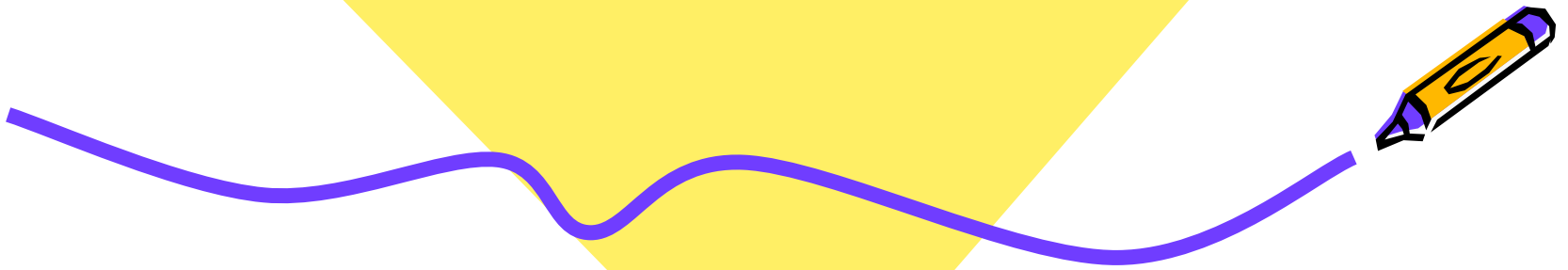


Lekotek:
Making Play Accessible for
Children with Special Needs



The Importance of Play

- It is our philosophy that all children are unique individuals who are capable of learning and that the first three years of their lives are critical for brain development.
- Play is more than a mere time filler, it is an essential component of healthy development.



"True child's play is largely self-motivated, self-designed, and often seems to the adults to have no serious aim at all."

Millie Almy, University of California



The components of play...

Curiosity

Actively Engaged

Trial and Error

Pretense

Discovery

Games

Social Etiquette

Risk-Taking

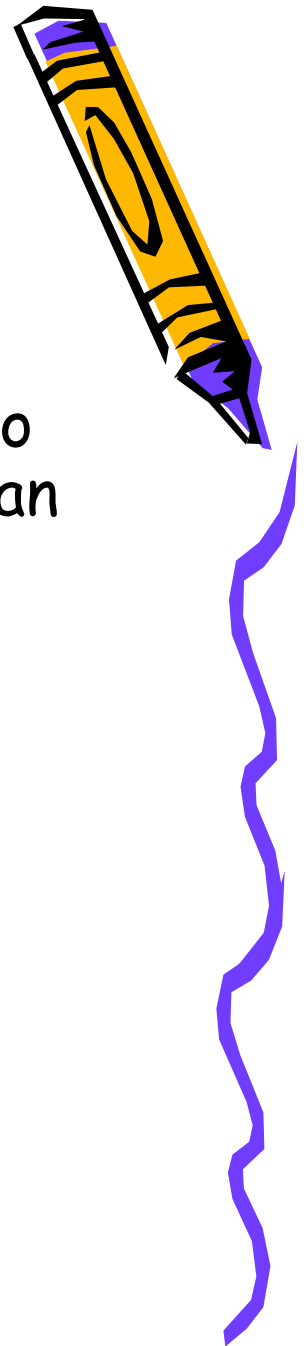
Complex Adaptive Activities

Novelty

are the same as the
components of learning.

