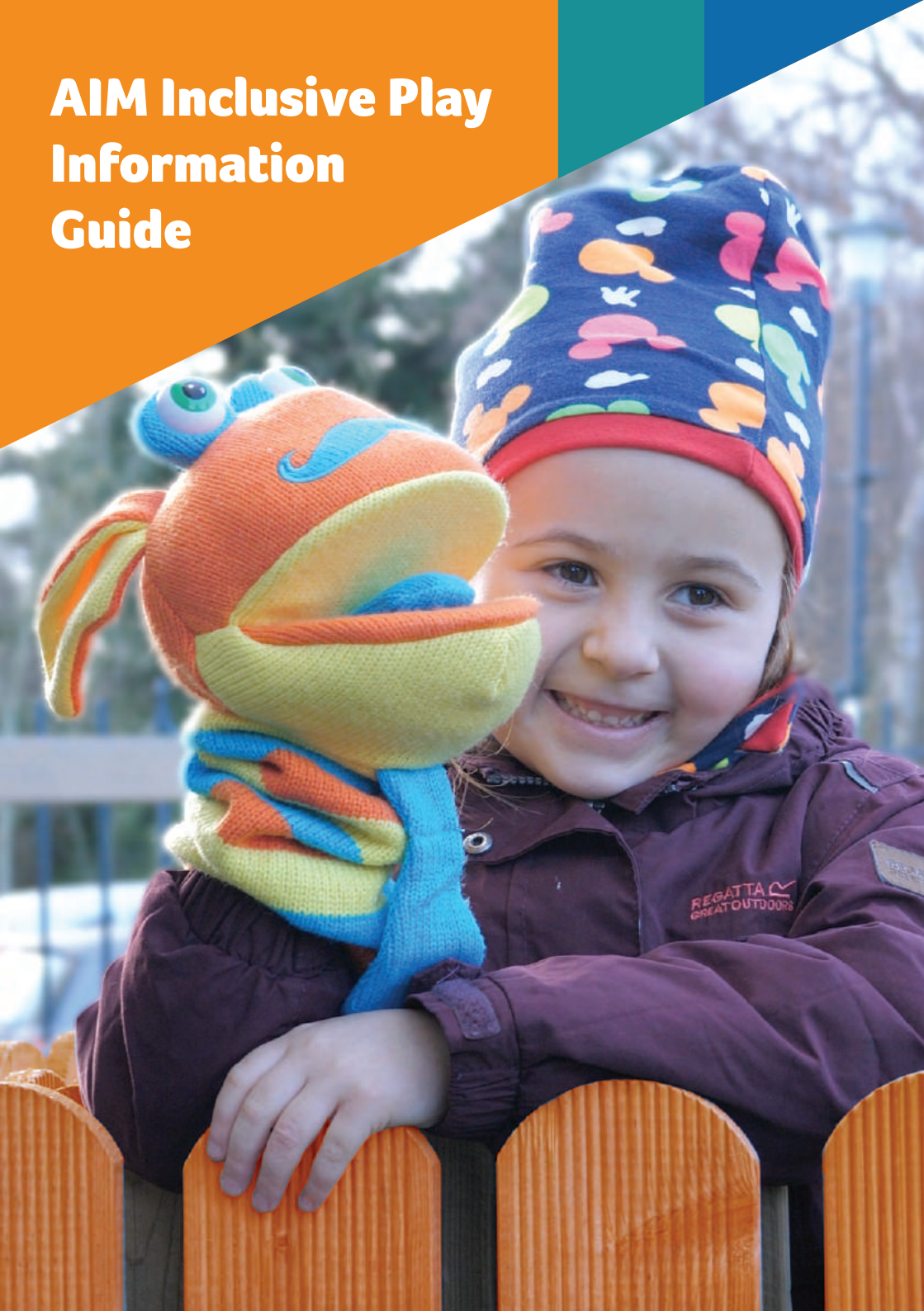


# AIM Inclusive Play Information Guide



# AIM Inclusive Play

## What's in AIM Inclusive Play?

All Kinds of Feelings/All Kinds of People

Audible Soft Foam Ball

AIM Early Years 'My Day' Fan

Creating Sensory Play/Hey, Children on the Autism Spectrum Play Too!

Dancing Ribbons

Dark Den Cube/Pop Up Dark Den

Disc 'o' Sit/Movin Sit Junior

Emotions Poster

Grimms House/Grimms Rainbow

Jumbo Tweezers

Kinetic Sand

Laptop Tray

Massage Set

Recordable Answer Buzzer

Large and Mini Sand Timers

Sockette Puppet

See Me Sensory Ball

Sensory Bubble Hourglass

Sensory Light Reflective Blanket

Warmie Weighted Sensory Friend

Traffic Light Fan

Tactile Ball

Teeter Popper

Therapy Putty

Strobe Bar

Time Timer

Squigz



## Welcome to AIM Inclusive Play.

AIM Inclusive Play is the latest addition to the suite of supports provided under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

AIM Inclusive Play is a set of sensory and educational play resources to support inclusive practice within pre-school settings. This guide supports the appropriate and effective use of these resources.

I am very excited to be able to provide these wonderful resources to your pre-school room. The resources have been carefully chosen, with the help of Learning SPACE (Specialised Products Aiding Child Education), to support all children, regardless of ability, within the learning environment.

I do hope these resources support the wonderful work you do with the children in your pre-school room and that you and the children enjoy exploring these resources together.

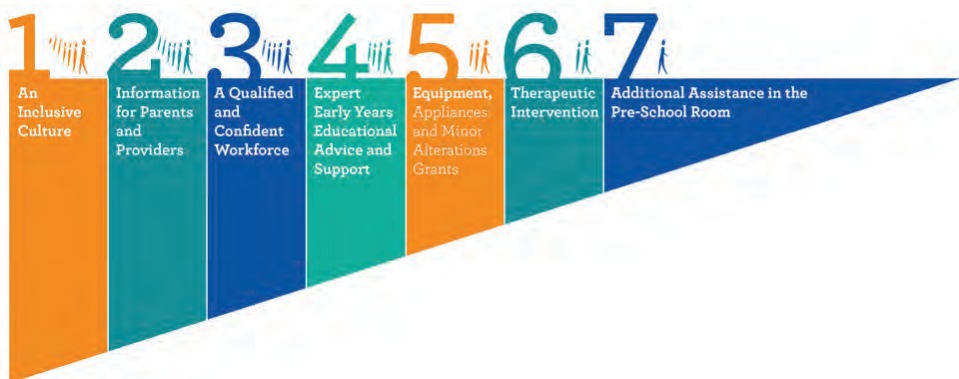
*Dr Katherine Zappone*

*Minister for Children  
and Youth Affairs*

# About AIM

AIM supports children with a disability to access and meaningfully participate in free pre-school education provided under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Its goal is to support pre-school providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience for children and families.

