
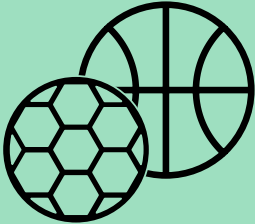



Teaching Leisure Skills in the Classroom: Evidence-Based Strategies to Encourage Participation

① WHAT IS LEISURE?

Leisure activities play an important role in every person's life. Hurd and Anderson (2011) describe leisure skills across the three different domains below:

Leisure as time	Leisure as activity	Leisure as state of mind
		
<p>Leisure is time free from obligations, work (paid and unpaid), and tasks required for existing (sleeping, eating).</p>	<p>Leisure is a set of activities that people engage in during their free time – activities that are not work oriented or that do not involve life maintenance tasks such as housecleaning or sleeping. Examples include bicycling, painting, walking, listening to music, playing sports, and reading.</p>	<p>Leisure depends on a participant's perception. Perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and positive effect are critical to the determination of an experience as leisure or not leisure.</p>

① WHY IS LEISURE IMPORTANT?

Autistic individuals don't participate in leisure or recreation activities as often as their peers. Developing leisure skills improves overall quality of life. Finding enjoyable leisure activities can lead to independence and help build relationships in the community. Leisure skills also enhance communication and social skills.

④ **HOW CAN EDUCATORS ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES?**

As students grow and learn in the classroom, their leisure skills play a vital role in their social skills and language development. Leisure time can be built into the school setting through cooperative play, center time, recess, clubs, and more. There are many different evidence-based strategies that can be used to encourage engagement in leisure activities at school. Today we will focus on four: reinforcement, task analysis, video modeling, and most to least prompting.

Reinforcement	
What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Item or action that is produced following the desired behavior that ensures that the behavior is more likely to be produced again in the future » Key to changing behavior
Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Through the proper use of reinforcement, behavior can be changed.
How to use it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Depending on the task, the student may require more frequent reinforcement. The less preferred the task, the more frequent the reinforcement to build “behavioral momentum.” Give the student small tasks where they can be successful, in sequence, to build momentum and confidence in that task before producing a harder, less desired task. » Keep the biggest and best reinforcement in your back pocket for the tasks that they like the least.
Leisure Skills Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teacher gives high-five and verbal praise to student when they participate in kickball game with other students at recess.

Task Analysis	
What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Breaking down a task into small, manageable steps » Making a task visual and concrete
Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Removes barriers to the task by making the steps manageable » Builds behavioral momentum to the final task, by giving the student small successes along the way
How to use it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use this any time a student needs the task broken down into more manageable steps. » Add in the reinforcer component after each step to bolster success.
Leisure Skills Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teacher writes a task analysis for watering a plant: a) get up, b) get the measuring cup from the counter, c) walk to the sink, d) fill the measuring cup up with water, e) walk to the plant, f) pour the water from the measuring cup into the watering can, and g) pour the water from the watering can onto the soil of the plant.

Video Modeling

What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» A video-recorded demonstration of a behavior or skill shown to the learner» Can be done by the individual to learn or by a peer model
Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Videos don't require face-to-face interaction so they may be less stressful for autistic students.» Videos can be rewatched as many times as needed for the student to learn the skill.
How to use it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» When teaching a new skill, as a form of modeling» Often paired with task analysis, prompting, and reinforcement
Leisure Skills Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Teacher shows student a cooking demonstration video on YouTube.

Most to Least Prompting

What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Errorless learning procedure
Why is it important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Instructional strategy that systematically reduces teacher assistance from most help needed to independence
How to use it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Most intrusive: physical prompt > modeling/video modeling > verbal > positional > gestural > visual» Start with the most intrusive because this task is seen as a "can't do," meaning the individual still needs to learn the skill/task.» Move as quickly as possible through the hierarchy towards the least intrusive prompts.» This allows for maximum independence over time and reduces the risk of prompt dependence.
Leisure Skills Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Teacher manually guides student's hand when watering plant (physical prompt). The next time, the teacher waters the plant first (modeling). After this, the teacher provides cues by pointing to the measuring cup, watering can, and plant (gestural). Finally, the teacher shows student a card with a picture of a plant being watered when it's time for the student to water the plant (visual).

④ **REFERENCES:**

Billstedt, E., Gillberg, I. C., & Gillberg, C. (2011). Aspects of quality of life in adults diagnosed with autism in childhood: a population-based study. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*, 15(1), 7–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361309346066>

Hurd, A.R. & Anderson, D.M. (2011). *The park and recreation professional's handbook*. Human Kinetics.

Ratcliff, K., Hong, I., & Hilton, C. (2018). Leisure participation patterns for school age youth with autism spectrum disorders: Findings from the 2016 national survey of children's health. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48(11), 3783–3793. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3643-5>

Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Savage, M. N. (2020). *Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with autism*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team.

Vuran, S. (2008). Empowering leisure skills in adults with autism: An experimental investigation through the most to least prompting procedure. *International Journal of Special Education*, 23(1), 174.