

Tactile Balls

Tactile Balls encourage:

- fine motor skills (small muscle movements in the fingers)
- eye hand coordination
- tactile input

Tactile Balls use these materials:

- different types of fabrics
You can use fabric - cotton, fur, textured
Try using old clothes and cut them up - jeans, t-shirts, flannel
Use felt squares from craft stores
- old socks
- rubber bands

How to play Tactile Balls:

1. Cut out a set of matching 4 fabric squares about 8" by 8" for a total of 8 fabric squares.
2. The child can assist with this step. Place the sock in the middle of the fabric square. Gather up the fabric around the sock and secure with a rubber band. Your tactile ball is ready to play with.
3. Place the matching 4 fabric squares around the room. The child can stand in the middle of the room. The child tries to throw the tactile ball to the matching fabric square.

Additional Ideas:

Try placing dried beans inside the tactile balls. The child can help to put the beans in a plastic bag and tape it securely shut. Make sure the children do not throw the bean bags at anyone.

Play hot potato with a group of children using the tactile balls.

Comments:

Same or Different

Same or Different encourages:

- fine motor skills (small muscle movements in the fingers)
- the ability to discriminate objects just using the sense of touch
- tactile input

Same or Different uses these materials:

- fabric scraps, small household items or small toys

How to play Same and Different:

1. If you have fabric scraps of different textures, have the child assist and cut up each scrap into two pieces. For household items or small toys, find matching items i.e. 2 spoons, 2 forks, 2 small toy cars, 2 small blocks, 2 large stringing beads, 2 toothpicks, 2 marshmallows, etc.
2. Explain to the child that he is going to try and determine if he is holding the same objects in both hands or different objects. The child must have his eyes closed. Use a blindfold if the child will tolerate it. Place one object in each hand. The child should feel the objects and then state "same" or "different". You could also have the child identify exactly what the object is in each hand. If it is fabric, the child can describe it i.e. one is smooth and one is furry. Continue play with all of the fabric scraps or items.

Additional Ideas:

To work on visual memory, place some of the items on a tray. Have the child look closely at the tray for 30 seconds. The child should now turn his back or close his eyes. Remove one object. When the child turns back around, he should state what object is missing.

If the child does not like to touch certain objects or textures, begin by playing the game only with textures that the child will tolerate.

If you have a group of children, hand out the objects. On "GO", the children should move around the room and find the other child that has the same item as them.

Comments:

Sock Sacks

Sock Sacks encourages:

- eye hand coordination
- bilateral coordination (using both sides of the body together)
- gross motor skills (large muscle movements)

Sock Sacks use these materials:

- old tights or stockings in different colors
- balled up pair of socks
- cardboard tube or plastic bat

How to play Sock Sacks:

1. The adult should cut off the top of the tights. The child can place a balled up pair of socks all the way at the bottom into the foot of the tights. Create at least 2 sock sacks in different colors.
2. Let the child play with the sock sack. Have the child place one in each hand and make large arm circles. Put a target on the floor such as a book standing up or empty 2 liter bottle. The child stands back a few feet and tries to knock the object over using the sock sack.
3. The adult can swing the sock sack in a circle and the child can jump over it.
4. Hang the sock sacks from the ceiling. Call out one color of the tights. The child tries to hit the sock sack using the cardboard tube. Try calling out left or right to identify which sock sack to hit.

Additional Ideas:

To practice catching skills, place two balled up socks in the bottom of the tights. Knot the tights off. Throw the sock sack back and forth to each other.

Comments:

Tree House Kids

Tree House Kids encourages:

- gross motor skills (large movements)
- fine motor skills (small movements of the hands and fingers)
- visual perceptual skills

Tree House Kids uses these materials:

- pipe cleaners
- scissors

How to play Tree House Kids:

1. First you must create the tree house kids. Take one pipe cleaner, grab it in the middle and form a small circle for a head, twist a few times for the body and separate the pipe cleaner to form the legs. An adult should cut another pipe cleaner in half. Using one half of the pipe cleaner, grab it in the middle and twist it around the body to create the arms. Twist each arm up so that you can link the tree house kids together. Create at least 5 tree house kids.
2. Go outdoors. Find a bush or tree and the child should hang each tree house kid in the tree. Tell a story to the child about the tree house kids who want to go out and play. The child should then close eyes. A person hides the tree house kids all over the yard or park. Hang them in trees or hide them in the grass.
3. Now the child is ready to find the kids. Tell the child that the tree house kids must return home to the tree. The child should search for the kids. Once found, the child should bring each tree house kid back and hang it on the tree. Continue playing until all the tree house kids are found.

Additional Ideas:

For finger isolation, the child can loop the tree house kids on each finger. Try linking the tree house kids together, hanging them in a chain, arm to arm.

Comments:

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