

TCES Occupational Therapy Department



Engaging in Meaningful Activities

What are Meaningful Activities?

Meaningful activities include physical, social and leisure activities that are tailored to the person's needs and preferences.

Why are Meaningful Activities Important?

Meaningful activities are fundamental to the health and wellbeing of an individual. It can help to improve physical fitness, improve mood and help to combat depression and anxiety, combat loneliness, improve the quality of sleep and promotes a sense of purpose in life.

How Can I engage my young person in meaningful activities?

1. **Share your enthusiasm.** Show them with your voice and your body language that you are really excited about spending time with them doing an activity.
2. **Give the children an active role.** The best way to learn is by doing and children in particular respond really well to getting a chance to try something for themselves. So include them!
3. **Provide real experiences wherever you can.** Your interaction with children is a chance to pull them away from the virtual world of computers into a real life sensory experience. Children love what they can touch and taste and smell.

4. **Be clear and be consistent.** Children can relax and engage better if they know what to expect from you, if they know what the rules are and that you will stick to them. Consistency is key. Children actually really like having a routine, where they know where they stand.

Ideas for meaningful activities

- Paper folding activities:
<https://flintobox.com/blog/do-it-yourself/paper-folding-activities-kids>
- Challenge cards (44 engineering and science challenges) :
https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk/content/dam/pdf/JDF_with%20cover%20challenge-cards_DIGITAL.pdf
- 23 popular games:
https://www.momjunction.com/articles/educational-games-for-your-teen_00353167/#gref
- Educational games:
<https://www.ducksters.com/games/>
- Papunet:
<http://papunet.net/games/games>
- ABCya:
<https://www.abcya.com/grades/6/skill>