

## Ways to Adapt Everyday Classroom Materials

### Adapted Pattern Blocks

- Bright Color
- Textured surfaces
- Wooden handles glued on for easier grasping
- Rubber backing minimizes sliding on carpet or table surface

**Alphabet Letters:** These different materials provide sensory input.

- Sandpaper letters
- Sponge letters for painting or at the water table
- Foam letters at the water table
- Large magnet letters in the science area

**Augmentative Communication:** Picture boards, picture cards on key chain or belt loop

### Ball Catcher with Velcro Handle

- Koosh® ball sticks to glove
- Supports a child with motor delays
- Velcro strap helps child who has difficulty holding on to things

### Ball (Textured)

This ball is easier to catch when child also wears a mitten or glove.

### Blocks with Velcro

These create opportunity for success if a child has weak visual-motor or fine motor skills. Blocks stick and stack and stay that way!

### Books that Reflect Disabilities

This gives that message “I belong here.”

- Include disability specific books that talk about a disability.
- Be sure to include books where the child is a character in the story, but the content is NOT about the disability. Woodbine Publishers has a great series about a boy named Russ with Down’s syndrome. He goes to the firehouse and other places just like any other child.

### Border Frames (Textured)

These frames help children focus on a specific area and provide tactile cues for the edges of the paper.

- Place around piece of paper – especially for children who have visual impairments.

### Braille Blocks

The blocks can support learning the Braille alphabet and offer tactile feedback for children with visual impairments. These materials also give the message that “I belong.”

### Chalk Stompers and Sidewalk Chalk

These tools support a child with motor delays.

- Sidewalk chalk is large and maybe easier to grasp

- Stompers can be attached to hands or feet

### **Choice Board**

Using real objects on the board can help children understand the choices they are making.

### **Classroom Area Picture Board**

The picture board is helpful to children who have difficulty getting from one area to another.

- Children can point to pictures to indicate their choices.
- Matching card(s) can be given to a child to carry to a wall pocket in another classroom area.

### **Communication Book**

This book helps children communicate who may not yet be talking.

- Use real pictures or drawing.
- Include pictures from home and school.

### **Crayola Twistables**

Use with a child who has difficulty grasping and holding onto a small crayon.

### **Flashlight**

If used as a pointer, a flashlight helps children focus. In addition, it provides a light source when used with color paddles for children with vision impairments, or for children who need help with focusing.

### **Floor Puzzle (Large)**

The size can help active children who like to spread out and who may work better on the floor with a larger space.

### **Foam Blocks**

These light blocks can be used for a child who doesn't have muscle strength. If you wet them they stick together easier and make it harder for them to be knocked down.

### **Glitter Glue/Crayons**

These add visual contrast/highlights and tactile cues. Tip: If the glitter starts to flake, replace it.

### **Gloves (Textured) from Lakeshore® Learning Materials**

These gloves support a child who is tactile defensive and doesn't like to touch things that have a different texture. They can be used with paint, play dough, etc.

### **Glue in a Pump Bottle**

The pump can help a child who has difficulty controlling the amount and supports a child with motor challenges such as weak muscle tone.

### **Handles**

Handles offer a way to support children who have difficulty grasping things.

Adding handles can help children with cookie cutters/play dough, painting, and puzzles.

### **“Hey Diddle Diddle” Story Box or Velcro Apron**

- Concrete objects for children to manipulate on their own while singing songs or finger plays
- Can also use with the whole group

- Good for children who have difficulty grasping
- Children can wear glove or apron and access manipulative pieces

### **“The Hungry Caterpillar” Book by Eric Carle**

- Holes - tactile cue for counting
- High visual contrasts - brightly colored picture on white background
- Cardboard pages = easier to turn pages

### **Knobbed Crayons & Crayola Twistables**

Knobbed crayons are easier for some children to hold, especially those who use a barrel grasp.

### **Lap Tray**

- Helps define a work space
- Can be used with a child in a wheelchair if they cannot get to shelf or table
- Bean bag bottom helps stabilize the tray

### **Memo Mate or a Digital Recorder**

- Record message and use it to help child in transitions.
- Change the message as desired.
- Other children can record the message and play it for the child who needs the extra prompts.
- For a child with no language, a simple message can be recorded for them and they can play the message. For example: Record “do you want to play?” which they can then play when entering play that is already happening.

### **Nesting Cups**

This infant toddler toy could be used in preschool sand & water table.

- Each cup is visually different.
- Rubber ridge makes it easier to hold.

### **Object Schedule Box**

The object schedule box may help individual child with the transitions during daily routines.

- Use real or near real objects.
- Glue objects, use Velcro or leave unattached.

### **Page Turners (for children who have difficulty turning the page)**

- Attach tabs to the edge of pages (number or alternate colors).
- Place one paper clip on each page of the book and use a magnet to assist in turning the page. (Space out the placement of the clips to make sure you turn one page at a time.)
- Self-adhesive, vinyl dots - Place dots in the upper right corner of each page. Child can easily grasp the dot. Note: dots can be found in most hardware stores in various sizes. Replace if they become loose.
- Craft Sticks- Glue colored craft sticks (large or small) in alternating patterns to paper.
- Additional tip: Place Velcro on back of book so when book is placed on carpet it keeps it from sliding.

