



PARENT Connection

TPAS NEWSLETTER
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Use Them or Lose Them: Maintaining Skills at Home

Written by: Jelena Mumovic, Instructor Therapist, TPAS

Children receiving IBI services at TPAS are taught a broad range of skills across various domains such as communication, visual performance, and daily living. Each skill is broken down into many smaller steps in order to help your child learn it. It is important to help your child maintain and demonstrate the relevant skills that he has learned in a variety of situations.

Encouraging your child to maintain learned skills can be done by taking a look at the routines your child participates in on a daily basis and the skills they have learned. Many children learn how to match objects and pictures in their IBI programs. These skills can be used in everyday routines such as tidying up and getting dressed. For example, place a picture of your child's shoes on a bin. When you return from an outing, have him remove his shoes, and put them away by matching them to the picture on the bin. Similarly, when putting away his toys, have your child match the toys to corresponding bins with pictures of the toy on them. Once your child learns more advanced matching skills, like the ability to sort items that are not exactly the same, you can have your child help out with chores such as laundry. When putting away clean laundry, your child can help sort clothes into drawers by matching them to corresponding pictures of shirts, socks, and underwear. Your child's participation in such tasks will also increase his independence.

Another skill often taught in




IBI programs is the ability to find items when told their name (e.g., "where's the cat?"). This skill can be maintained by asking your child to point to items present in your surroundings. For example, when reading a book together, you may pause and ask your child to find a picture on the page before continuing. At a birthday party, you can have your child show you the balloons, candles, and favourite treats. Make practicing into a game while outside in the playground: say

"slide" and have your child go to it and play.

As you can see from the examples above, there are many natural ways in which you can help your child continue to use skills learned in TPAS. As your child gets older and his interests change, the examples above may need to be adapted to reflect his development.

To begin identifying key skills

that are ready to be practiced at home, consult your child's clinical team. Setting up a time to observe your child during his IBI sessions may help you to recognize the skills that your child already demonstrates. It can also help you to gain additional ideas and pointers on how to go about practicing and applying these skills to your everyday routines.

 Talk to your child's Supervising Therapist for more ideas on which skills to select, and how to maintain them at home

A Parent's Perspective: Transferring Skills to Home

An interview with: Tanya Morgan, Parent



As your child learns new skills in his IBI program, a very important task falls to you as a parent: the task of practicing these skills at home. TPAS Parent Connection talked to one parent about this experience, and she was happy to share her thoughts with you.

In your view, what do you feel is the most useful skill set that your daughter learned at TPAS that she is now doing at home? Why do you view this as the most important?

My daughter's communication skills were the most important

thing that she learned at TPAS. From asking for the things that she wants to expressing her emotions, it has changed how she interacts with people around her. Her articulation also improved making it easier for people other than me to understand what she was trying to communicate. She will now socially interact with others, rather than just me, as she knows they will understand her. Her improved communication skills have also changed how my daughter and I connect. Previously, her days were a blank slate. I was able to get a general idea of what she did that day from notes the teacher sent but this did not tell me what was important to her about the day. Now she is able to tell me about a new activity or something that she enjoyed when I ask her about her day.

Tell me about a specific skill that your child learned at TPAS that she is now doing at home?

After she was able to do all of the steps of her toileting and hand washing routines independently,

she learned to close the washroom door for privacy.

What did you do to practice that skill at home?

Initially she sometimes needed verbal reminders as she went in the washroom or if she forgot I would close the door for her to make it a part of the routine.

If another parent asked you if it was possible to help your child continue using skill learned at TPAS at home, what would you tell them?

Yes it is definitely possible. It is important to be persistent and consistent. This meant that I needed to let her know what the expectations were going to be and follow through with those expectations each day. Initially I needed to give her some reminders but once she realized what the expectations were she began to close the door independently. Also, once a skill is taught at TPAS you might need to create situations to practice the skill at home, especially if it has not been a part of your family's routine before.

Planning to Maintain Learned Skills at Home

Written by: Jessica Connolly,
Supervising Therapist, TPAS

Parents play an integral part in the long term success of teaching that occurs in an IBI program. Maintenance of a newly-learned skill depends on how frequently the skill is required and practiced and whether the skill results in something preferred (i.e. reinforcement) for that particular individual. This will require parents to make changes in routines or expectations at home in order to create opportunities for newly learned skills to be used and to result in naturally occurring reinforcement. *The Surrey Place Centre TPAS Parent Library* has many resources to plan an environment that will help to maintain skills that your child has learned.

- » **More than Words – Hanen Centre:**
This book includes many strategies that parents can use to encourage communication skills at home and in the community.
- » **Teaching Verbal Behaviour in the Typical Environment – Tigg, C:** This book explains and demonstrates how to make requesting easy and fun for your child.
- » **Incentives for Change – Delmolino, L:** A guide to encouraging independence and self-management in individuals with ASD.
- » **Capturing the Motivation of Children with Autism or Other Developmental Delays – Partington, JW:** Outlines how to use your child's own motivation to increase spontaneous language and social interactions.

You can borrow materials from the *Surrey Place Centre TPAS Parent Library* by contacting your Transition Coordinator or Supervising Therapist.

Upcoming events:

Please visit www.surreyplace.on.ca for more information & other events

Skill Building for Success at Home (Part I and II)

October 17 and 24, 2011

6:00-8:00pm

245 Sheppard Avenue West

In this two part workshop, you will learn how to introduce and support the development of daily living skills in your child. As parents, you will select a home based goal and discuss practical

strategies for teaching. Part II will focus on group discussion, problem solving and identification of future teaching steps.

Group Stepping Stones Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)

Coming soon! Please visit www.surreyplace.on.ca for more information.

Respite Access Clinic

October 25, 2011

9:00am-4:00pm

2 Surrey Place

December 6, 2011

9:00am-4:00pm

245 Sheppard Avenue West

This clinic will consist of one-on-one sessions with an Access Facilitator in order to fill out renewal or first-time funding applications.

To register for any of the listed events, please contact Susan Varga at 416-925-5141 ext. 2363