

## **GUIDELINES FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN** (without Cortical vision loss)

Boys and girls have trouble with eye-foot movements. Large muscle activities, eye-hand coordination and increased mental alertness and body awareness are areas of activities that need immediate attention. Boy or girl will benefit from daily warm-up stretching and bending movements that are practiced at the time of arrival each day.

Other large muscle activities to include on a daily basis are: dancing, running, changing directions, turning 360 degrees in a circle and playing “follow the leader” to the beat of music. Boy or girl needs to listen and hear both music and human voices, so chanting and singing are essential sounds, especially if parents and teachers speak in tones of voice and pitch that frequently change from high to low and soft to loud.

Teachers and family must focus their hands and eyes on boy or girl’s face to direct attention to play activity and talk about what comes next. Be ready to redirect boy or girl again and again by cupping the face. Since boy and girl have limited ability to feel their body sensations, it is essential to do two activities at a time: words or songs and massage.

Classroom activities concentrate on floor play activities on the floor and activity boxes arranged along the walls, but always on the floor; children move from around and around toys, selecting what they like, assisted by and teachers who help them and play with them on the floor. Start each day by taking boy or girl’s two hands, leading them around the circle, talking about the activities, in order to “awaken” awareness of surroundings.

**Teachers take the lead if children do not respond, offering toys and sitting on the floor or low chairs in the middle of the room.** When a child begins an action, teachers imitate what children do. Teachers say, “I did what you did. Good boy or girl! Do it again.”