



Project Naturalistic Teaching



MODULE 5

Environmental Arrangements



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Environmental Arrangements

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Environmental Arrangements

The natural environment in which the child lives provides numerous learning opportunities for the basic skills and behaviors that he or she needs to learn. As teachers, one of our most fundamental roles is to make some environmental arrangements in natural environments so that the child gains and reinforces basic skills and behaviors. In other words, while the regular routines, activities and transitions that take place during the day in the daily programs of preschool classes offer natural teaching opportunities to children, in some cases it is necessary to organize these routine, activity and transitional moments in order for children to gain the determined goals.

Adaptations are made in the environment with environmental arrangements, thus creating a **"learning need for the child"** and a **"teaching environment for the teacher"** regarding the acquisition or reinforcement of the skills and behaviors set forth for the child. The most important point here is that these arrangements must be **"natural"**, part of the routine, activity and transitions.

While environmental arrangements can be seen as the initial process of the natural teaching process, they also play a role as strategies to prevent problem behaviors in some cases. In addition, in some publications, environmental arrangements can be considered as teaching strategies in natural environments. Environmental arrangements are not a teaching technique in themselves, they are the beginning of natural teaching process and are used together with teaching strategies and techniques. In other words, environmental arrangements create an opportunity to use teaching strategies and techniques. The natural teaching process is sometimes started with environmental arrangements, and then the child is supported with teaching strategies and techniques. Environmental arrangements will be discussed in this section. Teaching strategies and techniques are discussed in detail in the booklet "**natural teaching strategies and techniques**".



Environmental arrangements are discussed in four headings:

01

Making Unreacheable

02

**Giving in Limited Proportion /
Piece by Piece**

03

Leaving Incomplete

04

**Creating Surprising /
Unexpected Situations**

1. Making Unreachable

Making inaccessible is the most basic and perhaps the most important environmental arrangement. The purpose of this arrangement is to create a need for the child to communicate with the adult by making the object or situation that the child wants to achieve inaccessible to the child. With this arrangement, the situations that the child wants to reach or attain are prevented physically or socially. It is important to decide in what way and how this inhibition will be in line with the goals determined for the child. Especially when the situations that the child wants to reach are made inaccessible by taking into account their interests and requirements, a learning-teaching opportunity will be created for the relevant situation.



Many objects, toys or situations that the child interacts with during the day, but which we often do not realize, can be used to support the child's skills.

O B J E C T I V E

Supporting fine motor skills / expressing wishes

In the table below, the environmental arrangements you can make to support these skills of a child with limited fine motor and language-communication skills are given.

FREE PLAY

- Putting the puzzles in a closed box/jar/on a shelf out of reach of the child
- Putting the toys that the child wants to play with in a closed box/jar/on a shelf out of reach of the child
- Putting the winding/opening toys where fine motor skills (fingers) will be used actively, without opening the covers.

BREAKFAST

- Giving the beverage in a closed plastic bottle
- Putting the food in closed, transparent boxes that can be opened with the use of fingers

TOILET ROUTINE

- Keeping the door of the classroom closed
- Keeping the toilet door closed
- Keeping the tap closed

HOME COMING

- Intentionally leaving the shoelace or adhesive on or off

ART

- Putting the crayons in a transparent box

When we examine the examples on the previous page; Keeping the doors closed while going out of the classroom or going to the toilet, ensuring that children who need fine motor skills are supported open these doors, creating a natural learning-teaching moment by using the inaccessible environmental arrangement. During the toilet routine, keeping the tap closed as well as the door and asking the child to open it provides an experience for the child's fine muscle motor skills. In the meantime, appropriate teaching strategies for the child and techniques of providing help (prompts) that the child needs are provided with the teaching or reinforcement of these skills (we talked about in the previous sections).

