

TRANSCRIPT: ISC - Promoting independence

Gavin Lyons

I work a lot with the families of the young people in our department and what we find is that there's never a time that the child can entertain themselves for ten minutes, so that parents can go off and make that 'phone call or put the dinner on or spend some time with another one of their siblings and so on. So our 'choice time' session is, essentially, trying to teach them to do that.

A lot of their day is directed by us. At the same time, we want to give them the opportunity to be themselves, to follow their own, sort of, interests and, to a certain extent, be autistic rather than having us constantly directing as to what to do. So, it's important that we teach our young people to be able to develop those interests into something constructive, in which they can occupy themselves for even just a half-an-hour session.

So, we've based all the activities around what they want to do, whether that's just sitting and playing with a tray of pasta, to going out for a cycle on the bike. It's whatever they like and then, ideally, we want them to do it as independently as possible. If they need a little bit more support then we can provide that, but that whole session is devoted to them being themselves and trying to turn those unique interests of theirs into a constructive activity in which they can spend time doing independently and appropriately.

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