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The Importance of Teaching Sequencing to Young Children

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panels, then four, etc. The older the student, the more panels he/she should be able to arrange in correct order. Always start at the student's level of instruction. (For example, a sequence might include a picture of a dirty dog needing a bath, a tub filled with water, the dog being washed, and the clean dog.) When the child thinks he/she has the correct order, have him/her tell a story in order using the pictures. If the pictures are not in a correct order (the picture of a clean dog is placed before the picture of someone washing the dog), have the child tell why that does not make sense and have him/her attempt to rearrange the sequence. Use pictures of events in nature like a volcanic eruption, tadpole metamorphosis, seeds to flowers, or the changing of the seasons to enhance the child's learning.

Sequencing is the process of putting events, ideas, and objects in a logical order. Why is sequencing important? We sequence all day long—we divide our time into what we need to do first, second, and last; we understand events in our lives by understanding the order in which they occur. For some children, sequencing can be a hard concept to grasp, especially when they are trying to tell a story. Using good key words like "first," "next," "then," and "finally," cue your child as to what is coming next. The following activities are fun ways to practice sequencing with your child.

Photo Sequencing- Use old family photos of the child from infancy to the present. Scramble the photos. Have the child arrange the photos by paying attention to his/her size in the photo. Emphasize the use of basic concepts vocabulary terms like "younger," "older," "shorter," "taller," etc. Have the child tell about him/herself in each of the photos. For example, "This is when I was born. Next, I learned to crawl. Then, I learned to walk when I was older. Now, I know how to ride a bike."

Letter and Number Sequencing- Students who are beginning to learn and recognize letters and numbers can make letter and number flash cards from index cards or paper. Using two to six letters/numbers, have the child arrange the letters in the order they appear in the alphabet or the numbers as they appear on a number line. This is a more difficult task because children must figure out which letters are missing between the letters/numbers you are giving him/her to arrange.



Sequencing Activities

Picture Sequencing- Cut several sequential pictures from magazines, picture books, comic books, or the comics section of the newspaper.

Make sure the pictures have an obvious order. Scramble the pictures. Younger children should begin with two panels representing beginning/end or first/last, and then progress to three

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(cont.)

Story Sequencing- For young readers, cut simple sentences from stories or create your own on a computer. Use a story with four to six sentences or a poem with four to six lines. Begin with two strips to tell the beginning and end, then add a strip until all six are in order. This activity can also use the lines of familiar songs/nursery rhymes (e.g., *Happy Birthday, Jack and Jill*).

Which Way to Go?- Pick a familiar route in your home, neighborhood, or school, and another familiar destination. Have the child walk the route and draw a map with symbols to represent places along the way. Older children can write the directions in numbered steps or in a paragraph. Give the map/directions to other children to see if they can find their way to the destination.

Kitchen Steps- Visit the kitchen and prepare a dish using a few ingredients/steps. For young students, make a sandwich, a bowl of cereal, or other snack that does not require the use of the oven or stove. Talk about the food preparation as you go. Then, have the child repeat the steps, write the steps, and draw a sequence of pictures showing the preparation.

Music and Dance- Sing familiar tunes (e.g., *Old MacDonald, This Old Man*) and clap hands in rhythm with younger children and stop a few times to allow the child to fill in the phrase/clap. Do this until the child can sing the song/clap the rhythm on his/her own. Create simple dance steps (no more than six) and practice them together.

Present steps, stop, and let the child continue the routine. Take turns presenting routines to each other.

I Spy and Why- Play "I Spy" together, but add a simple step. After "spying" the object, give the student examples for what, how, and why we use the object in a logical flow of ideas. For example, "I spy a fork. I use a fork to eat food. I eat food to keep healthy. I need to be healthy so I can run and play. I like to run and play to have fun." Have the child continue until he/she can think of no other details to add to the sequence.



Sequencing in Daily Living

We have countless opportunities throughout the day to encourage children to think sequentially. In the car on the way home, ask, "Which way will I turn at the stop sign?" At home ask, "Now, what will I do with these dirty dishes?" "Tell me what happened at school today," or "Before you go outside in the cold, what do you need to do?" The list is unending.

Sequencing is an important skill in pre-reading, comprehension, and writing. Start your child/student early to help build a solid foundation for learning.

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Resources

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