

Activities of Daily Living

DOING ACTIVITIES HAND IN HAND WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE MULTIPLE DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT, AT HOME

Everyone performs various activities as a part of a routine, such as bathing, eating, cooking, grooming, cleaning among others every single day. Such activities help us to function effectively in day-to-day life. However, these simple activities can also be great opportunities to engage children with multiple disabilities and vision impairment (MDVI) meaningfully and to encourage them to learn new skills.



Using simple activities at home to enhance learning

Children with MDVI can be involved in simple and meaningful activities at home. A simple activity like making lemon juice can become a great learning experience that is enjoyable and fun! Almost like a ritual, the same sequence can be followed every time the activity is done at home to help the child remember the steps:

- going to the kitchen;
- locating the refrigerator;
- opening the door together in a particular way;
- getting the lemon;

- going to the kitchen cabinet/stand and getting the salt, sugar, spoon, glass, plate and a knife, one item at a time;
- closing the door (listening for the sound);
- carrying the items to a designated place (either in the kitchen, on the table, on a tray attached to a wheelchair/chair, on the lap, or on the floor depending upon the child's need – the main objective being that both the child and you are in a comfortable position to do the activity).

Remember that children may need time to collect all these things. Some children love to explore things as they collect them – they may want to bring the lemon close to their eyes to see the colour of lemon; some may want to smell the lemon; and some would love to explore the texture of the lemon. Children should be encouraged as they do so, as they are learning a lot from using their senses to gather more information about the ingredients.

Parents and caregivers can encourage the child to place each item carefully on the table/tray/floor and also encourage the child to identify the different items by looking at each item, listening to the distinct sounds, appreciating the different textures and the variety of tastes. Each step of the activity is performed together with the child, ensuring she/he has enough time to do the different steps.

Together with the child, parents and caregivers could cut the lemon, using any support the child requires. (Supports may range from giving her/him complete hand-over-hand support, to support at the wrist, or sometimes hand-under-hand with the parent or caregiver's hand under the child's hand gently guiding her/him to participate in the different steps.) Parents and caregivers could support the child (as required) to squeeze the lemon (either using hands or the lime squeezer) and add the sugar, salt and water. The child could drink the lemon juice she/he has just prepared which is a great reward in itself for doing the activity for most children. Gradually as the child practices this activity, he/she could be encouraged to make some lemon juice for his/her siblings or other members in the family.

Encouraging the child to clean up after the activity and to bring things back from where she/he took them is a great way to let the child know when it is the end of the activity.



Is it necessary to involve children in the entire process of the activity?

It is always helpful to include the child in the whole process of performing the activity. At times, the child may not be able to do every step of the activity. That is the beauty of doing the activity together - so that you can both support each other. Parents and caregivers could take the lead in doing some steps of the activity as the child watches or follows tactilely by placing her/his hand over the parent's or caregiver's hand. Gradually the child could be encouraged to participate more, as the ultimate goal is to ensure that the child does the activity as independently as possible. Involving the child in the full process of activities will likely mean that she/he participates in fewer activities throughout the course of a day, but each one will be more meaningful and full of learning.

What will children learn by participating fully in the activity?

Though making lemon juice is a simple activity, it is a wonderful way for children to learn different skills – knowing where the kitchen is; locating the refrigerator and table; gathering materials; learning about colours, textures, names of the ingredients used;

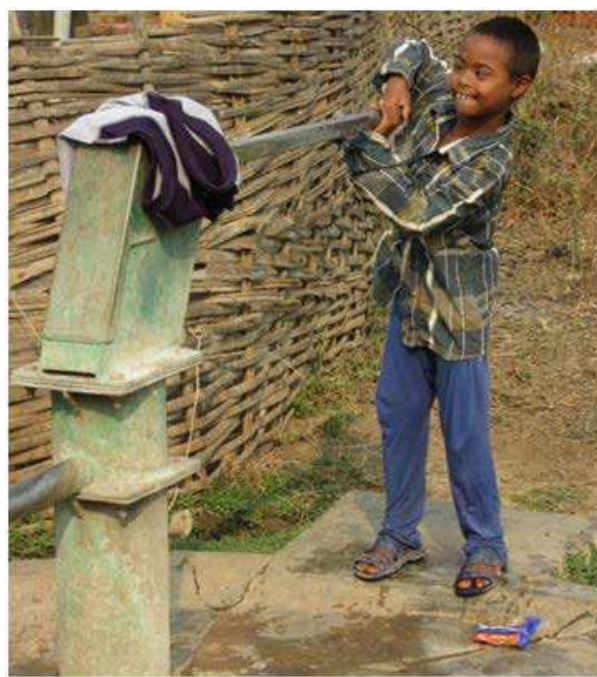
knowing the steps/sequence for making lemon juice; using both hands for picking, holding, cutting, stirring. Conversation that would happen naturally during the activity can all be learned simply as a part of doing these simple activities repeatedly in a fun way!

Are there any other activities at home that can involve children?

There are several other activities/household chores in which children could be encouraged to participate, depending upon their interest and their skills. This might include: wiping the plates before meal times, serving water to family members, folding clothes, accompanying parents and caregivers as they prepare for dinner, washing clothes or cleaning utensils.

At times, the child could just be near their parent or caregiver as they cook or clean. The child can watch or listen to the different sounds and to your voice as you talk to her/him in between. It could also be a way of engaging and involving the child.

It is important to involve the child in as many activities as possible which are a part of the daily routine!



Please remember:

- Children learn best when they're doing – when they're involved in experiences that they can attach positive emotions to.
- Consider the child's likes and dislikes.
- Remember to provide the appropriate support as required by the child.
- Encourage the child to be as independent as possible.
- Encourage the child to clean the table/place before doing the activity.
- Encourage the child to wash and wipe materials before and after activities.
- Motivate the child to wash his/her hands before and after activities.
- Keep a clean cloth near the child while doing activities, which the child can use to wipe his hands during the activity.
- Occasionally and if possible, parents and caregivers could give a choice to the child – e.g. ask the child to choose between a lemon and an orange to see what he prefers or if he wants to have something different.
- Encourage the child's brothers and sisters to do several household chores together.
- Remember to appreciate every little effort on the part of the child during activities.
- Children will gain confidence and consider themselves to be a valuable /important part of the family when they are involved in activities at home.

[FOLLOW THIS LINK TO SEE A VIDEO WITH MORE EXAMPLES OF HOW TO IMPLEMENT ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING FOR CHILDREN WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT.](#)