AIM is a child-centred model, comprising of seven levels of progressive support, moving from the universal to the targeted, based on the needs and strengths of the child and the pre-school setting.



**Level 1** seeks to strengthen and embed an inclusive culture in pre-school settings. This level includes a National Inclusion Charter underpinned by updated and strengthened Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines and a nationwide training programme for pre-school practitioners. A new higher education programme, Leadership for Inclusion for Early Years (LINC), has also been developed and graduates from this Programme are trained to take on the role of Inclusion Coordinator in their pre-school setting.

**Level 2** seeks to ensure information on pre-school services and supports for parents and practitioners is accessible, clear, consistent and up to date (see [www.aim.gov.ie](http://www.aim.gov.ie)).

**Level 3** seeks to further develop a qualified and confident workforce through a multi-annual training programme for pre-school practitioners, including Lámh training, sensory integration training and the Hanen Programme for Early Childhood Educators.

**Level 4** provides access to early years educational advice and support from a team of dedicated Early Years Specialists.

**Level 5** provides access to equipment, appliances and minor alterations grants for pre-school settings.

**Level 6** provides access to therapeutic intervention where this is critical to enable the child to be enrolled, and fully participate, in the ECCE Programme.

**Level 7** provides additional assistance in the pre-school room where this is critical to ensuring a child's participation in the ECCE Programme; this additional capitation can be used to:

- a) Reduce the adult to child ratio in the pre-school room by enrolling less children without financial loss to the pre-school setting; or

b) Increase the adult ratio in the pre-school room by buying in additional assistance.

The implementation and oversight of AIM is led by a Cross-Sectoral Implementation Group and Project Team, which are chaired by Department of Children and Youth Affairs and includes senior officials from the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health.

It also includes representatives from the Health Service Executive, the National Early Years Inspectorate at the Child and Family Agency, the National Council for Special Education, the National Disability Authority, Better Start National Early Years Quality Development, Early Childhood Ireland, Childcare Committees Ireland, Pobal and a parent representative.



# About AIM Inclusive Play

AIM Inclusive Play is the latest addition to the suite of AIM Supports.

AIM Inclusive Play is a set of resources to support inclusive practice within pre-school settings. These resources, which include equipment, toys and materials, also support the development of coordination and audio, visual and tactile skills among all children, and in particular, children with a disability.

All pre-school rooms delivering the ECCE Programme across more than 4,000 pre-school settings nationally will receive these resources.

AIM Inclusive Play offers the potential to support the implementation of all levels of AIM.

Many elements of Síolta and Aistear can also be supported by effective use of these resources.

More broadly, AIM Inclusive Play reinforces an important message – that children’s play is a vital ingredient of childhood, essential for both growth and learning and an integral element of high quality pre-school provision.

## CONNECTIONS WITH LEVELS OF AIM SUPPORT

- AIM Inclusive Play further strengthens efforts to embed **an inclusive culture (AIM Level 1)** within pre-school settings. The resources benefit all children and not just children with a disability. They also encourage cooperative play.

- AIM Inclusive Play includes a range of useful **information for parents and practitioners (AIM Level 2)**, including guides on how to use the resources and information on skills that these resources develop.
- AIM Inclusive Play seeks to further develop a **qualified and confident workforce (AIM Level 3)**. A hard copy and online guide will build capacity among pre-school practitioners on the appropriate and effective use of these resources. Early Years Specialists will provide additional support and guidance to the pre-school settings they are working with in relation to these resources.
- AIM Inclusive Play will enhance **early years educational advice and support (AIM Level 4)** provided by Early Years Specialists. Early Years Specialists will have access to these and other resources for demonstration purposes during mentoring visits to pre-school settings.
- AIM Inclusive Play includes specialised equipment, which was originally only provided to pre-school settings under the **equipment, appliances and minor alterations grants scheme (AIM Level 5)**. Now **all** pre-school settings will have access to these resources.
- AIM Inclusive Play includes equipment and materials routinely used by therapists when providing **therapeutic intervention** to children under **AIM Level 6**.



AIM Inclusive Play includes a guide on how to use the resources. A selection of activities is also suggested. This is just a starting point.

The potential uses of the resources are far reaching. Pre-school practitioners are encouraged to engage with and reflect on how these resources can be best used with children in their own setting.

It is also hoped that AIM Inclusive Play provides the catalyst for pre-school practitioners to develop their own resources for the children enrolled in their settings.



# Connections With Síolta And Aistear

Síolta is the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and is applicable to different types of settings working with children from birth to six years in Ireland. Síolta covers all aspects of practice and its purpose is to improve the overall quality of early childhood settings for children and families. There are twelve underpinning Síolta principles and sixteen inter-connected standards of practice.

Aistear is the National Early Childhood Curriculum Framework for children from birth to six years in Ireland. It supports adults (parents and early childhood practitioners) to develop and enrich learning experiences for all young children. Aistear comprises of 12 principles and 4 themes (Well-Being, Identity and Belonging, Communicating, Exploring and Thinking).

In 2015, the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide was developed to support practitioners to use both Síolta and Aistear together to develop the quality of their curriculum and in doing so, better support children's learning and development. The website ([www.aistearsiolta.ie](http://www.aistearsiolta.ie)) is regularly updated and provides self-evaluation and action-planning tools, tip sheets, templates and videos to enable practitioners to reflect on and improve their practice.

Síolta and Aistear underpin the work of Early Years Mentors who provide support to early years settings nationally to implement both frameworks. This includes the Early Years Specialists from the Better Start Quality Development Service and Síolta Aistear Mentors who provide support as part of the National Síolta Aistear Initiative.

It is a requirement for pre-school settings receiving funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to deliver the ECCE Programme to implement the principles of both Síolta and Aistear.

The Early Years Education Focused Inspections undertaken by the Inspectorate at the Department of Education and Skills are based on a quality framework that is informed by the principles of Síolta and Aistear.