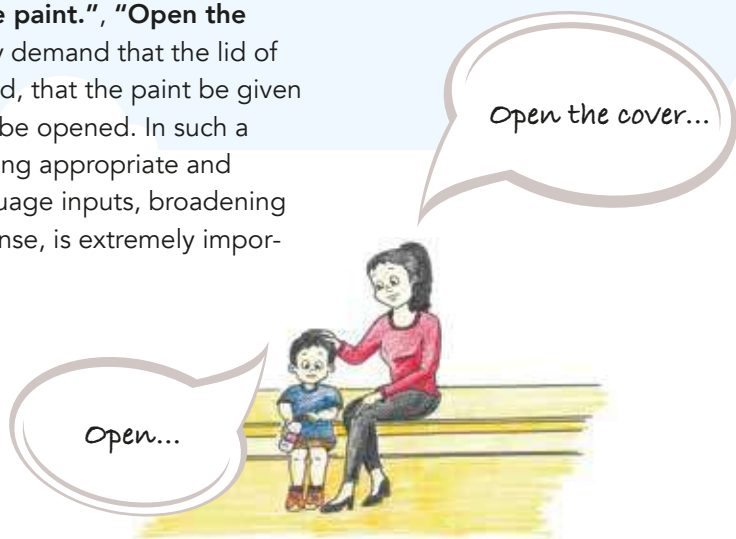
Likewise, placing the clockwork toy/ set-open toys that will be used actively by fine motor skills (especially the fingers) during free play without opening and thus preventing access to play with the toy and demanding the child to open the toys provides the child with an experience of fine motor skills.

During the art event, crayons transparent boxes/jars, and during feeding time with the crackers' and drinks are placed in mouth closed, and transparent pet bottle, allowing the child to experience them using their fine motor skills. In addition, the intentional closure of the shoelace or adhesive of the child's shoe on home coming and preventing the child from wearing the shoe and demanding that he untie the shoelace or adhesive is another example of life that will support the fine motor skills of the child.

The environmental arrangement of making inaccessible in the examples above can be used to support the child's fine motor skills, as well as to develop many skills determined for the child at the same time or separately. In other words, the environmental arrangements mentioned above can be used to support not only the fine motor skills of the child, but also language and communication skills.

For example, situations such as the pens needed for painting in a transparent jar and tightly closed, or the door that needs to be opened for breathing is locked, creates an obstacle in front of the object or activity that the child wants and makes the desired ones inaccessible. In this case, the child will feel the need to communicate with the adult in order to achieve what they want and will make an effort to communicate.

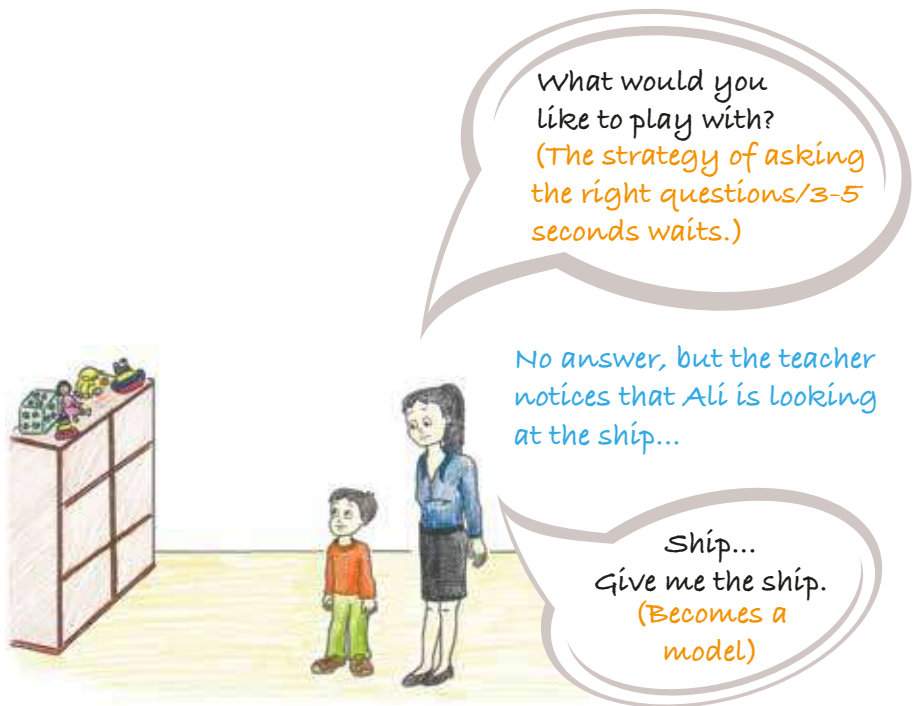
The important thing here is that the child's effort is accepted and developed by taking into account. For example, the child looks (first the cover/door, then at you, then back at the cover/door), gestures, signs, single words ("**Open.**") or sentences ("**Give paint.**", "**Open the door.**") etc., may demand that the lid of the jar be opened, that the paint be given or that the door be opened. In such a situation, providing appropriate and meaningful language inputs, broadening the child's response, is extremely important.



