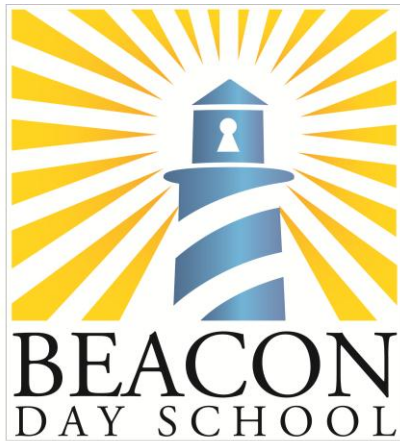


EDUCATIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS IN AN INTEGRATIVE EDUCATIONAL MODEL FOR AUTISM



Dr. Mary Joann Lang
CEO and Founder
Beacon Day School

Cognition

Cognition involves many different areas of functioning that include

- Attention and information processing
- Sensory-motor function
- Language
- Executive function
- Memory and learning
- Social skills
- Emotional function

Attention and Information Processing

- Selective attention (choosing what to listen to)
- Shifting attention (moving from one stimuli to another)
- Divided attention (splitting attention between two things)
- Sustained attention (staying focused on one thing for a long period of time)

DO THIS:

- **Structure the learning environment**
- **Eliminate distractions**
- **Set a routine/schedule (note sheets, flow charts, visual schedules)**

Sensory-Motor Function

- Gross motor skills (large muscles, e.g., balance, body posture, coordination)
- Fine motor skills (e.g., holding a pencil, writing letters)

DO THIS:

- **Occupational therapy**
- **Physical therapy**
- **Sensory integration therapy**

Language

Language involves many different ways of communicating including

- Speech
- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Interpreting information

Different ways of processing language include

- Auditory processing (understanding speech sounds)
- Oral expression (linguistic competencies and oral vocabulary)
- Receptive language (listening to and interpreting information)

DO THIS:

- **Visual cues**
- **Study sheets**
- **Outlines**
- **Note pads**
- **Time extensions**
- **Reinforcement**
- **Repetition**

Executive Function

Executive function is considered to be the “conductor” of many different cognitive processes, involving

- Planning
- Organizing
- Flexibility
- Abstract thinking
- Rule acquisition
- Self-regulation

DO THIS:

- **Structure daily activities**
- **Provide reminders to facilitate responsibility for personal items**
- **Provide modeling by adults to teach responsibility for personal items**
- **Provide organizational tools**

Memory and Learning

- Short-term memory (recall up to a minute without rehearsing material)
- Long-term memory (information remembered for a long time)
- Working memory (separation of different information such as visual and verbal)
- Comprehensive knowledge (information that is rehearsed and able to be recalled)

DO THIS:

- **Repetition of information**
- **Break up information into small parts and provide cues to assist in recall**
- **Lists**
- **Charts**
- **Relaxed learning environment**

Social Skills

Positive ways of relating to others aid in developing friendships and avoiding being mistreated by others. Social skills involve

- Communication
- Tone of voice
- Sense of humor
- Ability to take on another's perspective

Nonverbal social skills involve

- Active listening
- Relaxed manner
- Confidence

DO THIS:

- **Join clubs**
- **Join sports teams**
- **Go to social skills therapy**

Emotional Function

Being able to regulate one's emotional state helps prevent an over- or under-reaction in a situation.

DO THIS:

- **Discuss thoughts**
- **Discuss feelings**
- **Discuss behaviors**
- **Engage in role-playing**
- **Take a break in a calm environment**

Adaptive Behavior

Having the skills to adjust one's behavior in a particular environment or situation will help prevent disruptive behavior.

DO THIS:

- **Community-based activities**
- **Vocational activities**
- **Implementation of coping skills**

Health

Individuals with autism have a variety of health issues that include allergies and seizure disorders, which can hinder progress.

DO THIS:

- **Collaboration among educational team members, family, and primary care physician (PCP) to stay on medical treatment plan**
- **Dietary intervention**
- **Implementation of medicine under PCP guidance**

Contact Info

Dr. Mary Joann Lang
Beacon Day School
Beacon BASIC
24 Centerpointe Dr.
La Palma, CA 90623
(714) 288-4200
mjlang@beacondayschool.com