**Active Learning**

**Equality and Diversity**

**Relationships**

**Environments**

**Welfare**

**Parents**

**Principles**

**Teamwork**

**Pedagogy**

**Role of the Adult**

**Children First**

**Play**

**Communication and Language**

There are many elements of Síolta and Aistear which can be supported by effective use of AIM Inclusive Play. For example:

The AIM Early Years ‘My Day’ Fan supports **Síolta Standard 1 “Rights of the Child”** ‘Ensuring that each child’s rights are met requires that she or he is enabled to exercise choice and to use initiative as an active participant and partner in her or his own development and learning’ (see below).

#### **Opportunities for children to have choices and make decisions:**

- Providing individualised care for each child
- Supporting each child’s participation in group activities
- Ensuring the child is a partner in her or his own learning

“All Kinds of People” supports the **Aistear Theme “Identity and Belonging”**  
Aim 1: Children will develop strong self-identities and will feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories (see below).

#### **In partnership with the adult, children will:**

- Appreciate the features that make a person special and unique
- Understand that as individuals they are separate from others and have their own needs, interests and abilities
- Feel valued themselves and see themselves and their interests reflected in the environment

# Guidance for Practitioners

This guide describes each resource included in AIM Inclusive Play, outlines some of the possible key areas of learning supported by using the resources and suggests some starting points on how you may use these resources with children in your pre-school setting.

Whilst the suggested activities offer some ideas, you can of course adapt them, following the interests of individual children. A series of prompt questions are provided that may help you to reflect on how to make best use of these resources in the context of your setting.

**Consultation with the children and parents is an essential starting point. Where relevant, goals set by a child's therapist or outlined in the child's Access and Inclusion Plan should be considered. Based on this information, practitioners can decide how the resource may or may not be of benefit to different children depending on individual needs, learning styles and dispositions.**

The purpose of the prompt questions is to support you in pedagogical planning and reflections before, during and after using the resources. Select the questions of most relevance to your needs and context.

## **Considerations when planning to introduce a resource:**

- Is there anything else I need know about the resource before using it and who can help me learn more about it?
- How and when might I introduce the resource?
- How might I use the resource to extend or scaffold children's interests and learning?
- Are there any risks to children in introducing the resource and how can they be avoided?

### **Considerations when using a resource:**

- How might the resource meet the individual needs of groups of children in the setting (think about the child's interests and development goals)?
- What play opportunities can be supported by the resource?
- How does the resource link with Síolta and Aistear?

### **Observing children's use of and response to the resource:**

- How did the child/children respond to the resource/activity, how did they use the resource?
- What, if anything, was surprising or unexpected for the child/children when using the resource?

### **Planning for follow-up use of the resource:**

Based on my observations and discussion with staff/parents:

- How might I plan further activities to support children's interests, abilities and varying developmental levels?
- How can I provide further opportunities for and extend the current learning for children?
- How does the resource complement the curriculum content being provided?

### **Sharing ideas about the resource with parents:**

- How can I help parents to learn more about their children's interests and activities in the setting and to share their knowledge with us?
- How can I support parents to extend child/children experiences at home?

All resources in AIM Inclusive Play come with a one-year warranty. If a resource is faulty, please contact Learning SPACE (see contact details below). Learning SPACE will replace faulty resources under warranty where a fault arises due to a manufacturers' defect. Please note this warranty does not cover natural wear and tear, accidental damage, or negligence.

For each resource, please note the manufacturer's age recommendations and restrictions and other guidance on the intended use of the resource. Please also observe the need for adult supervision, as appropriate.

Email: [info@learningspaceuk.co.uk](mailto:info@learningspaceuk.co.uk)  
Web support: [www.learningspace.ie](http://www.learningspace.ie)  
Phone: 048 90319360





If you would like to receive a copy of the AIM Inclusive Play Guide in Irish, please contact us at [aim@dcya.gov.ie](mailto:aim@dcya.gov.ie)

For more resources and videos visit: [www.aim.gov.ie](http://www.aim.gov.ie) and click AIM Inclusive Play.

### **Contact**

Tel: +353 1 647 3000

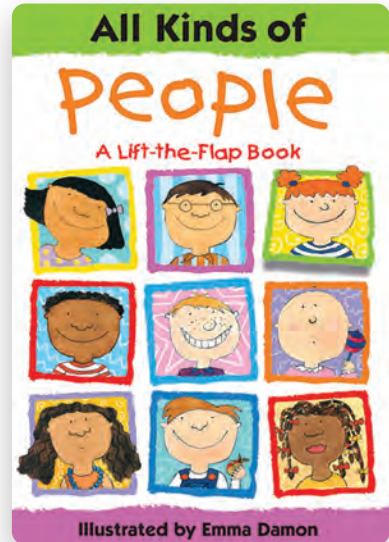
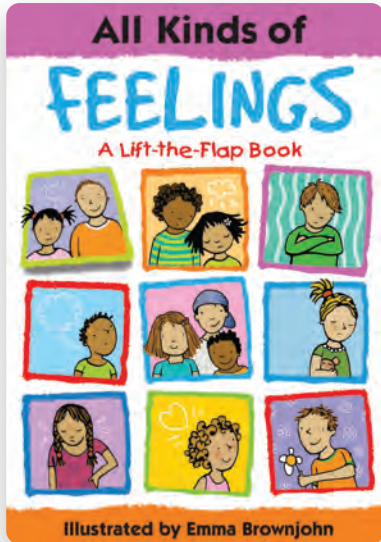
Email: [aim@dcya.gov.ie](mailto:aim@dcya.gov.ie)

Web: [www.aim.gov.ie](http://www.aim.gov.ie)



# All Kinds of People/All Kinds of Feelings

Suitable for ages: 3+



All Kinds of People is a book that demonstrates people can come in all different shapes and sizes, with different interests and hobbies. It celebrates difference in a positive, fun way and is a good starting point for discussion.

All Kinds of Feelings is a book that provides a starting point for thinking about and exploring feelings. It includes examples of how people may express their own feelings and why.

**Each pack will contain either All Kinds of People or All Kinds of Feelings.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Social and emotional development:** Both of these resources, if used appropriately, can support children to become more self-aware, build a sense of identity and become aware of diversity that exists within their individual contexts.

**Language, literacy and communication development:** These resources can support children to develop strategies to communicate their feelings.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- At the end of the All Kinds of People book, there is a mirror for children to look at their own image, along with a page for children to record their own unique characteristics. Consider adapting this activity as a small group activity for use in a particular way for your group of children.
- Consider using the All Kinds of Feelings book as a starting point for a discussion with an individual or group of children about different types of feelings and how we express ourselves. Consider an open ended art activity where children create their representation of a feeling of their choice. Discuss differences and similarities and how we might feel similar things but it may look different to each of us.
- Consider making a book that represents the actual children in your group.