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In the environmental arrangement of making inaccessible, it is very important that the object or activity made inaccessible for the child is desired by the child. Therefore, it is necessary to know the child well. The child should also know what is made inaccessible by the adult. More clearly, seeing the crayons the child needs in a transparent box will create an opportunity for the child to ask the adult for these pens.

Depending on this arrangement you make while applying the inaccessible environmental arrangement, situations such as behavior problems or tantrums may occur. In such cases, you should not be persistent. In this arrangement; For the child to demand an object or activity, it should be waited for 3-5 seconds and then modeled or supported by making choice in accordance with the developmental level of the child.



2. Giving in Limited Amount-Proportion / Piece by Piece

The environmental arrangements of giving a limited amount/piece is designed to create an opportunity for the child to want more and thus initiate interaction by giving a small amount (limited amount) of the things that the child needs or interests (toys, tools, food and drink, etc.).

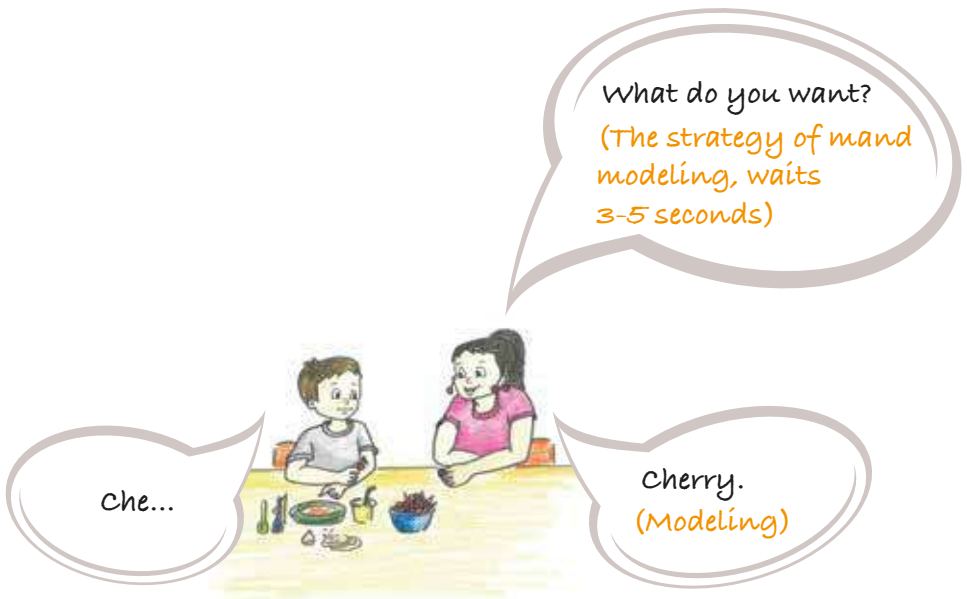
In other words, it is the giving of a whole, an activity or routine need to the child by breaking it into parts.

This environmental arrangement is seen as an effective and important arrangement, especially for the teaching of social and communication skills, because with this arrangement, it is not possible for the child to reach the situation they need or interest immediately or immediately.



With this arrangement, the things that the child wants are socially or physically blocked or held by the adult, and the opportunity is created for the child to express (verbal or non-verbal) what s/he wants. Thus, the door opens for the natural teaching of social and communication skills. With this arrangement, the adult supports all developmental areas of the child, especially social and communication skills, with appropriate teaching strategies for the child and techniques (prompts) that the child needs.

In the example below, the teacher gives the students the opportunity to express their wishes by giving the fruits one by one, that is, in a limited amount, at the feeding time.



