



CONTENT

1

INNER DRIVE

2

LAY IT DOWN!

NEWSLETTER

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INNER DRIVE

If we really, really want something, we try our level best to make it happen. What helps us make it happen? What pushes us to keep pursuing? It is our “Inner drive”. This Inner drive is ingrained in each one of us since birth. Not just mature adults, but also infants possess it.

Next time you get the chance, observe a 1 year old, who has learned to walk a few months ago, he sees his favorite yellow car on the dining table. His inner motivation to play with that toy pushes him to find ways to access it. He may walk to the table, look around for help and voice out a cry to his mother. In case his cry goes unheard, he will not give up. He might try to pull a chair out. After moderate effort he manages to do so. Then comes the harder part, where he attempts to climb up on the chair, lugging one foot after another, trying over and over again, he finally succeeds to get on the chair, bend over the table and grab his yellow car!

His drive to attain the car taught him two new skills, that of pulling out the chair and climbing up on it. Both these skills were rich in sensory as well as motor input that created new channels in the child’s brain. This will enable the child to re-do the same task again with mastery and confidence in the future. Therefore the child’s self-motivation and

opportunities in the environment help support his/her growth, development and promote sensory integration.

Within every child is a great inner drive to develop his/her sensorimotor skills. We don’t have to tell a child to crawl, stand up or walk towards his/her favorite toy, this happens inherently. Hence for our children when we are trying to cultivate these similar skills, it is important that we use what drives them to bring out the best therapeutic results.



As a therapist, watch and observe your child closely, to pick up what motivates them the most. Some children may voice out exactly what they like, while others may subtly guide you towards it.

Continued



For all the professionals working with children, the golden rule to go by is: “Use your child’s inner drive.” This will enable you to raise the level of challenge for your child; alongside help you achieve the desired skill at a faster pace, in turn enhancing the child’s progress learning.

Watch what your child is looking at or how his/her expressions change while they see something they like. Observe how your child’s face lights up when swinging or crashing. Look out for that big-toothed grin when he/she spots a favorite toy, it could be anything as simple as a rattle that makes sound or a pretty doll or even just an animal peg board puzzles. A skilled therapist must read the visual/verbal cues that the child gives. These are small but essential cues that we must keep in mind and use meaningfully while planning intervention for the child.

Every child is drawn to certain objects, toys, ideas, themes, and emotions. It is extremely important that we as professionals consider the child’s likes and dislikes during the course of therapy and intervention. If used correctly, it will help you establish a rapport and engage with your child meaningfully while at the same time benefit in skill refinement. It will also, promote the child’s 100% participation.

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LAY IT DOWN!

Most of the behaviors like defiance, escaping, avoiding and procrastinating tasks of children are seen because they are lost. Lost, not knowing what they need to do! We are partially responsible for this. Often our instructions to them are very vague; that they may have difficulty understanding what needs to be done. They may struggle with evaluating themselves, whether what they did is good enough or not, and are they meeting the expectations? Most of the children on the spectrum or with ADHD have difficulty comprehending the unsaid social cues (such as maintaining their personal space, understanding facial expressions, sarcasms etc.). Since they cannot read the unwritten rules, they tend to do only half of what is expected or even worse do things that are completely incorrect and unexpected.



Because of the mismatch between their actions and expectations, they often receive lots of negative feedback. This in turn raises the child’s anxiety associated with performing that particular activity with that particular individual! It also generates lots of self-doubt in their head. This constant self-doubt makes them more anxious as it sets them up for a higher chance of failure.

It is important as parents and professionals to lay down clear expectations for the child. This can be done in the following ways:

1. **Review whether your child has enough skill level to meet the given expectations:** Set the expectations according to his/her capability, such that the task is achievable to enable his/her success and then gradually increase the challenge so that it aids in building your child’s self-confidence.

2. **Make yourselves as clear as possible:** Avoid asking questions, using puns and long sentences. Use short, simple and to the point statements to give the instructions. Make sure you tell the child exactly what he/she needs to do.

While asking your child to sit down we often casually call out to him/her from across the room telling them to come and sit here. Instead let’s be more efficient and specific in the way we provide our instruction. **Go to your child sit down at his eye level and tell him/her come and sit at the table.**

Also, give your instructions in steps e.g. sit on the chair, open your math work book and solve sum number 5.

3. **Clearly demarcate the start and end of the task:** This will ensure that the child understands exactly when the activity starts, what the steps are and when it is finished. E.g. we sit on the swing, swing for 10 counts and then swing bye-bye.

4. **Have the child repeat the steps of the activity**

5. **Use visuals if necessary:** Showing him/her visually the steps of the activity he/she needs to perform will reduce any chance of confusion and improve the child’s performance.

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Washing hands

	Water on
	Hands wet
	Rub hands with soap
	Rinse
	Water off
	Dry

But it is important that we use distinct, de-cluttered visuals that are easy to understand and follow.

6. **If and when possible provide a visual model of the finished product:** A visual model of the end product will help provide a clear idea as to what he/she needs to do.

To make sure that the child succeeds at the task presented to him/her, ensure that the parameters (rules, boundaries and expectations) are clearly defined. This will reduce the child's anxiety associated with the activity as well as promote his success. Laying down the expectations will help the child become more aware of what he/she can do to triumph. It will improve their self-confidence and ability to participate in activities non-hesitantly without showing difficult behaviors.

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For any question or concerns regarding the newsletter please write to us on: reachtherapycenterforchildren@gmail.com

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