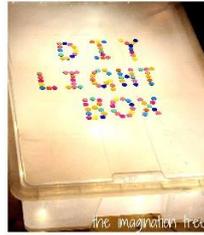


At home Multi-Sensory activities for Visually Impaired Learners/ Sensory Learners

- Visual stimulation activities – Exploring lights and light up toys in a dark room or under a piece of material or tent, or even in a large cardboard box. Use any light up objects you have, use lights and torches shining through different coloured materials and paper to change the experience, use Christmas lights! You can make your own lightbox by putting a set of fairy lights in a clear plastic box. Explore light reflective and shiny objects and brightly coloured and fluorescent objects.



- Tactile and sensory play – Exploring different materials and textures. You can use large pieces of material, small scraps of material, different types of paper, wrapping paper, foil. Also use materials which make interesting sounds – bubble wrap, foil, crinkly paper, make diy shakers from containers and rice, lentils, pasta etc.
- Exploring containers - It can be fun to put materials and objects in different containers, encouraging your child to explore and find items. You can use boxes, bags, screw top containers, zipped bags, anything you have – encourage your child to explore and try to open the containers if this is appropriate. For larger container play, put objects in large boxes or buckets so children can explore, empty and refill.
- Heuristic play/ treasure baskets – Playing with real household objects made of materials such as wood and metal, or any safe household objects, e.g. brushes, scourers, kitchen items. You could also include things like ribbons and fabric scraps. Also playing with natural objects like twigs, fir cones etc if you have access to things like that. The aim of heuristic play is exploring real objects more natural materials instead of only plastic toys. Always consider the safety of anything you are using.



- Messy play – There are lots of messy play ideas. For safety, if you think your child is likely to explore using their mouth, it is better to use food based messy play. Examples are jelly, porridge (dry and wet), pasta (dry and wet), dry lentils/ beans etc. You can use cups, spoons etc for scooping and pouring with dry messy play. You can also colour rice and pasta using food colouring. You can make gluck or gloop by mixing cornflour with a small amount of water.

If you would like alternatives to play doh and kinetic sand, these can be made from food ingredients – there are lots of recipes online for play doh and cloud dough (which feels just like kinetic sand and takes no time to make). Some cloud dough recipes use baby oil, but any vegetable oil, olive oil etc works just as well.



- Baking and cooking – These activities can also be used as messy play activities, children can have time to explore and play with the ingredients before helping to cook with them.

- Water play – Water play can be simply exploring the water, using containers in the water, adding items to the water to find, e.g. small toys. You can add bubble bath solution or food colouring. Ice play is also fun. You can freeze toys within ice for children to find.
- Sensory stories – This doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as adding a few sensory experiences and toys to a story. For example, exploring things like water, ice, sand, stones, reading the story under a blanket if it's night time in the story, hot and cold such as a hot water bottle for the sun, a water spray for rain, a fan for the wind. You can make sounds from the story, and if you have access to a switch you can record sounds which your child can then contribute to the story. If there are animals in the story you can use cuddly toys or puppets, or materials which feel like those animals, for example a soft cosy blanket for a bear, feathers for birds etc.
- Relaxation/ massage – All you need is some relaxing music and some lotion or cream. Hand massage is very relaxing and combined with music and dimmed lights this can help bring some calm to your day. If you have access to Spotify or other similar music streaming services it's easy to find relaxing and chilled music or sounds.
- Environmental awareness – If you are able to get outside, take time to listen and talk about all the sounds you hear, talk about smells around you, help children to explore outdoor objects and natural objects through touch where appropriate, and talk about the weather and the temperature and what it feels like.

There are lots of ideas online:

- Pinterest has lots of ideas for all types of sensory play and messy play, it also has ideas for supporting visually impaired children. www.pinterest.com (You can also download the pinterest app to your smartphone or tablet – it's free to join and you can save all your favourite ideas) You will also find links to other sites through pinterest.
- The Imagination Tree has lots of ideas, some of which will also be on pinterest www.theimaginationtree.com

These are probably the best places for multi-sensory activities but there are loads more sites – just search sensory play ideas, multi-sensory play etc and you'll find lots more!

Apps for visually impaired children

I've attached a couple of articles listing relevant apps but if you search the Apple app store or the Google Play store there will be other apps available.

<http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/apps-for-children-who-are-visually-impaired> (This is an American list for Ipad apps but most of the apps are available in the UK too)

<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/technology/20-great-android-apps-kids-cvi-or-low-vision> (Apps available on the Google Play store for android devices)