In many routine and activity periods in preschool classrooms, a limited rate of giving strategy can be used to initiate communication or to support existing cognitive, social and communication skills.

O B J E C T I V E

Expressing requests

When we look at the examples in the table below, countless opportunities can be created during the day for the purpose of "**expressing wishes**". The behavior or skill expected of a child for such a purpose may differ from child to child. While the behavior expected of some children is only short-term eye contact, from the others can only be expected to just point and some to verbally express their desire. This expectation is formed on the basis of the child's current level of development and what they can do.

FREE PLAY

- Giving the puzzles to the child one by one
- Giving the blocks to the child one by one
- Giving the shapes thrown in the shape bucket to the child one by one

BREAKFAST

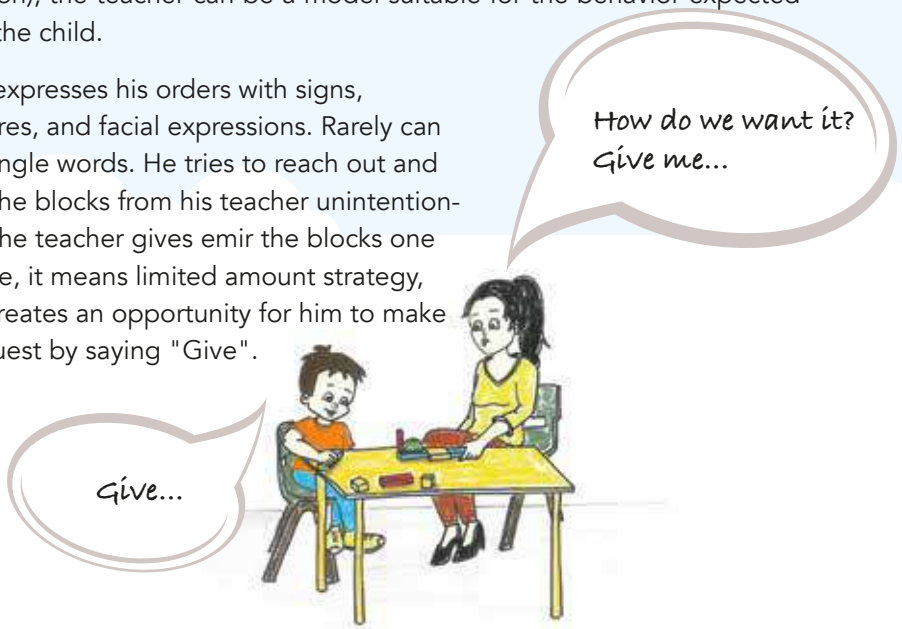
- Putting the child's favorite beverage to taste (a few drops) in his glass
- Putting very little of the child's favorite food on his plate (such as a bite of cake, half a pretzel)
- Too little bread on the table
- Giving the child olives one by one at breakfast

ART

- Giving the crayons to the child one by one

As can be seen from the previous table; Different, routine, activities and transitions, the child is interested in the object, toy, tool-equipment or food and drink, etc. has been given to him in limited proportion. For example, not all crayons are placed in front of the child while doing paint work. Instead, the teacher keeps these items with them, preventing the child from accessing other items that they may need, and creating an opportunity for the child to interact with him/herself. The same applies to the example of puzzles and games with blocks in the free play hour, and drinks and food in the breakfast routine. Following these environmental arrangements, some children will be able to express what they want by making eye contact, some by pointing, and some by verbally expressing ("I want a pencil" or "pencil", etc.). After this environmental arrangement, the teacher will be able to ask questions to the unresponsive child, "What do you want?", (with gestures, which is non-verbal for some children, and verbal expression for some children). Again, the same teacher will be able to give clues by saying "You want..." etc. and request the child to express what he/she wants (make eye contact, point or verbally express). According to the reaction from the child (correct answer, wrong answer, no reaction), the teacher can be a model suitable for the behavior expected from the child.

Emir expresses his orders with signs, gestures, and facial expressions. Rarely can use single words. He tries to reach out and take the blocks from his teacher unintentionally. The teacher gives emir the blocks one by one, it means limited amount strategy, and creates an opportunity for him to make a request by saying "Give".



