

## Postural Pre-Tuning: Getting in Position to Learn

Posture and sensory input and perception have a big impact on a child's ability to learn new information. Getting your child's body "ready" is essential for success in language and other types of learning.

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Good posture is necessary for the movement interactions during speech productions. PROMPT clinicians practice "postural pre-tuning" in the beginning of each session, making sure that the child has whole body stability whether they are working in a chair or on the floor. For example, if the child's head is in extension (leaning back), the clinician will reposition the head which allows the client to receive the PROMPTs and to have more stability for speech production. The easiest way to ensure that the child has the core stability necessary to support their learning is to position the child sitting up straight in a chair with the legs at a 90 degree angle with the feet planted on the floor. For some children, not establishing posture that facilitates core stability can result in uncomfortableness and decreased alertness and attention to the activity.

Another component of pre-tuning is regulating the sensory system so the child is ready to receive and perceive sensory information. If the child's sensory system is not regulated, they cannot process incoming information from the environment. Children can be under- and/or over-reactive. Children who are under-reactive may seek sensory input by running around the room or appear to be "bouncing off the walls". On the contrary, if your child is over-reactive, he is overloaded by the sensory input.

Using sensory-based activities is an effective way to facilitate learning by keeping the sensory system regulated. For under-reactive kids who are seeking sensory input, you can pair movement with concepts. For example, have the child jump while learning information like math, naming objects or letters or completing jumping jacks while singing out the letters. Exercising can boost a child's attention and improve his cognitive abilities. For the over-reactive child, you want to provide soothing and calming sensations. You can use dimmer lighting or a calming musical playlist. You could also use a massage on the arms or a firm hug which are great strategies for helping children to soothe themselves. Deeper tones and slow rhyming are more calming and organizing. What sounds does your child find calming? Make a soundtrack and add it to the environment.

So remember to always make sure your child has postural stability and has a regulated sensory system by using these strategies!