# Audible Soft Foam Ball

Suitable for ages: 12 months+



The Audible Soft Foam Ball is filled with acrylic wool, ensuring it is both soft and flexible. This ball is 13cm in diameter and comes with rattling, sound devices.

**Each pack will contain one Audible Soft Foam Ball.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Physical development** such as gross motor and spatial awareness skills.

Opportunity for **sensory experiences**.

**Language, literacy and communication development** such as listening and expressing views both verbally and non-verbally.

**Social and emotional development** for example, individual children who may benefit from using a fidget toy.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- Encourage a child to engage in exploration with the ball. Consider suggesting how the ball might be used for example, rolling, squashing, shaking, rattling, listening etc. Elicit other suggestions from the child (verbal and non-verbal) and follow their lead.
- Where appropriate, consider using the ball to support the child to engage in co-operative play. The adult might begin by rolling or handing the ball to the child and encouraging the child to pass it back in their own way. Be aware of any opportunities to include other children to foster social play.



# AIM Early Years 'My Day' Fan

Suitable for ages: 4+



The AIM Early Years 'My Day' Fan is a visual aid to support and encourage communication. This fan represents the possible key elements of a daily routine in the pre-school setting and can support children's understanding of what is going to happen next. It is important that visual aids are not used to replace language, but are used alongside it to aid language development and communication.

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Language, literacy and communication development:** The fan can support children to communicate to other children and adults, using the fan as a visual aid to provide concrete reinforcement.

**Social and emotional development:** An individual child can be supported to feel in control of their daily routine by using the fan to understand and anticipate what is coming next and to be able to communicate their needs and preferences to other children and adults.

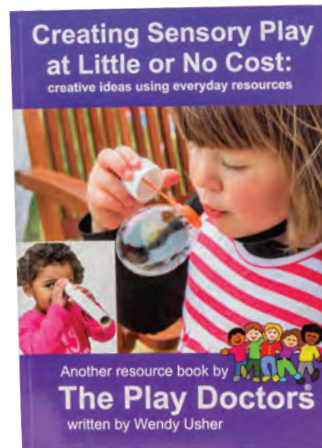
## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- The practitioner may use their knowledge of an individual child who may benefit from a using visual aid to understand the sequence of the daily routine within the pre-school setting.
- The practitioner can support an individual child to use the fan as a communication tool to make choices during the daily routine and to support the child in expressing these needs and preferences to adults and other children.
- Consider making a more personalised fan with the use of photographs of the child engaged in activities throughout the day.



# Creating Sensory Play at Little or No Cost/ Hey, Children on the Autism Spectrum Play Too!

Adult resource



These books are useful resources for practitioners to use when planning play activities.

Hey, Children on the Autism Spectrum Play Too! takes a practical look at autism and how best to support children by using a person centred approach. Children on the autism spectrum often play differently from others and this book supports the reader to think about how the play offered encourages participation and inclusion.

Creating Sensory Play at Little or No Cost contains many ideas and activities to help provide a range of sensory experiences from everyday items. Activities suggested are varied for children from 2-5 years and the book also contains photocopy resources which include ideas for families to engage in sensory play at home.

**Each pack will contain either Creating Sensory Play at Little or No Cost or Hey, Children on the Autism Spectrum Play Too!**

## Key learning this resource may support:

Hey, Children on the Autism Spectrum Play Too! may support practitioners to plan and provide a range of appropriate play opportunities to support children's learning and development across a range of areas.

The suggested activities in Creating Sensory Play at Little or No Cost offer many opportunities to provide varied **sensory experiences** and opportunities for children. **Language, literacy and communication development** can be supported through many of these activities and scaffolded by the practitioner based on the individual context.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

As these books are provided as a resource to practitioners, it may be useful to spend some time reviewing them individually and as part of a team to discuss and plan the most appropriate activities for the children you are working with.

**Hey, Children on the Autism Spectrum Play Tool!** This book may be particularly useful for adults who are working with or are new to working with children on the autism spectrum. It aims to make the reader think more carefully about differences in play for some children and how they can offer opportunities to support inclusion for all children.

**Creating Sensory Play at Little or No Cost:** Children may be involved in choosing which activities in the book they are most interested in trying and these could perhaps be planned, based on consultation with children.





# Dancing Ribbons

Suitable for ages: 18 months+ (due to choking hazard)



The dancing ribbons (6 pack) consist of 6 strong, woven nylon hand straps, each with 1 metre long strands of colourful ribbon. These offer opportunities for music, movement and physical play.

**Always use under adult supervision.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

The dancing ribbons offer many opportunities for children to engage in play and exploration which supports **physical development** such as gross motor skills, spatial awareness and fine motor skills.

**Social and emotional development** may be supported as children engage with the ribbons in a way which encourages body awareness, individual expression and communication.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- The practitioner may use different types of music and movements to encourage the children to move in a way that they like, responding to variations in the music for example, tempo and pace.
- Children who wish to may lead a small group by providing suggested movements using the ribbons.
- It is important to note that if you have a child with limited mobility please adapt the use of the ribbons to suit their individual needs. For example, have all children sitting on the floor and following music with a steady beat.



# Dark Den Cube/Pop Up Dark Den

Suitable for ages: 3+



Dark dens can be used in different ways. For example, they offer an environment for children to relax and unwind and can also be used to support imaginative role play both individually and cooperatively. The dens have a double, thick nylon skin, creating a dark atmosphere inside. The dark den cube is a stable feature in the room, whereas the pop up dark den is portable and can be taken up and put down easily.

**See AIM Inclusive Play website for tips on setting up and taking down the den. Each pack will contain either a dark den cube or pop up dark den.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

The dens provide opportunities for **sensory experiences** as children can explore shades of light and dark and tune into a range of senses.

The dens provide lots of opportunities for children to engage in **role play and imaginative play** as they decide what and how the den might be used on a particular day.

