



**Integrating Children and Knowledge of Washington**

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## **INDEPENDENT WORK STATION**

The goal of this program is to teach children to occupy themselves for a period of time without supervision. Teach in the Controlled Environment before moving to the Natural Environment.

### **Procedures**

1. The therapist should set up a group of plastic cabinets with 12 drawers. All drawers should be removed except for the last drawer in the last set of cabinets.
2. Place in the drawer a reinforcing activity; if possible, the activity should be one that has a natural end (e.g. puzzle, shape sorter)
3. The therapist should say, "Go do your activities." At this point the therapist should *WITHOUT TALKING* prompt the child to complete the following process:
  - Physically guide him, if necessary, to the area where the cabinets are located.
  - He should pull the drawer out of the cabinet and take it to the worktable or to the floor to complete.
  - He should take the activity out of the drawer, complete it, return it to the drawer, and take the drawer to a place of disposal.

The child should *NOT* put the drawer back into the cabinet. Instead, he should place the drawer in a prearranged disposal area. The therapist will collect the drawers, and activities will be changed before they are returned to the cabinet. After the child has completed the entire cycle then the therapist can reinforce.

You know you are ready to add a second drawer when the child can complete the entire sequence with one drawer without prompting. All activities placed in drawers should be mastered and easily completed by him. Reinforcing activities should be placed throughout the set of drawers (e.g. every second or third drawer) to encourage him to continue to work.

If you are placing in the drawers an activity that is not enjoyable for the child but *IS* considered important by the team, you can place a primary reinforcer (e.g. candy) in the drawer to make the activity an improving set of conditions.

If there is an activity in one of the drawers that *DOES NOT* have a clear end, then you can place a preset digital timer on the outside of the drawer. When the child places the drawer on the table he can press start and enjoy the activity until the timer rings. When the timer rings, the activity should be returned to the drawer and placed in the disposal area. If the child disregards the timer, the therapist should prompt him to place the activity in the drawer and place in disposal area.