



While each activity comes with specific instructions, these “Keys to Presenting” offer suggestions and techniques to make activities more meaningful and effective.

Before Getting Started

- Make sure that the area is free of distractions and has good lighting.
- Have a work surface that contrasts with the activity materials to make them more visible (a dark mat when using white cards, for example).
- Read the instructions for the activity and follow the recommended steps. They are designed to follow a logical progression with one step building on the previous.
- Review and familiarize yourself with the materials.
- Identify areas of particular interest to the person so that you can focus on those.
- Set up as much of the activity as possible before inviting the person to join you.
- Have a plan in case the person doesn't want to do the activity:
 - » Be prepared to start doing it on your own in the hope that they will join in.
 - » Have another activity ready to go to offer as an alternative.

The Concept of Correctness

- There is no such thing as “correct” when doing an activity - “correct” is relative.
- If the flow goes in ways you didn't expect, encourage it and follow the lead of the person. It is not our definition of success that is important, it is the participant's version.
- If a person places a piece in the “wrong” position or makes a move “incorrectly”, do not fix it or tell them that it is wrong - let them continue with the activity.
- If at some point, they realize there is a problem, give them time to fix it on their own. If they need help, try to guide them:
 - » Ask leading questions such as “Does a dog fly?”, “Is the piece the same colour as that one?” - this may help them find the answer.
 - » Move the piece to the correct position and ask if they think it goes better there - if they say yes, leave it, if not, move it back.
- Remember that engaging the person in meaningful activity is the goal, not completing the activity in a pre-defined manner.

10 Keys to Presenting

- Invite the person to join you
- Offer a choice
- Demonstrate, don't explain
- Start simple
- Let the person do it
- Give them time
- Watch for frustration
- Success is relative
- Don't correct “mistakes”
- Follow their lead

More tips and ideas on the reverse...

Presenting the Activity

- Always offer the person a choice to do the activity or not. Invite them to join you - ask if they would like to help, or if they would like to try something.
- Use the word “would” rather than “could”.
- If they say no, honour their choice, but if you start doing the activity yourself, they may want to join in - if not, leave it for another time.
- Sit on the person’s dominant side, rather than sitting across from them.
- Whenever possible , demonstrate with actions rather than explaining. When you must use words, use as few as possible and use the same ones each time.
- When presenting an activity for the first time, start at a simple level, even if you think it is too easy - it is better for the person to feel successful with an easy level than to be frustrated by a more difficult activity. You can progress quickly to a more difficult level if that is appropriate.
- Only move to a more challenging level after the person has shown that they are ready.
- Remember that the purpose of the activity is to engage and stimulate the person, not complete the activity “successfully”.
- Always give the person plenty of time to do each step on their own before offering assistance.

When Finished

- Congratulate them with a hearty and sincere “Good job”, thank them for participating and ask them if they would like to do it again sometime.
- Have the person help you put the activity away - this adds to their feeling of accomplishment.
- Evaluate the activity:
 - » Did they enjoy it?
 - » Were they able to do it successfully?
 - » Would it be more beneficial by changing some aspect of the activity or presentation?
 - » Did some aspect of the activity give you ideas about activities that might be well received?

Small Group Activities

- Everyone should be involved in the activity even if they are not the primary “player” at the time.
- Every reaction, no matter how small should be acknowledged.
- There are no winners or losers, every outcome is considered successful.
- There should be no pressure on a participant to do something they don’t want to do.
- The performance of one participant should not affect the other participants.

Visit keepingbusy.com for articles and information about presenting activities effectively

Keys to Presenting an Activity: The Montessori Way

Keeping Busy Inc.
500 Stonehurst Rd. N.
Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0
800-834-8290 keepingbusy.com

© Keeping Busy Inc.