



Idaho Project for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness

Fact Sheet

FUNCTIONAL - AND FUN?

The book, "The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun" (Carol Stock Kranowitz, 1998), is a source for many ideas that parents and teachers might use.

In a chapter on Touch, the author points out that there are children who are over-responsive to touch, others who crave touch, and yet others who have poor tactile discrimination.

Touch:

- Provides information through the surface of our skin
 - Extends from head to toe
 - Detects texture, shape, and size of objects;
 - Discriminates between threatening and non-threatening
 - Helps determine pressure/pain, temperature (hot/cold), detail or gross form
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Do you see your child doing these things?

(over-responsive)

- Draws back from light touch, rubs off kisses, pushes you away to avoid contact
- Dislikes finger painting and hates glue
- Is upset when the weather is windy — and hair is ruffled—yet, no hats either!
- Hates tooth brushing or any personal grooming, including haircuts, cutting nails
- Stands last in a line
- (under-responsive)
- Needs intense touch to even be aware of it

- Drops things, but doesn't know
- Doesn't care if face or hands are messy
- Hurts others, including pets

(seeking touch)

- "In-your-face"
- Rubs or bites him/herself, twirls or pulls hair
- Likes being barefoot
- Enjoys "messy"

Poor discrimination

- Has trouble holding on to things, especially ones that need fine-grasp (e.g., pencil, scissors, fork)
- Avoids touching items that other children like to touch
- Cannot tell one texture or shape from another

Add Deafblindness to the mix, and you KNOW you have to figure out something to help this child learn!

Carol Kranowitz has many ideas and suggestions. Here are adaptations of a handful of them!

- **Try "Un-Paint"** - that is, alternatives such as a lotion the child may like, damp sand. Make sure you create a "boundary" to work within (trays?) AND, somewhere nearby, provide the means to wash the stuff off! (Bucket of water, paper towels etc)
 - Make "lazy 8's" (from Brain Gym)
 - Polish finger and toenails
 - Give a toy car a wash with shaving cream. Take the car through a "car-wash" maze built with blocks; don't forget to rinse, dry and put the cars away
 - Sand dunes—start with dry sand and a spray bottle. Add small plastic critters—fish, crabs, etc) to the sand mix; maybe add some umbrellas, palm trees too.

BENEFITS

- Increases tactile discrimination, body awareness, and creative exploration;
 - Increases tool use, hand strength, hand-eye coordination, bilateral coordination—e.g., move two cars simultaneously
 - Figure 8—crossing midline (especially if child uses both hands and makes large 8s)
 - Informs the sense of smell
 - Provides kinesthetic awareness, fine-motor skills
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- **Try Theraputty instead of play dough**

- Help "hide" a child's hand in theraputty; feel the weight—lift up in 3-5 steps and sing or say "heavy" — and "hand" as you drop the child's hand.
- Is your hand hiding? Let's get it out — push, pull to get off.
- If you do this with a foot, getting it off with both hands will help with two-handed coordination.
- Hide small toys or objects in the theraputty — and then look for them. Sort them.
- Play "Simon says" with the theraputty—use commands such as "push!", "pull", "pinch", "roll", "twist".

BENEFITS

- Hiding hands—diminishes over-responsivity
 - "Weighing" - body awareness
 - Removing or manipulating the putty—proprioception, motor planning
 - Bilateral coordination—using two hands
 - Tactile discrimination, attention, classifying
 - Attending to verbal directions; responding to them
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- **Create a TACTILE ROAD:**

This can be done inside or outside. You will need what Carol Kranowitz calls "step upons". Some of her examples include:

- Carpet squares
- Large swatches of fabric (e.g., chiffon)
- Fake fur
- Down comforter
- Terrycloth towels
- Bubble wrap
- Corrugated cardboard

Use your imagination! Choose items that are safe to step on — without sliding, tripping. Blindfold yourself, and try them out first.

Now lay them out on the floor or the grass — or maybe the gym. This can be in a line, or in a circle — depends on your group. The author suggests placing them close to one another to begin with. Have children take off their shoes and socks to walk on these surfaces.

If a child is in a wheelchair, you may need to get him or her out of the wheelchair and help the child from surface to surface, giving him/her time to explore with both hands and feet — or maybe with arms and face too!

If a child has difficulty moving from texture to texture, bring the squares to them — but be sure you have them “feel” each with not just their hands, but their feet, legs, arms, even face.

You could add “incentive” to the exercise by placing baskets of objects on the corner of each — and have each child gather one object from each basket — and put it into a box or basket they can carry with them. For example, Dollar Tree stores sell Sheriff’s stars, large metal “coins”, flags, etc.

You could also engage them with a song that goes with moving from surface to surface; or play a pretend game — be a bus that has to stop at each square.

BENEFITS

- Tactile awareness and discrimination — with feet, knees, hands, face, etc.
 - Moving between squares — awareness of distance, attention, visual discrimination
 - Movement and motor planning, balance
 - Proprioception—especially if some squares are higher than others, or sink down more
 - Tolerance for a variety of sensations
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• Nature Bracelet

What you need: Wide width masking or transparent tape. Place a “bracelet” of tape on your child’s NON-DOMINANT wrist, STICKY SIDE out. Overlap the tape about an inch—or more.

NOW — go for a walk! Pick up small items you may see on your walk —a small flower, a leaf, a blade of grass, a feather, a sprig of a scented herb, small pebbles. Stick them on as you move along. Cover the sticky tape.

You can cut off the Bracelet and tape it on to a piece of cardstock — and put it on the refrigerator. OR, you can tape it into a page in a “memory book” — so you look at together later — and remember that walk.

Repeat the experience in different locations:

- A visit to the coast
- A fabric store
- Grandpa’s farm
- Aunt Mae’s garden

Pasting each of these in the “memory book” will provide a variety of places, things — and even people — to talk about later.

If your child doesn't feel comfortable with this sticky "thing" on his/her wrist, use a piece of heavy card stock and glue the band on there — sticky side out (overlap under to fix to the board). The author suggests that this could gradually build up into a collage. OR — you wear the band, and let the child stick items on your wrist or arm.

NOTE: Maybe find an alternative way to "travel" for a child in a wheelchair — e.g., on his tummy on a rolling board.

Also — be aware of a child's level of tolerance of objects and for the sticky tape, AND also of smells he/she may encounter.

BENEFITS

- Tactile discrimination — through the objects, through the sticky tape itself
- Tactile tolerance—especially if they are "new"
- Eye-hand coordination (or hand-under-hand OR hand-over hand experiences)
- Improved motor skills — pressing them onto the tape
- Bilateral coordination — using both hands to decorate the bracelet
- If the child is doing the collecting — gross motor skills (bending, standing up, reaching for something)
- Having a conversation while taking the walk
- Giving names to items
- Remembering later too!

Information Kindly Supplied by
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