Nicola Schaan
Occupational Therapist | OT Reg. (BC)
ot@nicolaschaan.ca
nicolaschaan.ca

CO-OP Approach: Summary for Families

CO-OP is a meta-cognitive approach to learn new skills.
The child learns to slow down, make a plan, and fix problems.

Core strategy: Goal, Plan, Do, Check

The child learns to ask these four questions. They can use them for almost any task.

Goal	Plan	Do	Check
What do I want to do?	How will I do it?	Try the plan.	Did it work? If not, make a new plan!

Features of the CO-OP Approach

1. **The child picks the goals:** The child guides what they want to get better at. There are many activities kids can choose to improve gross and fine motor skills; we incorporate the child's interests. We check how well they do at the start and at the end.
2. **We find what is hard:** The therapist watches the child try the task. The therapists observes three things: Does the child want to do it (motivation)? How can we break this down into smaller steps? What strategies can we teach that might be helpful?
3. **The child learns to think it through:** We teach the child to use Goal, Plan, Do, Check. They also find small tricks that help with one task. We keep track of useful strategies
4. **We ask, we don't tell:** The therapist does not give the answer. We ask questions and use coaching so the child learns to solve their own problems. We work on one thing at a time.
5. **We use the "just right challenge":** Tasks are not too easy and not too hard.
6. **You are part of the team:** We stare strategies so the child can use them in different places

How you can help at home

- Ask: "What is your goal? What is your plan?"
- After they try, ask: "Did it work? What can you change?"
- Try not to give the answer. Let the child figure it out.
- Remind the child to use strategies (we may create a strategy card to use).
- Cheer for trying, not just for getting it right.

Based on a CO-OP (Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance) case study:
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10461053/