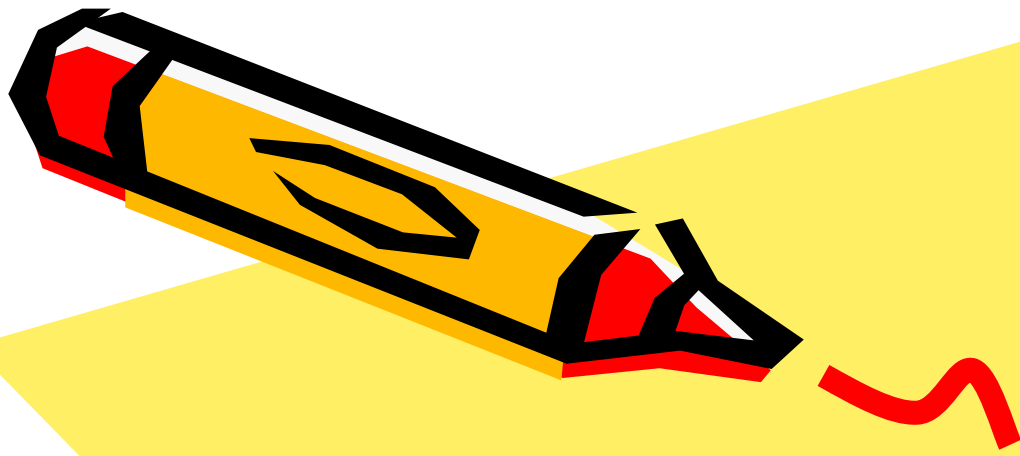


Play Techniques



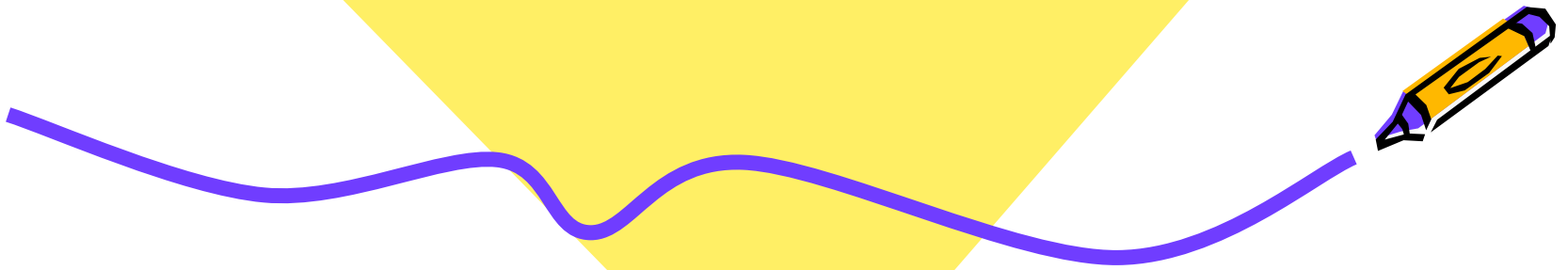
- Look beyond the traditional function of toys to see the variety of ways in which a single toy can be used to promote learning.
- Follow the child's cues
- Consider the child's interests
- Encourage communication
- Use repetition
- Model appropriate play
- Use positive reinforcement



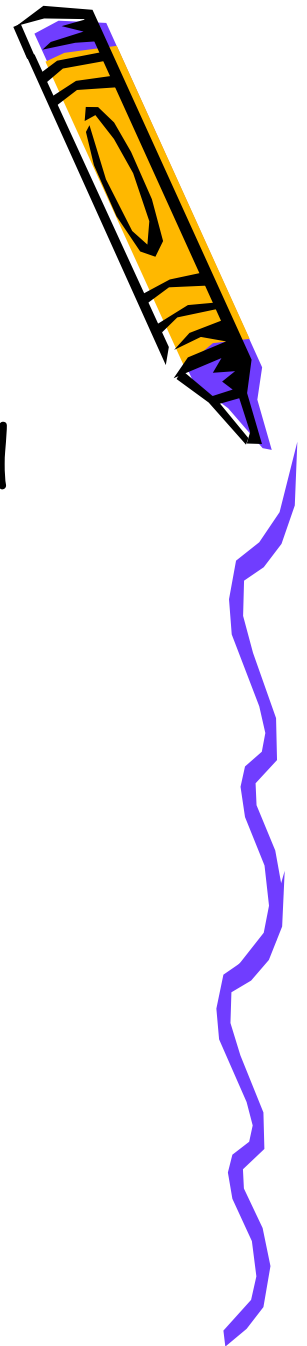


Activity:

Personal Philosophy of Play



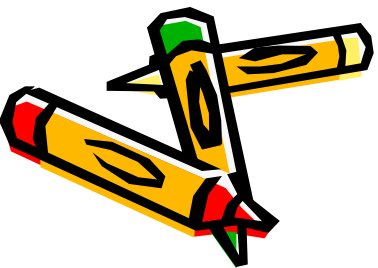
Play and Children with Special Needs



- Children with disabilities may need additional assistance and guidance during the learning process.
- Accessibility to the same toys and play opportunities that typically-developing children do is essential.



"Children with disabilities, educated in an inclusive environment, should have the opportunity to play and learn from all the toys in that setting. A child's ability to use a traditional toy allows the child to participate in play alongside peers and siblings."





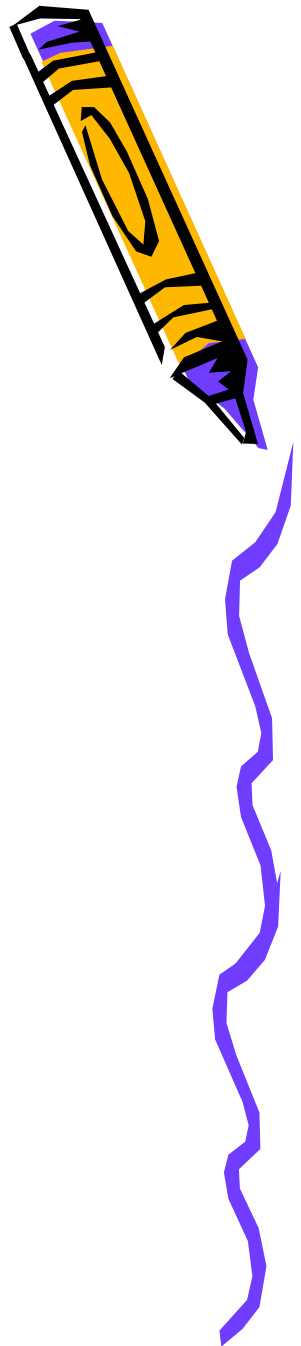
Activity:

