

## **Multisensory approaches**

These are ways of presenting material to be learnt by enriching one or more of the five senses. This is most commonly linked to learning handwriting but these ideas can be used to assist in other areas of learning or daily life.

### **Visual**

- Drawing/ writing on different types of paper or textures e.g. aluminium foil, brown paper bags, grease proof paper, corrugated card, construction paper
- Use magic gel pens or special colouring books when the paint appears when you paint with water
- Try different colours of chalk, markers, crayons, pens, pencils and paint
- Use star stickers to make pictures or draw letters
- Use stencils of different shapes to rub on or draw around with a pencil.
- Use contrasting colours for effect or emphasis
- Try pens that light up when pressure is applied on the page.

### **Tactile**

- Drawing/ writing on different textures e.g. aluminium foil, sandpaper,
- Draw/ write in a flat tray filled with a layer of rice, salt, split peas, flour, talc or shaving foam.
- Draw in sand, gloop, mud, finger paints, gelatine, oatmeal, corn flour, instant pudding, lotions with the index finger
- Use different crayons, paintbrushes, chalk, sponges, blocks, water, pens to write in different textures.
- Trace over letters/pictures /shapes formed in wool or pasta
- Paste stickers, wool, pasta, beans, Playdoh to form the outline of a letter, shape
- Try walking, skipping, creeping along string or rope –place shapes, bean bag, etc at the beginning and end for start and finish.
- Make finger, hand and footprints
- Change the temperature of the materials. Sometimes put the paint markers, or crayons in the refrigerator before the activity. Lotion can be warmed up (very gently) in the microwave.

#### **Finger paint recipe:**

Combine 1 cup of flour, 4 teaspoons of salt and  $\frac{7}{8}$  cups of cold water. Add food colouring or powder paint. Mix well. Store in Fridge.

### **Auditory**

Auditory strategies play an important role in learning

- Use consistent auditory instructions and stories when learning things like letter formation i.e. talk through how the letter is formed while writing it e.g. Letter “w”: “start at the top of the hill and slide down, down and then start to climb up, up again, and slide down, down again and the climb up, up again”.
- Make sure that parents know what auditory instructions you are using for letter/ number formation so that can be re-enforced.

- Try attaching bells to the end of a paintbrush
- Make patterns or practice letter formations in the air
- Try filling empty jars/ milk bottles with varying amounts of water and hit with paint brushes or pencil from Left to right – this will work on left to right orientation for writing
- Try playing “Simon says” making shapes or letters with the body

### **Proprioceptive**

Proprioceptive input is one that stimulates joint muscle feedback. Using activities where there is increased weight, resistance or requires 2 hand involvement would provide good feedback to the body.

- Do painting and drawing activities on vertical surfaces.
- Use a weighted paintbrush/ pen
- Use a rolled up newspaper to act as a wand in the air to draw shapes.
- Use a scarf/ ribbon to make shapes, letter in the air
- Try “table wiping” using vertical, horizontal and circular movements.
- Try “water painting” (practice) using a large paintbrush on the wall.
- Fill empty fairy liquid bottles with water and squirt shapes or letter on the dry playground.

### **Olfactory**

The sense of smell can be incorporated into learning tasks:

- Drawing, writing with scented markers
- Add a few drops of bubble bath or scented oil to Playdoh or homemade finger paint.
- Add vanilla, mint, cherry, banana flavouring to finger paints. These smells can be strong and should be used only with non-toxic finger paints or Playdoh.
- Use scented lotions for finger painting
- Soap and finger paints can also be used.

### **Gustatory**

- Try finger painting in a tray of whipped cream, icing.
- Drawing on a frosted cake to decorate it.
- Draw on crackers or bread with cheese spread.
- Ice rich tea biscuits
- Try picking out letter of the alphabet from alphabet spaghetti
- Warm spaghetti sticks and make shapes.

Credit to Children's Therapy Team of West Dorset General Hospitals NHS Trust for some of the ideas above