### **Pattern Blocks with Knobs (Large)**

- Knobs make it easier to grasp.

- Large size may be easier to move and see.

### **Peg (Large)**

- Easier to grasp
- Can be stacked into one another

### **Photographic Daily Routine**

These can help children remember daily routines (e.g. hand washing). With Velcro added, routines can be changed and will still allow children to follow it. This is helpful for children who have difficulty transitioning between activities.

### **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)**

The system is successful for children in Autism Spectrum Disorders or Pervasive Developmental Disorder.

- Use Boardmaker® software to create icons.
- Use for schedules, expressive and receptive vocabulary.

### **Picture Schedule (Large)**

The schedule helps with daily routines, transitions and planning, or making choices.

### **Picture Symbols (Large)**

This is useful for children who are just beginning to communicate or for children with visual impairments who may need communication support and for children who are distractible.

- Print in black/white to support children with visual impairments.
- Provide two symbols to support children making choices.

### **Pipe Wrap**

Pipe wrap provides another way to build up handles for easier grasping for children with fine or gross motor delays.

### **Play Dough Press**

Use the press with a child who has motor difficulty and may not be able to use a rolling pin or other play dough tools.

- Can push on lever and have something happen
- Can help build hand or arm strength

### **Pointers**

Pointers help children focus and participate.

- Glove pointer (can also use Velcro to move finger of glove, as for Sign Language alphabet.)

### **Red Lips**

The lips offer strategies for taking turns to share ideas.

- Children hold lips
- Visual cue to help children identify and remember whose turn it is to talk

### **Rubber Tubing or Pipe Cleaners**

- Use for bead stringing with large beads.

- Materials are easier for child to grasp.
- It does not bend like string.
- Use pipe cleaners which have texture as well

### **Scratch and Sniff Books**

These books enhance reading experiences by tapping into additional senses.

- Check to make sure scents are present.
- Offer children help finding the area to scratch.

CAUTION: Some children may have an allergic reaction to the scents.

### **Shelf Liner**

Place this non-skid surface under a toy or project to provide stability, or for children to sit on. It offers high contrast surface for children to work on.

CAUTION: Some children may be allergic to latex. An alternate is dysom, a foam-like substance which is a commercial product available in medical supply stores/catalogs.

### **Sign Language Poster/Placemat and Puzzle**

These materials send a “you belong here” message to children using sign language.

### **Song Cards**

The song cards can help a child focus their attention.

- Place on floor in front of one student, another student can turn the pages if needed.

### **“Spider on the Floor” Book/Song by Raffi**

This is helpful for children who have visual or attention challenges.

- Place the book version of the song on the floor in front of the child.
- Children can have their own spider and move it along with the story. (The yarn spider is easy to make.)

### **Stamp Markers**

These work successfully for children with up and down arm movements who are not yet scribbling or writing.

- Use with children who may be tactically resistant (do not like touching things or being touched) can wear a mitt and participate.

### **Stick Puppets**

Providing each child a puppet may help them to focus on the activity in a large group. Large format may help children see characters in the story if they have visual impairment.

### **Story Boxes (Homemade)**

Story boxes offer concrete objects for children to manipulate on their own while signing songs or finger plays.

- Can also be used with the whole group
- Can help children to stay engaged who are easily distracted

### **Tongs**

- Use to pick up cotton balls or “puff” balls.

- Children build hand strength.
- Provide practice for using scissors.
- Use as serving tongs at mealtime.

### **Touch and Feel Books**

These books enhance reading experience by tapping into additional senses.

### **Toy Microphone or Tape Recorder**

This has been a successful strategy with children who are reluctant talkers.

- Encourages speaking/language

### **Toys Representing People with Disabilities**

Children need to see people with disabilities reflected in the classroom. It gives the message “I belong here.”

- Block people
- People puzzle

### **Velcro Apron**

The apron increases level of engagement.

- Child can participate in story time by adding characters as the story is told.
- Apron can be worn or placed on floor in front of child.

### **“Wheels on the Bus” book/song**

Helps children focus when they are easily distracted at large group time. Fun and cheap!

- Make individual steering wheels from flexible hosing and black tape
- Place on floor in front of one student and another student can turn the pages if needed.

### **Whisper Phone**

A “whisper phone” encourages children to use language and helps with volume.

### **White Board and Dry Erase Pen**

This is an easy surface to write or draw on for a child with low muscle tone.

Tip: Do not use markers with odors.

### **Writing Tools**

- Bug’s Life® pen has a large handle and talks when you make a mark on paper. This provided additional input for the child.
- Wiggling pen provides additional tactile input and has a large handle for easier grasp.
- Toddler Magna Doodle® by Fisher-Price offers erasable screen to write on with auditory feedback when they make a mark.