



MODIFYING AND ADAPTING TOYS FOR SPECIALLY NEEDED CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Caretakers worry that the children in their programme who have special needs won't be able to connect with and manage toys in a meaningful manner, and this worries many caregivers. Children with disabilities can benefit from this paper's advice on how to make toys and play situations more accessible by making suitable adaptations. Children with special needs may benefit from the study's five suggestions for selecting toys, including using responsive toys and including natural objects as playthings. Toys may be stabilized, extended, attached, and confined by using these ideas. Classroom learning areas for gross and fine motor skills, as well as art and theatrical play, are also discussed. The report says that caregivers can make a learning environment for all children by picking age-appropriate toys, making toys that fit each child's needs, and setting up centers that help them grow.

INTRODUCTION

Cherry, 1976; Cook, Tessier, and Klein, 2004) [2]. To meet this need, reputable daycare facilities provide time in their schedules for children to engage in physical and mental activities such as play. There are a few youngsters with impairments who may not be able to play with toys in a meaningful manner. Because of this fact, many caregivers are concerned about their capacity to offer appropriate play experiences for children with special needs who are part of their programme. Many children with disabilities, on the other hand, will be able to have meaningful play experiences if the toys and the play environment are changed in the right way.

Choosing a Child's Plaything

Toy selection for children with special needs may be made easier by following these five basic tips:

- Responsive toys and materials for children's play (i.e., toys that produce light, movement, or sound when activated by the child).
- Age-appropriate toys and playthings should be used. Toys and materials that are appropriate for typically growing children may aid young children with disabilities.
- Toys and materials should be modified as needed to improve interest and learning.
- Natural objects such as boxes, cooking utensils, and packaging materials should be included in the play materials.
- Toys and play materials should be chosen to encourage the acquisition of key skills (Bailey and Wolery, 1992) [1].

ADAPTIVE TOYS

For children with impairments, it may be important to modify the toys and materials they play with in order to enhance their learning and social relationships. Most modifications deal with concerns about toy stability, toy extension, toy attachment, and toy confinement.

Caregivers shouldn't have to deal with the hassle or expense of making these modifications. It's possible to handle these adjustments using a variety of affordable materials. There are several ways to keep toys from getting out of the child's reach, such as using hoops or a planter base. Toy confinement may also benefit a youngster with poor eyesight, since it helps them regulate their local play space. According to this article, magnetic strips on the toy and a baking sheet on which to rest the toy would be ideal for youngsters who require their toys to "remain in place." Stability is also provided by the use of suction cups, clamps, and Velcro. Toys may be kept in place while being played with by placing a non-slip shelf liner under them. Children with fine motor deficits may benefit from an extension made of wooden spools or knobs attached to puzzle pieces. Children will be able to grab the puzzle piece with less effort thanks to this easy modification. Velcro strips may be attached to a child's wrist in order to keep a toy from falling out. If you have Velcro wristbands, you may attach a tiny musical instrument like a bell to it and have your kid engage in "musical band" activities. Drum sticks and other mallets may have their handles made from the spongy area of a foam hair roller. Adapting toys for young children with impairments is made easier with the help of Let's Play, a University of Buffalo initiative. The following are some of the materials:

Stabilization	Static dissipative materials such as suction cups, grip liners, and Velcro
Increasing/Expanding/Building	Foam padding and/or commercial Plasticine or modelling clay. Popsicle sticks.
Attaching	Links, snaps on fabric tape, elastic straps, and/or magic shoelaces may be obtained from Discovery Toys or Right Start.
Confining	Planter bases, box tops, and hula hoops

Before making changes to toys, parents and other caregivers should keep in mind that the best toys for children are those that focus on the abilities and interests of the children themselves (Exceptional Parent, 1993) [5]. Special consideration should be given to the needs of children with special needs.

For kids with special needs, commercially made and cheap toys can be very useful. These toys may already be in the daycare center's possession, so they don't need to be modified. Sassy, Inc., for example, sells a Ring Wing Rattle for Rs. 400/-. Using this toy, children are encouraged to reach out and grab, as well as develop their visual perception. Childcare providers may offer toys and materials that are more enticing to children with disabilities. If you don't have a caring adult around to play with and care for your toy, it won't be very useful.