**Social and emotional development** may be supported as children engage in play together and individual children may use the den as a safe space when they are feeling overwhelmed within the learning environment.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

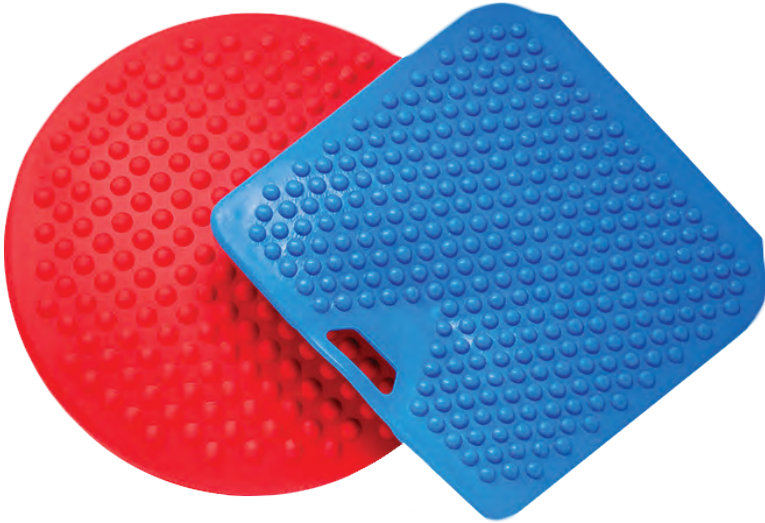
- The practitioner might support open ended exploration and play by following the children's lead in terms of how they engage with the dark den. For example, do the children decide it is a house, a boat, a volcano? Follow the children's interests and ideas and participate as appropriately.
- An individual child may be introduced to the dark den as a space that they might find comfortable and safe at times during the daily routine when they might be feeling overwhelmed. Tune into the child's body language and communication about whether this is something that might be helpful for a particular child.
- Consider as a team if the dark den is part of the learning environment or perhaps at certain times it acts as a space for children to go when they need to. The den can be adapted based on children's needs. For example, by putting some cushions inside to enhance cosiness and warmth or providing additional sensory materials inside.

**Use your knowledge and understanding of individual children when using this resource as some children may not like being in a darker space.**



# Movin' Sit Junior/Disc 'o' Sit

Suitable for ages: 3+



The Movin' Sit Junior and Disc 'o' Sit are air filled cushions which, when sat on, create a 'wobble'. There are two surfaces to sit on a smooth surface on one side and circular dimples on the other for additional sensory input.

**Please Note:** These should only be used for up to 30 minutes at a time with intervals. They are NOT suitable for full day use. It is still possible to slouch on a cushion so children need to be shown how to sit and should be encouraged to sit upright where appropriate. Maximum recommended weight: 45kg or 100lbs.

Each pack will contain either a Movin' Sit Junior or a Disc 'o' Sit.

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Movin' Sit Junior Blue:** When used in a sitting position, the wedge shaped design automatically moves the user into a sitting position by encouraging a forward pelvic position. Its main purpose is for posture, sensory input, helping the proprioceptive sense (sense of body awareness) and creating movement.

**Disc 'o' Sit Red** is helpful for good posture, sensory input and movement. It is also suitable for balance and motion exercises which support better coordination and improve reflexes and stability.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- This resource can be used to support an individual child to sit with and engage with their peers during relevant parts of the daily routine for example, small-group time, greeting, story time etc. The design of the cushion is helpful for decreasing fidgeting and can help children to be active whilst sitting.
- Depending on a particular child's needs, the cushion may be used to support balance.

### Setting up the cushions

1. Remove the plug with a small spoon.
2. Partially inflate by mouth or with a pump if necessary. Inflate as little or as much as is comfortable. Over inflating causes a bulge and will result in not being able to be used effectively.
3. Cover the opening with your finger.
4. Release your finger and quickly insert the plug.
5. Please adjust the inflation according to the preferred comfort and stability level.
6. Place the cushion on the chair, upwards, downwards or on the floor.
7. To deflate the cushion, remove the plastic stopper.



# Emotions Chart

Suitable for ages: 4+



The Emotions Chart features photographs and text describing 16 different emotions. It is a visual resource to support activities with children on exploring, naming and expressing feelings. The chart includes a resource guide on the back.

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Social and emotional development** including creating an awareness of how different feelings affect us and developing strategies to support individuals.

**Self-awareness and identity** including an understanding of oneself and the point of view of others.

**Language, literacy and communication development** including an ability to name and validate our feelings.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

The practitioner could consider using this chart to support a small group discussion or practical activity about feelings. For example, after reading a story chosen by the children, consider the following with the child/children:

**Does the story show any feelings we might see on our chart?**  
**How a particular character might feel at a certain point in time.**  
**How might a particular character deal with a situation or event?**  
**Would the children do anything differently?**  
**Encourage children to share their own experiences and follow their lead.**

- The practitioner could also consider real scenarios that children can connect with. For example, something that might be particularly relevant to a particular child/group.
- Encourage children to refer back to the chart where appropriate or meaningful. For example, identifying a face on the chart that might represent their version of a particular emotion—provide open ended art materials where children might create a face representing their view if it is not captured on the chart.
- The Emotions Chart can be a starting point to begin to make an emotions chart featuring the children themselves (with their consent).
- Refer children to the chart throughout the pre-school session as emotions do not only arise during a group activity, such as circle time.



# Grimms House/Grimms Rainbow

Suitable for ages: 3+



The Grimms House/Grimms Rainbow is a versatile toy which can be used in a range of ways for lots of different creative activities e.g. imaginative play, stacking, building, exploring, sorting etc. The unvarnished wood is natural and prevents blocks from slipping when stacked.

**Each pack will contain either the Grimms House or the Grimms Rainbow.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Social and emotional development:** This resource can be used as a tool to support cooperative play between children.

**Physical development:** Stacking and sorting the blocks can encourage development of fine motor skills.

This resource may encourage **cognitive development** by supporting early mathematical skills and exploration of early mathematical concepts.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- Encourage the children to explore the blocks in their own way. Observe the variety of ways in which children use this resource depending on their developmental level and current interests and think about how this learning might be consolidated and/or extended further. For example, a child may be interested in using the resource to explore early mathematical concepts such as sorting by shape or colour.
- Cooperative play may be encouraged. For example, if appropriate, the adult could suggest 'I wonder what you might be able to build together?'
- Imaginative play can be encouraged by the introduction of small world items.



# Jumbo Tweezers

Suitable for ages: 3+



The chunky design of these tweezers provides opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills or to use in an open ended way during the daily routine.

**Each pack will contain two pairs of tweezers, colours may vary.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Physical development**, particularly fine motor skills can be supported by using these tweezers. The chunky design features ergonomic depressions to help small hands grip in the correct places and support development of the forefinger pincer grasp.

