Tool Time: For a More Hands-on Experience for Students with Fine Motor Challenges.

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Who needs tools? We all do!

- Some people need tools that are adapted to their needs.
  - People that are left-handed
  - People with fine motor challenges
  - People who are visually challenged
  - People who are developmentally / cognitively challenged
How do we determine which tools are needed? Consult the team!

- The team is comprised of all the specialists available within the school district and your “continually extending” circle of friends.
  - School: occupational therapist, physical therapist, special education teacher, general education teacher, nurse, psychologist, social worker, principal, physical education teacher, music teacher, art teacher, technology teacher, BOCES staff, etc.
  - Parents
  - The “continually extending” circle of friends – these are contacts you can make by asking questions of any person or organization that you think might be helpful. They may have a suggestion or can refer you to someone who can help.
What tools do we need?
Tools that fit the ability!

- There are many tools available for purchase for many different needs:
  - Grips that train for the correct grasp of a pencil – fine motor.
  - Grips that allow a student with a severe motor challenge to actually hold a brush, marker, or stamp.
  - Scissors that train or help a student cut paper.
  - Glue that allows a student who is visually impaired to create a collage.
  - Stamps, templates, masks, and much more that enable a more hands-on creative experience for students with challenges.
Where do we find these tools? Catalogs and you - become an inventor!

- Check school catalogs, the internet, the professional team who services the student, and your own creativity.
  - School and art supply catalog.
  - Physical and occupational supply catalogs.
  - Your own ingenuity – need is the mother of invention! Check out your “continually extending” circle of friends for ideas.
- See the handout and Conference Website, http://www-pub.naz.edu:9000/~include/, for a more extensive listing.
Can we use these tools?
YES WE CAN!

- These tools have been created to allow the student the least restrictive and most hands-on, creative experience possible.

- In conjunction with the paraprofessional and/or supervising teacher, the ultimate experience is made possible. Strategies based on the need of the student must be planned and put into place before the creative experience begins. All people involved must agree that the creative process is more important than the end product.
Adapting regular tools:

- Handles of pencils, paint brushes, markers, crayons, etc. may be made larger using “Model Magic”, purchased grips, or PVC pipe (Guay, 1999, p.24).
- Strap grips may be utilized for many applications using elastic or Velcro as the implement holder (Zederayko, Ward, 1999, pp.20-22).
- Add a handle to a block stamp – drill a hole and add a piece of doweling.

Be an inventor! If you can’t fabricate your idea, find someone who can. Keep trying until it fits!
Adapting Projects

➢ To enable: Drawing

- Choose the right grip for the drawing utensil and supply templates. Templates can be made using any picture. Photocopy the picture, cut it out, and trace it on to tag board or mat board for added support. If there are internal items that are necessary, follow the same procedure. Example – portraits, outline of face and shoulders – internal items – eyes, ears, nose, mouth, eyebrows. Remember to use enlarge or reduce to get the appropriate size for the ability of the student!

- An appropriate drawing surface should be used. Table tops are available for wheelchair applications. Slant boards and easels will also help in certain instances. Taping the paper to the surface being utilized will prevent it from slipping.

- Make the project size larger and simplify shapes for students with visual impairment. Use good contrasting colors for differentiation of shapes, objects, and grounds. Sensory products, such as scented markers, texture plates, and colored glue outlining, enhance the experience.
Adapting Projects Continued

➢ **To enable:** Painting

- Follow the steps for drawing to set up the picture and choose the right grip for the paint brushes required. Use a low center of gravity paint tray for acrylics and liquid tempura paints. A low center of gravity water cup should also be used. Biggie Tempura Cake Trays are also an easy to use paint and may be used like watercolors by adding lots of water and less pigment on the brush.

- Stencils and masks may be used to contain the painting area. Masks may also be used to paint decorative borders. Masks are the opposite of stencils; the mask prevents paint from being painted in a specific area or can create a design. An art shirt is always required for painting.

- If you anticipate that a student’s pace will prevent them from finishing on time, use colored construction paper as the base paper so the student won’t have to spend too much time creating a background.
What *Adaptive Measures* Does the Student Need to Succeed?

- Adjusted table height or special table to accommodate a wheelchair?
- Is the student sitting next to an average student so that *peer modeling* is available?
- Does the student need *hand-over-hand* direction?
- Will you use templates (*tactile cues*) or gesture the shapes in the air (*proprioceptive cues*) to help them draw?
- Does the student need *verbal* redirection in small steps, or one step at a time, or would *visual* cues be more helpful?
- Could you *model* the project and break it down into smaller steps?
More Adaptive Measures....

- What *adaptive tools* does the student need?
- Should other students model adaptive tool use for the student with special needs?
- What can be planned for the student who finishes early? Experiment with other adaptives?
- How much hands-on intervention should be given by the teacher or paraprofessional? (Guay, 1999, pp. 22-32)

Team brainstorming answers these questions and puts the needed support in place.
The Kit Contains:

- Ball grip brushes
- Large handle brushes
- Pencil grips – model magic
- Weighted grips (for students lacking pressure - no muscle tone)
- Straps with elastic to hold thick handles (markers, brushes)
- Stamps / Stamps with handles
- Straps with Velcro for stamps with Velcro
- Thick sponge stamps
- Stencils
- Glitter pens
- Double grip scissors (hand-over-hand)
- Funny brushes - med., lrg., xlr
- Templates and texture plates
- Sponge brayers
- Low center of gravity paint trays
Adaptive Resources:

Catalogs:

- **Dick Blick, Art Starts**, P.O. Box 1267, Galesburg, IL, 61402-1267, 1-800-447-8192, www.dickblick.com
- **Kaplan Early Learning Company**, P.O. Box 609, Lewisville, NC, 27023-0609, 1-800-334-2014, www.kaplanco.com
- **Sammons Preston Rolyon**, P.O. Box 5071, Bolingbrook, IL, 60440-5071, 1-800-323-5547, www.sammonspreston.com
- **Sportime, Abilitations**, P.O. Box 620856, Atlanta, Georgia, 30362, 1-800-850-8602, www.abelitations.com
Adaptive Resources:

- **Web Sites:**
  - Adaptivemall.com – adaptive equipment
  - Adaptivation.com - adaptive equipment
  - Codi.buffalo.edu – University of Buffalo – Cornucopia of Disability Information
    - Search words – special needs children, special education, disabilities
  - Vermontadaptive.org – sports organization
  - Neosoft.com/~tsadaqua - sports organization
References