Disability "Frame-of-Mind"



Points to Consider When Buying Toys for Children With Special Needs:

- ☑ Multi-sensory appeal
 - ☑ Method of activation
 - ☑ Where toy will be used
 - ☑ Opportunities for success
 - ☑ Current popularity
 - ☑ Self-Expression
 - ☑ Adjustability
 - ☑ Child's individual characteristics
 - ☑ Safety and durability
 - ☑ Potential for interaction



Disability Trends in the Toy Industry

- The toy industry, which is constantly marketing new products, caters to the typically developing child.
- Manufactured toys specifically for the special needs population, such as switch toys and sensory manipulatives, continue to be expensive and unchanging.
- Traditional off-the-shelf toys can be modified for accessibility.





Disability-friendly toys



- Dolly Downs - www.campventure.org
- Disability Dolls - www.lakeshorelearning.com
- Wheelchair for American Girl Dolls - www.store.americangirls.com
- Fisher Price Little People Wheelchair - www.fisherprice.com
- Rescue Hero - Aiden Assist - www.fisherprice.com
- Sign Language Barbie - www.mattel.com
- Share A Smile Becky Barbie - www.mattel.com

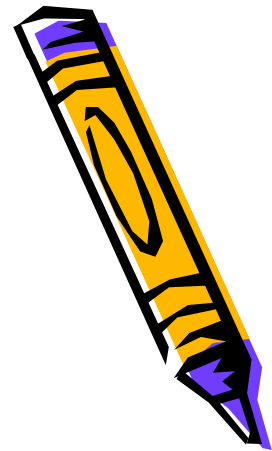


(CNN)





Online Resources for Specialized Toys



- www.beyondplay.com
- www.tfhusa.com
- www.comeplaytoys.com
- www.dftoys.com
- www.specialkidszone.com





Off-the-shelf Toys

- Everyday toys can be used and modified for children with special needs (Think outside the box!)
- Toys 'R' Us Toy guide for differently-abled kids





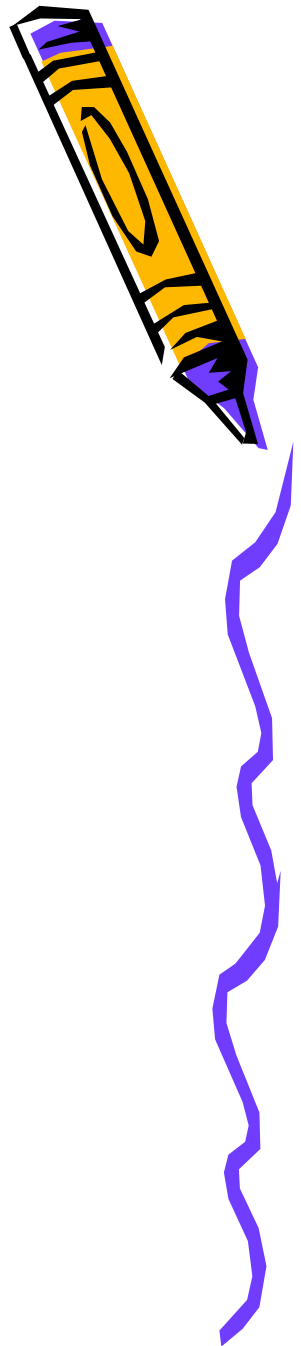
Activity:

How many ways can you
play with a toy?



Modifying Toys

- Stabilize
- Enlarge
- Reduce Required Response
- Make More Familiar/Concrete
- Remove Unnecessary Features
 - Remove Distractions
 - Add or Enhance Cues
- Improve Safety or Durability
 - Sustained Action



Easter Seals Virginia Lekotek

- The mission of Lekotek is to use “interactive play experiences, and the learning that results, to promote the inclusion of children with special needs into family and community life”.
 - The word Lekotek is Swedish for “play” and “library”. Lekotek works with caregivers to make play accessible for all children through special play and learning centers.
 - Children are learning new skills that build the foundation for future learning. They have access to traditional toys, adapted toys, computers and books.
 - At Lekotek, families work with a trained Lekotek Leader to identify appropriate toys and activities. Lekotek Leaders support families in the inclusion of the child into family and community activities.
 - Lekotek services include interactive family play sessions, toy lending library, inclusive playgroups, family social gatherings, and parent resource library. Play sessions are typically center-based, but may be provided in the home or hospital for medically fragile children.
 - Lekotek services are currently based out of the Salem office of Easter Seals Virginia (East Main Street next to Macado's) and are available to families living in Roanoke City and Salem City, and the counties of Roanoke, Craig, Botetourt, Bedford, Franklin, Floyd, and Montgomery.
- Families are eligible for Lekotek services if at least one child in the family has a diagnosed disability, developmental delay, or is at-risk of a delay. Children are eligible between the ages of birth to 8 years old.

