | Object 6 |

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| Object 2 | Motor activity 2 | SSR 3 | Goodbye greeting/closing routine |
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Other Tips:

1. The reinforcer is being able to play with items the way they like to play (the theme). After developing a routine with some back and forth you can try an elaboration. After the elaboration you need to go back to playing the way the child likes to play (go back to the theme). Their preferred form of play is the reinforcer for staying with/ trying the elaboration.
2. Avoid using direct, behaviour specific praise. For example, do not say "good girl/boy!", "nice looking at me", etc. The reinforcer is your facial reactions, animated tone of voice, your engagement with the child, and continued play in a reinforcing activity.
3. Have items visible but in baggies or bins. It slows down the child from grabbing everything so you can allow them to make a choice but they are easily limited to one play theme
4. It may be helpful to use small toys that allow the child to look at you and back to the toy. For example, instead of using a big dollhouse, use Little People with the table and chairs set and beds on the floor.
5. It is good if there is a shared item but you each have your own of something else. E.g. you have a bowl of imaginary food and you each have a spoon. Or you have a doll in a tiny bathtub and you each have a cloth to pretend to wash them with.
6. If you attempt to introduce something new to the child it is okay if they protest a little, continue for a little longer just so they have that exposure to what the activity is, then you would stop and go on to something else. You wouldn't give an instruction that you would feel you have to follow through on. It would be more like an offer. Look at this. Try this. And trying to get them exposed for a tiny bit longer each time. Try things several times before determining they don't work!
7. Routines: After a child selects an item or is offered a sensory social routine, get some back and forth by pausing during routines so that they can respond to have the routine to continue, or by taking turns, then elaborate, then close which means clean up if items were used. Have the child do the clean up with the therapist.
8. If a routine doesn't really go to far you can draw out the closing to get in more teaching opportunities.