# Puzzles

## Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaches:</th>
<th>How to complete puzzles of various types</th>
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<td>Before beginning:</td>
<td>Child should have developed Readiness &amp; Compliance Skills, and have the ability to sit and visually attend to an activity for several minutes at a time. Shape Sorters is a good prerequisite skill for this lesson.</td>
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<td>Why it’s important:</td>
<td>Completing puzzles is excellent for brain and visual skill development. It also incorporates fine motor skills, and can be generalized into play activities (both independent and interactive).</td>
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<td>Materials needed:</td>
<td>A small variety of puzzles, 3-4 of each of the types listed under “Targets”.</td>
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<td>Generalization activities:</td>
<td>The ability to complete puzzles can be generalized across a nearly endless supply of new puzzles of increasing complexity. This skill can be incorporated into Independent Play, Parallel Play, Interactive Play, free time at school, etc.</td>
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Steps

Prepare
1. Sit facing the child, in a quiet place free of distractions.
2. Have several potential reinforcers and highly preferred items ready and available.
3. Have data collection materials ready.
4. Have lesson materials prepared.
5. Make sure the child is ready to attend, ideally looking at teacher and not engaging in any other activities.

Teach
1. Instruct the child, “Let’s do the puzzle!” or “Put this together.”
2. Wait 3-5 seconds for child to begin activity
3. When child begins, start timer
4. [FOR INTERLOCKING PUZZLES ONLY: It may be helpful to teach the child the pre-step of sorting the pieces into 2 piles: 1 pile of pieces with a straight edge, and 1 pile of pieces with NO straight edge. This will give a smaller group of pieces to work with at a time, making the overall task easier for the child to complete. Once the piles are sorted, the child can start by putting together the “straight edge” pieces to form a border, then move to the second group of pieces and use those to “fill in” the middle of the puzzle.]
5. Provide brief feedback on child’s individual responses:
   - **Correct** response: brief social praise “Good!”
   - **Incorrect** or **No response**: “Keep trying…” (note that an incorrect attempt is usually self-corrected with a puzzle, since the piece will not fit in the wrong space)
6. When child has completed the entire activity (whole puzzle), deliver enthusiastic praise and chosen reinforcer.
7. When recording data, duration of time to complete the puzzle should be noted, as it helps measure the child’s fluency with this activity.
8. When collecting data, **also take note** of the child’s increased development in regard to method: initially, the child often utilizes a “trial and error” approach (trying to fit a piece in various spaces/positions until finding the spot where it fits), but as fluency increases, s/he may increasingly utilize a “look and locate” approach (looking at the piece and at the completed portion of the puzzle, and then visually assessing to see the area it is most likely to fit).

Typical order of Learning Targets:
1. Inset-style puzzles, 1-5 pieces
2. Inset-style puzzles, 6-12 pieces
3. Sorting “straight-edge” and “squiggly-edge” pieces into 2 piles (pre-jigsaw skill)
4. Jigsaw-style (interlocking) puzzles, 1-10 pieces
5. Jigsaw-style (interlocking) puzzles, 11-25 pieces
6. Jigsaw-style (interlocking) puzzles, 26-40 pieces
7. Jigsaw-style (interlocking) puzzles, over 41 pieces