

One Page Resource: Modifying Activities for Children with Disabilities

Many teachers begin the day by offering children fun activities that entice children to play, for example, adding new colors to the easel, mixing water and starch in the sensory table, placing boxes in the dramatic arts center for fort-building. Whatever the activity, children are attracted by the novelty and get to playing by picking up a paintbrush,

touching the goop, or stacking boxes. But what if the child is blind or doesn't use his or her hands to play? Children with unique abilities often play differently than their peers without disabilities. Planning for children with unique abilities in daily activities is called inclusion. Simple modifications to activities can help ALL children be part of the classroom.

Adapted from McCormick, L. & Feeney, S. (1995). Modifying and expanding activities for children with disabilities. *Young Children*, 50(4), 10-17.

blocks

- *Add Sensory Cues*
Experiment with blocks of different textures and colors. Glue sand paper or patterned paper to your unit blocks.



- *Stabilize it*
Use blocks or tiles with magnets or Velcro.
- *Contain it*
Play with blocks on a table. Use a tray.
- *Simplify it*
Use fewer blocks; start a tower for a child.
- *Use an alternative*
Stack bean bags, bottle caps, cups, shoe boxes, sticks, stones, and other natural materials, etc.

dramatic Play

- *Add Sensory Cues*
Add 3D labels on shelves: glue a fork to the drawer that stores the utensils to identify that drawer as the utensils drawer.

- *Stabilize it*
Toy furniture can have large knobs and handles to open. Raise doll cradles and doll houses to usable heights.

- *Contain it*
Use shelf liners to stabilize plates and pots for children to pretend mix.

- *Simplify it*
Keep the organization of the space the same even when you change themes. Designate the area with a different-colored rug. Provide dress up clothes with large head openings and Velcro instead of buttons and zippers.



library

- *Add Sensory Cues*
Books with sounds, textures, and or easy-to-turn pages (tabs).



- *Stabilize it*
Use a block stand, clipboard, or bean bag snake to hold a book open and steady.

- *Simplify it*
Add picture symbols to the page to correspond with the words.

- *Contain it*
Provide a cozy place for reading, a bean bag, rocking chair, or even a small tent – to block out distractions.

- *Use an alternative*
A child can read and listen to stories using CDs or iPads. Record children's stories and comments and play back.

art

- *Add Sensory Cues*
Place a raised or textured background for painting and writing (think of leaf rubbings in the fall or using rubbing plates). Wrap crayons or paintbrush handles with foam or Velcro for a better grip. Add scents to the paint.

- *Stabilize it*
Drawing and painting on vertical surfaces helps kids position their hands more naturally. Use tape to stabilize the paper further or hold in place trays.



- *Simplify it and Contain it*
Work in stages with fewer materials at a time. Paint with bingo markers, squeeze bottles, or other no-spill containers. Use other types of tools to paint, like plungers, combs, strings, nylons. Use spring-assisted scissors.