



Learn

Language for Praxis: Strategies for Teaching Kids with Praxis Deficits

It can sometimes be frustrating for children who have praxis deficits to describe what they want to do, where they want to start, how they want to complete a task, what part of a task is hard for them, and what they want the end result to be. However, with thoughtful and precise words which a parent, caregiver, or sibling can model and help them find, a child's idea, plan, and purpose can be happily and easily shared and successfully achieved.

In general try not to use the verb (jump, crawl, swing, go over, go under, go on top etc) when beginning and activity or task. Instead, when doing an activity or task, ask them in a question.

For example, putting on a coat, you could start by saying, "What do you do first?" "Where does the sleeve go?" If your child is having difficulty labeling actions or figuring out the sequence, you can then describe what you are doing to put their coat on such as, "First you slide the sleeve on, then you slide the next sleeve on, close it, hook the zipper, and pull up the zipper."

Using these strategies helps to facilitate their ideas and labeling of actions with their own experience.

Here are some other helpful strategies to help your child find the words needed to complete a task, share an idea, or solve a problem to achieve their goal.

- "What activity or game will make your body feel good or 'just right'?"
- "Show me..." (have the child do and describe what their idea or plan is)
- "Where is it? Where did it go?" (For example if you are hiding animals behind the couch your child will then hopefully say, "Behind the couch". This gives your child the visual, representational thought, and spatial awareness when experiencing if something is behind something else.
- "Can we move this a different way?"
- "How about this one..."
- "What are you thinking?"
- What can we do with....? It looks like it would be good for scooping - let's test it.
- Model an idea: I could....., what can you do?
- If the child gives an idea but it's not workable, still allow the child to "test it" and use it as an opportunity to explain why it didn't work based on the properties of the object.

- Cooking: Can anyone find me something small on the table that is good for scooping cinnamon? How about something to mix with? This looks like a lot of flour - do we need a big bowl or a small one?

In the process of the game or activity you may want to praise your child. When doing so make sure to use the verb or adjective to describe what they are doing so well:

- "Good, looking with your eyes"
- "Nice, jumping with your feet"
- "Good catching with your hands"
- "What great climbing! I love how you are reaching and looking with your eyes!"
- "Remember - your eyes tell your body where to go...Good looking!"

Here are some **DON'Ts** when addressing this at home

- Asking your child, "Can you...", "Do you want to..." because it's not your child's original idea. You are giving them the idea and the words that go with that idea.
- Asking your child, "How are you doing that?" or "Why are you doing that?" - Too open ended.