

## Recreation Program Adaptation Ideas and Suggestions

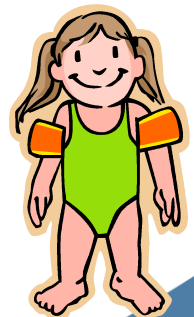
### Adaptations for General Activities:

- Substitute walking, wheeling a wheelchair or rolling for skipping or running.
- Use a bounce, a roll or an underhand toss to replace overhand throwing.
- Substitute sitting down, kneeling or lying down for standing.
- Decrease distances for throwing.
- Allow the child to hit a ball any number of times.
- Permit other people to run for the child.
- Reduce the number of points needed.
- Substitute different body positions.
- Substitute slower movements for faster ones.
- Provide more frequent rest periods.
- Use lighter and more easily-controlled equipment, such as plastic bats, nerf or beach balls, balloons, bean bags or rings instead of a harder plastic ball.
- Attach a string to the ball so that it can be more easily retrieved.
- Use a t-ball stand in baseball.
- Lower the basketball net or hang hula hoop from the net for lower targets.
- Use a larger target (e.g. garbage can instead of a basketball net).
- Use larger racquets.



### Adaptations for Pool or Sun Activities:

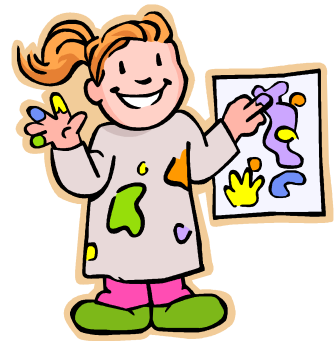
- Keep empty wheelchairs, walkers or cushions in the shade as they are notorious for soaking up the sun and becoming extremely warm.
- Use neck-supporting life jackets, especially for those who are prone to any kind of seizures or have difficulty holding their heads.
- If a child uses an assistive communication device, explain what you are going to do well beforehand and allow time for questions and/or clarification.



- Watch how long a child, who has limited mobility or who are thin, stay in the water as they may become cold more quickly.
- Have a variety of flotation devices (e.g. a large floating pad, pool noodle, puddle jumper, lifejackets, etc.) so that the child who is not able or does not feel comfortable swimming is able to “hang out” and play in the water.

## Adaptations for Arts & Crafts:

- Use “open-ended” materials and projects, so that there is not a right or wrong way to complete the project.
- Use big, thick crayons, marker, paint brushes, etc.
- Attach the crayon or pencil to the individual’s hand with a ribbon or cloth.
- Use straws, fingers, sponges, etc., instead of paintbrushes.
- Use scissors with big handles or spring-leaded handles.
- Use glue sticks rather than bottles.
- Tear, rather than cut, paper.
- Use “touchy-feely” supplies (e.g. felt, wool, pine cones, macaroni, etc.).
- Make things that make sounds (e.g. shakers).
- Use textured paint (with sand or sugar).
- Do creative modeling with Playdoh or plasticine.
- Tape paper down when painting or use a C-clamp.
- Secure paint tins in plasticine so that they are not easily knocked over.
- Use plasticine or Styrofoam around a paintbrush or pencil to create a grip.
- Lower the table or working surface.
- Have raised edges around working surfaces so that it is more difficult to drop little pieces on the floor.



### Adaptations for Music:

- Allow for differing levels of skill by planning a variety of musical activities.
- Consider adding use of musical instruments if singing is difficult for a child.
- Consider using house hold items, such as pot and pans for percussion instruments.
- Sing action songs to encourage the child to move.



### Do It Yourself:

#### Making Your Own Adaptive Equipment

##### Bean Bags

- Cover using a variety of materials that have different textures, like cloth, canvas, vinyl, leather, etc.
- Fill using popcorn kernels, dried beans and peas, rocks, foam pellets, birdseed, sand, rice, etc.
- Bean bags are great for throw/catch and target games.
- Use bean bags to modify various tag games (e.g. tag by touch or bean bag toss).



##### Streamer Balls

- Use a spongy ball or a stress ball from the Dollar Store. Thread ribbons or streamers through the ball.

##### Parachute

- Parachutes can be very expensive – try using a large colorful sheet as an alternative.
- Attach two sheets together to make a larger parachute.
- Attach straps or cut holes on the edges of the sheet to help with grip.

### Coat Hanger-Stocking Rackets

- To create a stocking racket: bend the hanger into a racket/paddle shape, bend the hook to form a loop for a handle, pull the stocking over the large racket/paddle end and tie it at the handle, stretch the racket wide in order to make the striking surface larger and tighter.
- Stocking rackets are great to use for hitting balloons or light weight balls (e.g. foam) during a game.



### Foam Frisbees

- Simply purchase 1" thick foam and cut into various sizes of circles.
- You can also spray paint the foam to make them colourful!