The tweezers may support aspects of **cognitive development** as children can engage in exploratory play in areas such as science and engineering, using the tweezers as a prop.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- Use your expert knowledge of children to decide on the best use of the tweezers - when might it be appropriate for a child to use in an open ended way and are there occasions for individual children to use the tweezers in a particular way?
- Small items may be placed in the sand and the tweezers could be used as a tool to take them out.
- A child, who has an interest in transferring objects, may use the tweezers to transfer objects between containers or spaces.



# Kinetic Sand

Suitable for ages: 3+



Kinetic sand is mouldable, sculptable sand, suitable for creative and open ended play. It is suitable for building and shaping, providing a sensory experience to children. Box contains 1kg.

## Key learning this resource may support:

Kinetic sand is particularly beneficial in supporting **physical development** such as fine motor skills.

**Social and emotional development** can be supported by engaging with the kinetic sand as children may find it calming and relaxing.

Kinetic sand provides a range of **sensory experiences** for children.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- Practitioners may encourage children to explore the sand in an open ended way and support language and communication development by following children's lead in how they express their experiences.
- Individual children may benefit from using the sand in a particular way. For example, imprinting onto the sand or placing and finding items in the sand to develop fine motor skills.



# Laptop Tray

Suitable for ages: 3+



The Laptop Tray provides an individual work space for children engaged in working alone or in individual work as part of a small group. It is particularly suitable when using kinetic sand and other messy activities. The Laptop Tray also allows children to transport and display their creations.

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Physical development:** Use of the tray with materials such as small blocks may support development of fine motor skills. Exploration of sand or other messy play resources encourages a range of sensory experiences for children.

**Social and emotional development:** The tray can offer children an individual space to work in, promoting a sense of control and decision-making about their engagement with the material being used.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- Consider using the tray to support an individual child to engage with a developmentally appropriate material or piece of equipment that they have expressed an interest in, such as paint, gloop, play dough, sand, natural materials, rice, small blocks etc. Follow the child's lead and actively encourage and extend communication about the experience. Use your knowledge and understanding of individual children to promote open ended experiences which can support particular children within the daily routine.
- Trays can be used to provide a range of different sensory experiences to children by using each tray to provide a particular material. For example, to encourage children to explore different senses, each tray might have a different type of food that feels, smells, tastes, differently.





# Massage Kit

Suitable for ages: 3+



The massage kit is designed to stimulate the senses and consists of rollers and soft brushes, made from natural wood and can be used for sensory exploration by children under adult supervision.

**Please ensure that items are checked regularly for loose parts and breakages and disposed of appropriately. Not a toy, use under adult supervision.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

The massage kit provides opportunities for children to engage in **sensory exploration** such as touch.

**Social and emotional development** may be supported for children who find using the massage kit a calming and relaxing tool, which is positive for their wellbeing.

**Physical development** such as body awareness and development of gross motor skills may be supported by use of this kit.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- Practitioners should always ensure that use of the massage kit is always given or received with explicit permission by the child.
- The practitioner may follow a child's lead in how they use the massage kit. For example, a child indicating how they would like to use these materials. Children may like to use the massage kit on each other.



# Recordable Answer Buzzer

Suitable for ages: 3+



The Recordable Answer Buzzers enable children to record up to seven seconds of sound such as voices, music, messages etc.

**Each pack will contain one Recordable Answer Buzzer.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

Using this resource to record sounds and listen back can support **language, literacy and communication development.**

**Emotional and social development** may be supported as children record sounds and interactions with peers and other adults or by recording things which are important to them.

Using the buzzer in an open ended way can support development of **creativity and imagination.**

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- This resource may be used to support an individual child who may feel more comfortable recording themselves and playing back the recording when appropriate.
- The practitioner could introduce the resource to the children and encourage them to explore how they might use it in a way that interests them, for example recording a conversation or interaction, a song or other sounds which they are interested in.

### How to use:

1. Press and hold the red button on the side.
2. Wait for the beep and then record a sound, voice or music.
3. Release the button. You will hear a beep again.
4. Tap the buzzer and listen to your new sounds.

**The buzzer requires 2x AAA batteries and a Phillips screwdriver. Batteries should be installed or replaced by an adult.**



# Large and Mini Sand Timers

Suitable for ages: 3+ (Due to potential small parts, choking hazard)



Sand timers are an ideal resource to provide children with a visual representation of time and to anticipate a sequence of events. They can be used to support transitions and problem solving within the daily routine.

Large sand timers come with matching coloured, moulded end caps and clear, thick wall surrounds. Size: 160mm x 70mm. 1, 3 or 5 minutes (one supplied).

Mini sand timers come in a set and are colour coded to represent different time periods (Red-30 seconds, Green-1 minute, Yellow-3 minutes, Blue-5 minutes and Orange-10 minutes). Size: 100mm x 25mm.

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Social and emotional development** for example, helping children to understand and manage their own time, supporting children to problem solve with peers, as a tool to support self-regulation or to support a sense of independence within the daily routine.

**Language, literacy and communication development** for example, children can use the timers to indicate their wishes to adults or other children.

Sand timers can support **cognitive development** as children may engage in exploration of mathematical concepts such as symmetry, shape and other early geometrical concepts.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- A timer can be used to support an individual child during the daily routine who may need a visual representation during transitions or between activities. A minute (or more if appropriate) before tidy up time, the child might be encouraged to use the sand timer.
- A child with a particular interest, focus or challenge within the daily routine may find the visual representation of time helpful and reduce stress or anxiety.
- Sand timers can be a useful tool in supporting children to solve problems. A small group discussion with children about sand timers and how they might be used can be a way to introduce the resource. If a conflict arises about turns, the adult might suggest how the sand timer may be of help.



# Sockette Puppet

Suitable for ages: 18 months+



The knitted sock puppet is a character that can be used to interact in a variety of ways with individual and groups of children and adults. These puppets can be used to communicate in many ways, for example verbally (conversation, squeaking) or non-verbally (by touch).

**Each pack will contain one Sockette Puppet.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Language, literacy and communication development** for example, children may feel more comfortable communicating through the puppet with peers and adults as it supports development of verbal and non-verbal communication.

**Social and emotional development** for example, offering emotional support to a child and encouraging interactions between children and with adults or promoting development of imaginative play.

