

Classroom Strategies

Backward and Forward Chaining

Some skills are best taught retaining the sequence of actions that make up the task. Each section of the task is chained to the next. The following are two options which are known as 'backward' and 'forward chaining'.

Backward Chaining

Using this method we teach the child or young person the last step in task first, then the second last step and so on until the whole task has been taught. This method is often used when the final step in the chain is a reward, also backward chaining means that the child or young person always completes the task themselves.

An example might be putting a sock on. Step 1 being orientation of the sock, step 6 pulling the sock up.

ADULT	CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON
Step 1 - 5	Step 6
Step 1 - 4	Step 5 - 6
Step 1 - 3	Step 4 - 6
Step 1 - 2	Step 3 - 6
Step 1	Step 2 - 6
	Step 1 - 6

Forward Chaining

Using this method we chain the steps together starting with the first step and finishing with the last. This is used if the first steps of the sequence are difficult, thus giving the child or young person more practice. Also children and young people with sequencing problems may find this method easier as they learn the skills in natural order. It is important to remember that this approach means that the child or young person does not complete the task until they have mastered the whole task.

Once again using the example of putting a sock on.

CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON	ADULT
Step 1	Step 2 - 6
Step 1 - 2	Step 3 - 6
Step 1 - 3	Step 4 - 6
Step 1 - 4	Step 5 - 6
Step 1 - 5	Step 6
Step 1 - 6	