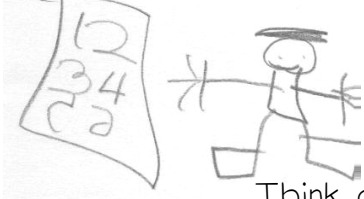


What is the best way to learn?



Think about when you learned to ride a bike. First you probably watched other people riding bikes. Then someone held onto the bike and talked to you about exactly what you needed to do. Then little by little, they let go – but ran along next to you to catch you if you started to fall. Finally you were confident enough to ride off on your own. This is exactly the way children learn best!

First an adult models exactly what the child needs to learn. Next the adult does the activity along with the child, finally the child is able to do it independently. We sometimes call this process

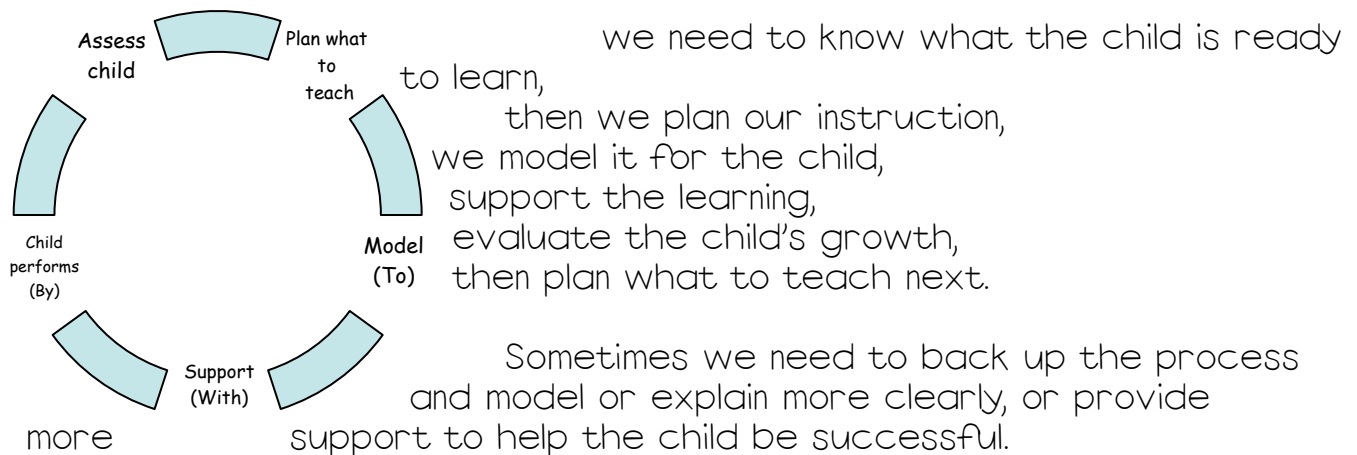
TO – adult showing or modeling to the child

WITH – the adult does the activity along with the child, and

BY – the child does it by him or herself.

We also refer to it as the gradual release of responsibility. In school this process is constantly ongoing. First the adult models and shows exactly what the child will be doing, at the same time giving very explicit explanations about how it works. Then the adult's role changes to more of a support person – giving verbal directions, suggesting clues, giving feedback, providing physical assistance when necessary – gradually releasing the responsibility to the child when he or she is ready.

Of course assessment is also a vital part of learning. As this process of learning is developing, the adult is constantly assessing how well the child is getting it. It really is a cycle:



Every child is so unique. The path to literacy success is different for each one, there are many ways to reach their goals. The most important thing is for adults to provide an emotionally safe, supportive environment that encourages children to gain confidence and make connections to things they already understand.

Learning should always be fun!



