Functional Learning (Waldon Approach)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcjpynBWuqg

Our firm belief is that every child can learn!

History…

- In 1976 Dr Stroh met Dr Geoffrey Waldon, a neurologist who had worked in Manchester University developing his educational theories
- The two exchanged ideas about early learning in relation to children with development delay.
- It marked the beginning of what became known as Functional Learning.

Play in early childhood

- Play and learning are linked.
- Evidence from neuroscience now suggests that play experiences from the age of two-months is linked with intense brain growth.
- Three babies were filmed from the age of five month to 2 years, the babies were observed individually. Each one of then given baskets which they never saw before, they explored the baskets in a similar way. Each one of them were leaning forward energetically, eager to touch and explore. The exploration was continuous and quiet, without use of language .The play of these babies showed the beginning of picking up, placing and banging which are the earliest Learning Tools.
- Play is pleasurable and self-motivated. Activity done for its own sake and not to achieve some end purpose. It is quiet, effortful and can be repetitive.
- Child with development delay do not show the early picking up and putting in, with objects and containers, which normally happens under the age of two. The lack of early exploration play limits the establishment of the Early Learning tools.

Functional Learning

- Functional learning is the simulation of experience of the normal young child during self-motivated play. Where play is not social, open-ended, not dependent on rewards and largely free from language.
- Functional learning helps to develop: ideas and concepts ,think creatively, problem solve (children learn by doing),developing their body coordination and control.
- Help develop a sense of self and feel good about themselves.

Goals and Characteristics

- **GOAL:** To provide child with many opportunities for ‘doing’ and ‘exploring’
- **CHARACTERISTICS:**
- Self-motivated
- Little language
- The play is quite, effortful and repetitive
- There is no fear of failure
- There is no necessary a goal
- The activity is carried out for its own sake
- There is no social reward
- The adult simply provides a safe, supportive environment

Early Learning tools

- Picking up,
- Placing
- Piling
- Banging and scraping
- When observing a baby playing, no one is directing his attention to the materials, no one is deliberately encouraging him to play, no one is telling him he is doing it properly, no one is praising his successes and no one is explaining anything and yet he is learning.

Characteristics of children with delayed development

Use objectives obsessively, for example always lining them up in the same way, because of the limitations in their early learning leads to limitations in understanding and coping strategies and as a result children will develop defensive behaviours to protect themselves against fear(unknown). When they are overwhelmed, unable to do or understand: show range of responses: crying, spitting, screaming, hitting ext.

Progression of early learning tools

- Drawings
- Paring
- Matching
- Brick Building
- Sorting
- Coding
- Sequencing

Each learning tool has 3 stages:

Simple-**S**
Intermediate-**I**
Mature-**M**

More information on Waldon Approach:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz1KP0XDKJs