ADAPTION EDUCATIONAL CENTERS

In most schools, activities in learning centres are the primary method of instruction for young students. Children with impairments may enhance their physical development by engaging in gross motor exercises. Generally speaking, children with impairments can more easily handle big, durable toys than tiny, fragile ones. The youngster will find it simpler to make use of bigger balls with less bounce in the gross motor area. Beanbags and huge rough balls are also good options for alternative materials [4]. After the child has mastered rolling and catching the larger balls, smaller balls may be introduced. As the youngster becomes used to playing with smaller balls, a Velcro-enclosed ball and glove combo is more convenient for him to use. When a kid has particular requirements, the target might be expanded and placed closer. You may acquire devices like rocking horses, scooter boards, ball pits, and other such things to assist youngsters with disabilities in strengthening their gross motor skills. Tricycles may be modified by adding blocks to the pedals and strapping inner tube portions to the pedals. Children who have physical problems might be able to use swings with back seats to get extra help.

When working in the fine motor area, it's vital to apply the methods outlined previously to stabilise and contain materials (shelf liner with non-slip backing, cookie sheet, magnetic strips, Velcro). Masking tape or pipe cleaners may be used instead of thread to make beads more manageable for youngsters. Neon colours may be used to paint the inset board for each component of an inset puzzle. If their children are hesitant to touch materials such as play dough or clay, parents may place them in a Zip Lock bag for them. Children with fine

motor impairments may stack empty tuna cans instead of one-inch cubes. Children with motor weakness benefit from the use of hand-strengthening tools such as clothespins. Wheelchair-accessible sand and water tables are needed. Children who need more support may benefit from using a tub or a play area with water and associated items.

It's possible to encourage youngsters with motor difficulties to build structures horizontally or against a wall while using block construction materials. It is possible to provide the kid with a predetermined number of blocks in a container should it be difficult for the youngster to remove the blocks from the shelf. Putting the blocks on a lower shelf might make it simpler for the toddler to reach them. In the block area, children with impairments may find bristle blocks, Legos, and giant cardboard blocks.

Spongy foam hair rollers may be used as a substitute for paintbrushes and markers for children with special needs in the art room [3]. Sand, for example, may be added to paint to give it a different scent or texture. Children with cognitive or vision issues benefit from the higher visual contrast provided by high-contrast colours. Muscle-weak individuals may benefit from the use of little scissors or loop scissors [6]. For example, glue can be used to make shapes for colouring or cutting, which makes it hard for the child to touch them.

Children's social and linguistic development may be greatly facilitated by the use of the dramatic play space. The ability to dress up, use props, and interact with each other in front of a mirror is an important part of encouraging youngsters to use their creativity. Children with disabilities benefit from closures that include large buttons or Velcro. To keep children who have short attention spans from being distracted, sheeting can be hung from the ceiling to separate the dramatic play area from the rest of the room.

A list of center-specific adaptations and resources is provided below:

Center	Adaptation	Helpful Toys
Theatrical Act	Clothes with big Velcro and button fasteners are prohibited in dramatic play areas.	Playthings include costumes, accessories, a mirror, a phone, shoes, and a pocketbook.
Artistic	Brushes and crayons have handles built into them. Perfume and texture may be added to paint. Paper is taped to the easel vertically. Draw the figurines with glue.	Small scissors, loop scissors, tear art, finger paints, straws, sand paper, an easel, glue sticks, and high contrast colours are some of the tools you'll need.
Gross Motor	Velcro-adjustable ball and glove Pedals with straps and blocks Expanded scopes Seatback swings.	Beanbags, waggons, scooter boards, ball pits, tunnels, and rocking horses all come in various sizes and textures.
Blocks Building	Erect buildings on a horizontal plane Build up to a retaining wall. Sustaining	Legos, Bristle Blocks, Large Cardboard Blocks, Human Figures, Cars, Trucks, and

	substance.	Other Toys.
Fine Motor	Materials for ensuring stability Confined substances Beading stringing using pipe cleaners. Play dough in a zip-top bag.	Pins for clothes Toys and sand are available at the sand table a water table and a variety of other fun items Puzzles.

CONCLUSION

Caregivers should not have to struggle to provide high-quality play experiences for children with disabilities in the typical daycare setting. By choosing suitable toys, customizing toys to meet the requirements of children, and developing centers that encourage growth, caregivers may create a learning environment for all children. This should be a win-win scenario for the instructor, the center, and the students.

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