

Backward Chaining

What is it? *Backward chaining is about chaining parts of a longer more complex task together but approaching completion in a step by step manner (e.g. building the sequence at the last part of the task and working back so the child experiences success, you gradually work back to increase more elements/parts of the task until the child can do the entire task with minimal or no support)*

Why use it? *When teaching a new skill or presenting a new task it can be challenging or confusing for children. Adults can provide the child with a sense of achievement by using the technique. Backward chaining is useful when learning self-care skills like dressing, helpful for younger children and where there is difficulty learning new skills*

Why is it effective?

Breaking longer or more complex tasks down into smaller progressive steps allows success, builds skills and increases resilience and independence in young children

What to do:

Step 1... Break task down into small separate steps/ plan for how you will approach this with the child

Step 2... Adult completes all steps/parts of task for the child **except last one (example: dry hands)**

Step 3... Teach child the last step/part of the task (showing them, doing the action with them). Support child to practice final step/part until they can do it without help (**example: dry hands**)

Step 4... Adult completes all steps/parts of task for child **except for the last two**. Teach child second last step/part (**example: turn off tap**) and let them complete the last step/part (**example: dry hands**)

Step 5... Adult completes all steps/parts of task for child **except for the last three**. Teach child third from last step/part (**example: wash hands**) and child then completes the last two steps/parts themselves (**example: Turn off tap, dry hands**)

Step 6... Continue in this manner until you are teaching first step/part and the child is completing the rest



Example: Handwashing process/task

(You can refer to picture sequence to show each part of task)

use for tasks such as:

- ✓ Dressing/ undressing [Dressing Myself | NHS GGC](#)
- ✓ Handwashing
- ✓ Feeding skills, cutlery use
- ✓ Completing puzzles, fine and gross motor activities
- ✓ Joining a carpet activity

Links to EYFS: Cognition & Learning, Communication & Language, Personal Social & Emotional Development

SEND Code of Practice: Cognition & Learning, Communication & Interaction, Social Emotional & Mental Health