**Physical development:** Manipulation of the puppet can support development of fine motor skills and encourages children to engage in sensory experiences.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- The character of the puppet could be developed in collaboration with the children to build rapport so it can be used in an active and meaningful way with the group. Practitioners can encourage opportunities for non-verbal children to participate and have their views heard. Areas for development of the puppet's profile could include:

**Will we give the puppet a name? What do you think we should call it/him/her? Where does it live? Who else lives there? What does the puppet like? What does the puppet not like?**

- The practitioner can use the puppet to support and encourage children to describe their experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, commenting on events and actions of relevance to them or to engage in imaginative play and story-making.
- The puppet could be used as a resource within the pre-school setting to help children connect to and make sense of experiences (both positive and challenging).
- The practitioner can consider using the puppet for modelling positive social interactions, exploring emotions and social stories.
- Practitioners can use both observation and knowledge of individual children to support them throughout the daily routine, considering where the puppet may be particularly beneficial.





# See Me Sensory Ball

Suitable for ages: 6 months+



This sensory ball is suitable for little hands and offers a range of play and learning opportunities. The spikes are firm enough to use for deep pressure and massage, but soft enough to encourage exploration. Size: 16.5cm.

**Each pack will contain one See Me Sensory Ball.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Physical development** can be supported such as gross motor skills as the child may choose to roll, throw, kick the ball.

The bumpy texture of the ball and various ways it can be explored offer a **sensory experience** to children.

The ball can support children's **social and emotional development** as children might engage in cooperative or group play with the ball.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- Encourage the child to explore the ball in an open ended way and follow the child's lead, using language to describe what might be happening.
- An individual child might be supported by the practitioner to play a rolling game which can help postural support and control or to use feet to pass the ball to each other.
- The ball can be used to develop sensory awareness for individual children where appropriate by rolling the ball on the child's hands, feet or back, paying careful attention to their body language about preferences.



# Sensory Bubble Hourglass

Suitable for ages: 3+



The sensory, liquid, hourglass shape contains colourful bubbles that fall and bounce to the bottom. They contain colourful oil and water. Approximately 7 cm x 4.5 cm.

**Each pack will contain one Sensory Bubble Hourglass. Colours may vary.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

The sensory bubble hourglass can be used to provide a visual **sensory experience** for children.

**Communication skills** may be supported if the bubble hourglass is used by a child to express their needs and desires in terms of time.

**Social and emotional development** as the bubble hourglass supports children to identify and manage transitions within the daily routine and have a greater sense of control.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- An hourglass can be used to support an individual child who may need a visual representation during transitions between activities during the daily routine.
- A child with a particular interest, focus or challenge within the daily routine may find the visual representation of time helpful and the liquid motion of the hourglass can have a calming effect and reduce stress or anxiety.
- The bubble hourglass can be used by individual children as a visual aid to help maintain attention, focus and as a sensory experience in itself.
- Consider other materials that can be used to make similar sensory objects such as water bottles containing glitter, oil and photographs.



# Sensory Light Reflective Blanket

Suitable for ages: 3+



The Sensory Light Reflective Blanket is shiny and crinkly offering opportunities for multi-sensory experiences for example, sound, vision and touch. Size 210cm x 140cm approximately.

**Please note the blanket should only be used under adult supervision.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

This resource provides a range of opportunities for children to engage in **sensory experiences** such as touch, vision and sound.

The blanket can be used in an open ended way and individual and cooperative play that develops may support **social and emotional development**.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- The sensory blanket may be placed in a relevant area of the pre-school room by the practitioner such as the home corner, to support children's open ended exploration and engagement with the blanket in creative play.
- The blanket may be used in the dark den where children can explore the range of sensory experiences offered as it is very responsive to any movement made by the child.
- The blanket may act as an emotional support for a particular child who responds positively to its warmth and a feeling of safety that might be created.
- The blanket can be used in dimmed light with a range of materials such as with the strobe bar to explore how it interacts with light.



# Warmie Weighted Sensory Friend

Suitable for ages: 3+



The Warmie Weighted Sensory Friend ('Warmie') is a fun play item, that can also provide comfort to children as the weight and gentle scent of lavender can create a soothing effect.

**Each pack will contain one Warmie Weighted Sensory Friend. Styles may vary.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

The Warmie may support **physical development**, in particular the proprioceptive sense (sense of body awareness).

**Sensory experiences** are promoted when a child engages with the Warmie including smell and touch.

**Social and emotional development**, as the Warmie may offer comfort, security and confidence to individual children.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- This resource may be particularly beneficial for individual children who need some additional sensory input or may be having a difficult day/moment and can benefit from the comfort that the Warmie may offer. The increased weight of the Warmie may be particularly beneficial for individual children as the extra weight can give input to the body for children who have an under-responsive system.
- Elicit ideas from the children on other personal items which make them feel at ease and comforted.

### How to use:

To use, pop the Warmie in the microwave for one minute to release the scent and to add a heated experience. Do not reheat until it has cooled to room temperature. Ensure the fabric is dry and clean before use. You may notice a little moisture on the surface of the fabric, which is quite normal and will stop after a few uses. To clean, use a warm, damp cloth and a tiny drop of soap to gently wipe the fur/fabric clean. Do not immerse in water.

The Warmie can also be used without heating, as a weighted soft toy and comfort object.

**Use only under adult supervision. Ensure the product is not over-heated. Ensure microwave is clean and the turntable can rotate freely when heating.**





# Traffic Light Fan

Suitable for ages: 3+



Traffic Light Fans are primarily used as a communication tool, as a visual aid to support children to communicate directly and visually with adults, as well as their peers.

## Key learning this resource may support:

The fan supports development of **language, literacy and communication** as it may support children to express their emotions and views.

**Social and emotional development** may be enhanced by effective use of the fan as children can be supported as active participants and have a tool which aids them in expressing themselves to peers and adults.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- An individual child may be supported to understand and use the traffic light fan as a communication tool during the daily routine. Colours and what they represent can be adapted and tailored based on individual needs. For example, Green may indicate the child is feeling positive 'I am happy', 'I like this', 'I don't need any help', Amber may indicate 'I need some help', 'I feel unsure' and Red might indicate 'I am sad', 'Please help me' or 'I do not like this'.



# Tactile Ball

Suitable for ages: 12 months+



The tactile ball is a small, textured ball, which children can explore, examine, play, squeeze and roll.

Please ensure that any water is expelled and the ball is fully dry before storing.

Each pack will contain one Tactile Ball.

## Key learning this resource may support:

A range of areas of **physical development** can be supported by the use of this ball including both fine and gross motor skills.