### Homemade Fox Tails

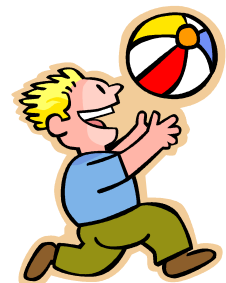
- Foxtails add versatility to regular tennis balls. They can be thrown and caught using the ball or the tail.
- To create a Foxtail: use single-legged pantyhose or long stockings (can be bought in a variety of bright colours), stuff the pantyhose/stocking with a tennis ball or with bean bags, tie a knot at the end of the ball or bean bags to secure them so they won't fall out.

### Plastic Strainer with Handle

- This is a great lightweight tool to assist with throwing and catching!

### Homemade Beeper Balls

- To create a beeper ball: cut open a foam ball, insert bells or other noise makers, reseal using sport tape or a bicycle tire patch.



### Carpet Pieces

- Can use different colours and cut in various shapes and sizes.
- Used to modify bases in softball (e.g. can create larger bases, use bright colours that are easier to see, etc.) Also, carpet bases are thinner than regular bases – easier for people in wheelchairs or for individuals with balance issues.
- Carpet pieces can be used as boundary markers or as part of an obstacle course.

### Empty Plastic Pop Bottles

- They come in a variety of sizes.
- Can be used for area markers, bowling pins, etc.
- You can add sand or stones to the bottles to increase their weight if necessary.



### Scarves

- Come in a variety of colours, sizes and textures.
- Make your own out of bandanas, neckties, large ribbon, handkerchiefs, etc.
- Can be used for signaling flags.

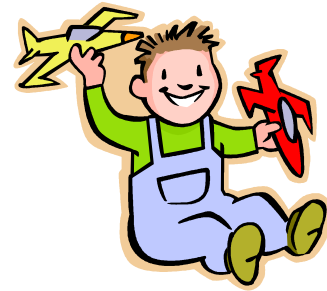
## General Toy & Play Material Adaptations

### Making toys easier to grasp!

- Add a knob, such as a spool, large bead or drawer pull, to a puzzle piece or wind up toy.
- Attach a ring, such as a bracelet or metal ring.

## Making the toy more intriguing!

- Grouping toys together suggests a play theme. Arranging an airplane puzzle next to toy airplanes help individuals make play connections and may spark the child's imagination.
- Add a surprise element. Familiar toys may be rejuvenated by adding a sensory experience (e.g. putting a scent on a stuffed animal).



## Add extra sensory input!

- Add new texture with Velcro dots to blocks or with a piece of material with an unusual texture, sponges to water play or sand to finger paint.
- Vary temperature with a warm stuffed animal or warm water for water play.
- Increase visual contrast use paint or a marker to make a hole where a puzzle piece fits darker, paint the two different parts of a snap a different colours or ensure that the colour of a piece of paper is a different colour then the work surface.
- Add food extract (e.g. vanilla or peppermint) to encourage individual to use toys differently due to the colour and smell.

## Promote independent play!

- Store toys where a child may easily get to them without help (e.g., on lower shelves, open containers)
- Secure toys near the child (e.g. wrist rattles, a ball hung from the ceiling, toys attached by plastic links to a stroller, wheelchair or walker). Toys should not be secured near a child any longer than they are interested in playing with them or they may become annoyed and frustrated rather than playful.

### Adaptation Tips for Individuals Who have...

#### Visual Impairments:

- Outline a work area (e.g. paper) with a black pencil or marker.
- Use a beeping target or beeper ball or a ball with a bell(s) in it like a goal ball.
- Be aware of what time of day it is and therefore how much light there is.
- Avoid participating in an activity that involves complicated colours.
- Always explain to the individual where you are if you have to leave them alone and give them the option to lean against something or hang on to something.

#### Mobility Challenges:

- Try to limit the distance from one point of the activity to the other and measure time rather than distance in the activity.
- Be aware of the terrain of where the activity is taking place – try to incorporate the use of a flatter, more “user-friendly” terrain.
- Make sure that whoever is supporting the individual is properly trained in lifts and transfer training.

#### Developmental Disabilities:

- Speak to the individual directly, facing them, not to a support person.
- Call the individual by name and stand close to them in order to gain their full attention before giving instructions.
- Make directions short, clear and concise.
- Make sure the individual understands the directions before beginning the activity.
- Repeat the directions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.
- Allow time for the individual to respond.
- Allow additional time to complete the activity.
- Provide visual information, such as pictures, props or gestures, to assist the individual in better understanding the activity or expectations.
- Give lots of advance warning of transitions from one activity or location to another.
- Be generous with praise and encouragement.
- Recognize and utilize individual strengths





## Emotional Challenges:

- Provide great amounts of positive reinforcement.
- Arrange for activities that are short in length.
- Plan for easy-to-succeed activities to avoid the individual becoming frustrated.
- Challenge skill level with activity level appropriately to build resilience.
- Provide opportunities to learn healthy ways to express emotions.
- Support in developing emotional awareness and emotional regulation skills.