3. Leaving Incomplete

Leaving incomplete environmental arrangement is carried out by not providing some of the materials required to complete a certain action/activity and skipping some steps of the action/activity. Putting soup on the child's plate and pretending to forget to give a spoon, giving a toothbrush for brushing and pretending to forget to give toothpaste, giving papers and pretending to forget to give a pen for the activity, giving the driveway in free play and pretending to forget the cars is an example of "**Leaving Incomplete**" environmental arrangement. Thus, the child is expected to contact the adult and request the missing material from the adult. In other words, in these created situations, the child will need the missing materials in order to complete the action/activity and will be able to attempt to request these materials from the adults. As in other environmental arrangements, in this one, the adult supports all development areas of the child, especially social and communication skills, with appropriate teaching strategies for the child and techniques (prompts) that the child needs.

When we examine the table on the next page; We see that many routines, activities, and transitions carried out during the day in preschool education classes include certain steps or tools. After a certain time, children become familiar with these routines, activities, and transitions. The environmental arrangement of leaving incomplete focuses on sabotaging these familiar situations. Skipping or missing some familiar steps during routines, activities and transitions provides opportunities to teach the child many skills (such as motor, cognitive, social, communication) in a natural way.

O B J E C T I V E

Expressing wishes

BREAKFAST

- Not giving the plate or spoon to the child/pretend to forget
- Giving the child a plate and not putting the food on the plate / pretend to forget
- Giving the child food but don't give the drink/pretend to forget
- Do not give a teaspoon or sugar after pouring tea into the child's glass / do not pretend to forget

ART

- Do not give the child the tools and equipment after giving the play dough/pretend to forget
- Give the child crayons and not give paper/pretend to forget

TOILET ROUTINE

- Not giving the child a paper towel after washing hands/pretending to forget

CLEANING ROUTINE

- Giving the child a toothbrush and not giving the toothpaste / pretending to forget

Let's explain with another example...

.....

Teacher Merve has a student named Ahmet who has autism spectrum disorder. Ahmet has limitations in initiating and maintaining interaction. Teacher Merve aims for Ahmet to initiate interaction by making eye contact with her. In order to achieve this goal, she thinks ahead of time in which activities, routines and transitions Ahmet can take part in the classroom during the day, and plans which steps of this activity, routine and transitions she should skip. According to this, Teacher Merve gives the coloring papers to the students at the table one by one during the art activity, but does not give them to Ahmet, she skips Ahmet and waits for him to make eye contact with her. When Ahmet realizes that he does not have any coloring paper and looks at Teacher Merve, Teacher Merve said, **"Well done, Ahmet, you looked at me so well."** by saying, **"This is your coloring paper."** He gives the coloring paper to Ahmet. If Ahmet doesn't notice that there is no coloring paper, or pretends not to notice, Teacher Merve said in a surprised tone, **"Aaaaa... Guys, who doesn't have coloring paper! Ahmet!... Aren't you?"** She creates an opportunity to attract Ahmet's attention and make eye contact with her. When eye contact is established, she says, **"Well done, Ahmet, you looked at me so well."** by saying, **"This is your coloring paper."** She gives the coloring paper to Ahmet.

Teacher Merve teaches the environmental arrangement and teaching process of leaving incomplete; By not distributing some kitchen utensils while distributing plates and glasses at the time of feeding, not distributing some tools while distributing equipment suitable for the game during free play, providing soap during handwashing and turning off the water, making Ahmet sit on the swing in the playground and by not swinging on the swing, she continues to practice.

☑ Thus, she creates many opportunities for Ahmet to exhibit the behavior of initiating interaction by establishing eye contact with the adult during the day.

Ahmet is a student with autism spectrum disorder. Ahmet has limitations in making eye contact and initiating interaction skills. Teacher Merve aimed for her student Ahmet to initiate interaction by making eye contact with him.

Everyone has crayons,
right?
Who doesn't have a crayon?
(wait 3-5 sec.)



Well done Ahmet..
You made very good eye
contact with me.
Take your crayon.

Bora is a student with Down Syndrome. Bora communicates at a single word level but has limitations in choosing and using appropriate words to express his wishes. Bora's teacher makes some environmental arrangements in the classroom environment to support these skills that Bora has limitations.