The sensory elements of this ball encourage opportunities for **sensory development**.

**Social and emotional development** may be supported as the ball can act as a calming or fidget toy for individual children and can be used for cooperative play with peers or adults.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- The ball could be used in a small group, to encourage social interaction as children roll or pass it to each other in a way that they like.
- The practitioner may encourage children to explore the ball in their own way and follow their lead.
- The ball could be used in the sand and water area to explore the patterns and reactions it causes.
- An individual child may like to use the ball as a fidget toy.



# Teeter Popper

Suitable for ages: 2-10 years. Weight limit: 100lb



The Teeter Popper is a unique instrument for play, offering a range of open ended play opportunities as children have fun sitting, kneeling, rocking, spinning, standing or balancing on it. The suction from the poppers grips and releases as children move, creating a popping sensation.

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Physical development** such as gross motor skills can be supported by this resource. It also supports development of core strength, stability, leg strength, balance and coordination.

**Social and emotional development** as the children might engage in play together when using the Teeter Popper. The Teeter Popper may have a calming effect on children who have difficulties regulating their bodies.

The Teeter Popper offers **sensory experiences** through touch, sound, visually etc. The many sound effects of the Teeter Popper may be helpful for particular children.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- The practitioner might support the children to engage with the Teeter Popper and explore it in an open ended way. This may be by touching, kneeling, rocking, standing, spinning or in other ways that the children discover.
- Individual children may benefit from using or being supported to use the Teeter Popper in a particular way for example, to support sensory integration or using it in a way that promotes the auditory senses.
- Consider children who may be sensitive to unexpected sensations and prepare the children in advance of the popping reaction.



# Therapy Putty

Suitable for ages: 3+



Therapy putty has different levels of resistance which are based upon colour Yellow=Soft, Red=Soft/Medium. The putty maintains its consistency through prolonged use, is unscented and non-toxic. Each pot contains 57g.

**Please ensure the container is sealed tightly after use to maintain the consistency of the putty. Not a toy, use under adult supervision.**

**Each pack will contain one tub of Therapy Putty.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

Opportunities for **sensory experiences**.

**Physical development** such as developing fine motor skills and hand strength.

**Social and emotional development:** The putty can act as a fidget toy for individual children and offer opportunities for children to self soothe.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- Consider placing small objects within the putty, roll in to a ball and encourage a child to guess what might be inside and pull it apart to find out. The child may then wish to choose an item of their liking to put inside. Be aware of opportunities to encourage cooperative play as children may engage in exploration together.
- An individual child may benefit from smoothing the putty out, an action which works different hand muscles and provides a sensory experience. Children may then choose how they use the putty next.
- Use the putty to provide an opportunity to engage in open ended play as children are supported to manipulate the putty in their own way.

**Be aware that not all children will enjoy using the putty and offer alternatives.**





# Strobe Bar

Suitable for ages: 3+



The strobe bar contains 9 bright, coloured, LED lights which react to the sound of your voice or can be set to light up randomly. Size: 25cm x 4.5cm.

**Please note: the strobe bar requires 4xAA batteries (included) and also comes with an AC jack input (adaptor not supplied) for optional mains supply. The strobe bar should always be used with adult supervision. The strobe bar should be used for short periods initially to ensure that no child is affected by the light. It is advisable that the practitioner initially sets the strobe bar to sound reaction and then moves to random setting as this is more controlled for the children and they will be quickly aware of how sound is affecting the lights.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

This resource may support **language, literacy and communication development** as it encourages listening and visual skills.

**Physical development** such as gross motor skills could be supported as children engage in dance and movement.

A variety of **sensory experiences** can be supported by using the strobe bar as children participate using light and sound.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

Practitioners should firstly consider how this resource can be used to support children at their current levels and also offer a gentle extension to their learning as and where appropriate.

- As the strobe bar is responsive to sound, it can be used to encourage individual children to be more vocal as they aim to light a number of bars.
- The strobe bar can be used with the sensory, light reflective blanket to create a cave like area for children to engage in open ended and creative play (under adult supervision).
- Music and other sounds may be initiated and developed by children to explore how they might affect the reaction of the strobe bar.
- Careful observation and consideration should be given to how children respond to this resource particularly children with heightened visual sensitivity.
- It is important to note that children with epilepsy or other neurological or heightened sensory awareness need to be observed when using the strobe bar at the start.



# Time Timer

Suitable for ages: 3+



The Time Timer is a resource that supports children to understand time as it provides a visual countdown of time passing. As the disc disappears, children can see how much time is left. There is also an additional (optional) audio alert where a beep sounds to signal time has finished.

The timer can be set to between 0-60 minutes. Size: 20cm x 20cm.

**Please note that setting the timer requires gentle handling and should be used under adult supervision or with adult support.**

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Social and emotional development:** The Time Timer can support individual children who may need a visual representation of time or those who may benefit from an auditory signal that a certain period of time has now passed. For example, in preparing for transitions during the daily routine.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- The practitioner may use their knowledge of individual children to decide where the timer may be of particular benefit in supporting a child's engagement in the daily routine.
- The timer may also be used as a tool to support conflict resolution, for example if children need support in managing times/turns, the timer could be useful.
- If children are interested in time specifically, the timer can be used to demonstrate the passing of time in a practical and relevant way, for example 'I wonder how long it takes us to tidy up?'
- Support a child to take the lead in using the resource to remind others of upcoming changes in the routine.
- Consider other visual or auditory cues in the immediate environment such as the bell in the nearby church, the sound of a train as it goes by or any other cues unique to the children's environment.



# Squigz

Suitable for ages: 4+



Squigz are a suction, construction toy made of silicone rubber. They come in different shapes which provide a range of opportunities for open ended and creative play. They connect to each other and to any solid, non-porous surface and can be flexed, bent, squeezed and stuck. They do take some strength to separate which creates a 'pop' sound.

## Key learning this resource may support:

**Physical development** such as fine motor skills can be supported when children engage with this resource.

**Social and emotional development** is supported as children may explore, create and problem solve together when engaged.

Squigz can support **cognitive development** as children may engage with them in ways that interest them which may focus on scientific, mathematical or engineering elements.

## Suggested starting points for engagement:

- Children should be encouraged to explore the Squigz in an open ended way and the practitioner can extend the play, following the child's lead.
- Group play might be supported if a number of children are encouraged to create something together.
- The Squigz may be used with particular children in a planned way to support the development or strengthening of fine motor skills or visual motor integration.

