

National Center on Deaf-Blindness



Transition Activities

Using Vending Machines

Topic:

Using Vending Machines can help your child know more about using technology skills for taking care of himself/herself; part of “knowing yourself” and “valuing yourself.”

Overview:

The use of a vending machine is a common human experience. It provides opportunities to practice a number of skills including money handling, fine motor skills, choice making, tactile search, and community access. Most work places have some type of vending machine and workers use it to stay hydrated, to increase energy, to take a break and stretch and to find something to eat. Vending machines also sell stamps, personal hygiene items, and even worms for fishing!

Outcomes for your child’s transition development:

Your child’s self-determination began with the knowledge of himself/herself – his/her strengths, areas of need, preferences, options. Following his/her knowledge of self, comes valuing himself /herself – accepting and admiring his/her unique strengths, recognizing, and expressing his/her unique preferences, and taking care of himself/herself in a larger and larger world – according to an anticipated schedule or routines. Self-determination expands through age, experiences, and development.

The outcomes for this activity are for your child to know more about his/her world and value his/her abilities and preferences – I can use technology.

Activity Directions:

1. Scope out vending machines in your community. Check malls, libraries, college campuses, city or county buildings, schools, laundromats, and grocery stores.
2. Putting money in slots takes some advanced fine motor and spatial skills. Have your child practice putting coins in a small slot made in a plastic container. Make sure the slot is on the side of the container not in the top so your child has to hold the coin in the same position that vending machines usually require. (Not all vending machines require the same spatial positioning of the coins, and you can eventually teach a different process for those.)

3. Go vending! Take your child to a real vending machine to use the skills he/she has been practicing.
4. Keep your eyes open for naturally occurring opportunities when you and your child are out and about in the community. If you come across a spatial configuration different from the one your child knows, use it as a teachable moment. When you get home, create a practice slot that matches the spatial requires so he/she can practice.

Ways to either Simplify or Increase Complexity:

Ideas for Simplifying Activity

- Describe options and let your child make choices.
- Put money in for him. Let him push buttons as he/she is able.
- Teach him/her to visually recognize vending machines and use them for a landmark.
- Teach him/her to experience and recognize the vibration of familiar vending machines.

Ideas for Increasing the Complexity of the Activity

- Teach money counting concepts, money identification and value.
- Teach healthy choice making.



The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education #H326T130013. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of The Research Institute, nor the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Jo Ann McCann.