In the example below, the teacher did not give the fork to Bora at the feeding time, leaving this step of the act of eating incomplete and provided the student with an opportunity to make a request.



1. Come on eat your food...
(wait 3-5 sec.)

5. Give me a fork.
(Modeling.)

3. What do you want?
(Mand-Modeling Strategy)

2. Upon the teacher's instruction, Bora realizes that he does not have a fork to eat and looks around.

4. Without a verbal expression, Bora points to the fork that was put away by the teacher.

4. Creating Surprising / Unexpected Situations

In pre-school classes, surprising/unexpected situations can be created for children by behaving as if they forgot or accidentally made during the day in situations that the child is familiar with or during activities, or by placing an object/material that is not suitable for the environment or the activity. During the surprising/unexpected situations created, opportunities arise for the child to learn many skills (cognitive, motor, social, language and communication, etc.) naturally.

Ece is a student with autism spectrum disorder. She has difficulty in establishing eye contact. Her teacher created a surprising/unexpected situation by putting Ece's glasses on backwards and gave her the opportunity to initiate an interaction with her.



Let's explain with another example...

.....

For example, for a student who has a need for purposeful communication, expressing wishes and loves cars, actions such as driving a ship on the driveway or flying cars instead of airplanes can provide opportunities for teaching these skills. Apart from this, for a child who has limited communication skills and has difficulty in eye contact, situations such as putting on socks on his hand instead of putting on his feet, wearing his glasses backwards, putting the sleeve of his coat on his head instead of the arm can make the child look at the adult, that is, make eye contact with him. In such a situation, **"Well done, you look at me very nice, can socks ever be worn on the hand?"**, **"We will wear it on our feet, where are your feet?"**, **"Come on, put the socks on your feet."** You can make sense of your action with expressions such as, and thus support all development areas of the child.



O B J E C T I V E

Expressing wishes

The following table provides examples of creating surprises/unexpected situations during the daily routine, activities, and transitions in the preschool classroom.

FREE PLAY

- Giving a car to the child who wants the baby in the house game
- Feeding the car instead of the baby in the house game
- Keeping new and different colored cars that may be of interest to the student in the free play corner.

BREAKFAST

- Putting crackers in the glass instead of water
- Giving a glass to the child who wants a plate
- Giving the child a pencil instead of a fork

READING CORNER

- Putting colorful books with lots of pictures and larger than other books in the library that may attract the child's attention.
- Looking at the pictures of the book backwards, reading the texts backwards

ART

- Giving kitchen utensils instead of play dough tools

TRANSITION

- Locking the classroom door
- Putting shoes on hands instead of feet

As seen in the table on the previous page, situations such as giving a car to the child who wants the baby in the house game, putting crackers in the glass instead of a drink at feeding time, giving a glass to the child who wants a plate are examples of environmental arrangements that creates surprising/unexpected situations.

Ilknur teacher brought new and different toys to the class that day that could attract children's attention and participated in children's free games using the strategy of creating surprising/unexpected situations. For example, she created surprising / unexpected situations for children by dressing the baby's clothes inside out in the house game, playing with colorful cars, giving planes or ships to children who wanted another car.



Almost every activity or game consists of a certain routine. In other words, the order and materials of the event or game are more or less certain. When the materials required for this sequence or game/activity are changed, this situation turns into a surprising and unexpected situation for the child and causes the child to react involuntarily.

For example; By creating situations such as giving the child a puzzle piece instead of a shape while throwing shapes into the shape bucket, giving the child a fork instead of a spoon to drink soup at feeding time, trying to put socks on the child's hands when going out, or trying to make the child wear sports shoes without removing the shoes on his feet during the sports hour, and thus you can create opportunities for child to initiate communication by placing obstacles in situations s/he already knows and anticipates will happen. In this case, the child may ask for a spoon instead of a fork and may indicate that s/he should wear socks on her feet when going out.

As you know, every child's language development level is different. Therefore, children's reactions to these environmental arrangements will also differ. Despite these differences, it is possible to support and develop the language development of the child, who is trying to express himself in a way, with environmental arrangements; because any dialogue you will establish with the child within the fun and educational contexts created is extremely important in terms of providing linguistic input to the child.

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