



## We are back...

As we continue our partnership with Blind Beginnings, PRCVI, And BC Blind Sports, the BC **Early Intervention** team from **Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada** brings you another issue with a new selection for week#5 of **Activity of the Day!**

During this time of social distancing, each week we will send out 5 activities to families who have a child with vision loss. Offering adaptations and using items and materials from around your home, we hope that you continue to enjoy them!

**Sensational  
Sensory Bags**

**Upper Body  
Strength & Mobility  
Part 1  
Infants & Toddlers**

**Pool Noodle Fun:  
Water Play!**

**All About Size -  
Big/Small**

**Making an  
Experience  
Book!**



## Sensory Bags

Sensory play helps children learn how their bodies work and how to process and interpret the world around them. For children who are blind or have vision loss touching objects helps them understand the world they live in. Certain types of sensory play can be calming and relaxing for some children. Sensory bags are a fun and mess-free way to explore! They can encourage curiosity, help develop tactile skills, stimulate vision. Children who don't enjoy touching certain textures may feel more comfortable touching them through the plastic bag.

### Steps:

- Take a large Ziplock bag, freezer bags are best as they are more durable. Fill it 1/4 – 1/2 way full of items from the list below.
- Try and get as much air out as you can before closing the bag.
- Once the bag is closed fold the top over once and tape it shut. This helps prevent it from spilling open.
- For children with some vision lay the bag on white surface, or white paper, to make the contents stand out.

**Optional:** for children with low vision tape around the bag with bright coloured tape to create a contrast to make it easier to see.



**Image of infant's hand touching a sensory bag placed on a white surface and taped with black around the boarder**

### Ideas to put in the bag:

- shaving cream
- pudding, jello
- paint
- rice, beans, uncooked pasta, dried peas, marshmallows
- bath salts, sand
- water, food colouring, glitter
- water and small toys (small toy animals, pom poms, sequins, beads, googly eyes, glow sticks, etc.)
- hair gel, food colouring, glitter ***the gel makes it squishy!***
- hair gel and small toys, pom poms, sequins, etc. The gel gives some resistance and when the children touch the items they don't float away.
- 2 cups of water, 2 packets of gelatin, food colouring - let sit 5 minutes before playing.

### Tips to expand the play:

- For **infants and younger children** lay the bag in front of them on the floor and encourage tummy time.



**Image of an infant at tummy time touching and engaging with a sensory bag**

- Encourage your child to explore – pushing, pulling, poking, smash it, dragging finger through the items.
- Let children explore touching the bag with different body parts. Try touching the bag with feet, elbows, etc. Some children may not want to touch the bag with their hands but will be more comfortable with their feet touching it.
- Try pushing items in the bag up, down, left, right, etc. This works especially well with hair gel and small items as the gel adds some resistance.
- Try drawing shapes or letters.
- Tape it to a window and talk about the light coming through; use pointer finger to draw shapes
- Put a piece of paper with a few drops of different coloured paint in the bag. When done playing take the paper out and let your painting dry.
- Talk about what it looks like "when you mix yellow and blue paint it makes green!"
- Talk about what it feels like – squishy, soft, cold, etc.

- Try putting the bag in the fridge / freezer to make it cold. Talk about what it feels like.
- Try using warm water and cold water, talk about the difference in how it feels.
- If you put familiar items in the bag, have child try and guess what they are by feeling it and describing it.
- Talk about the shapes and sizes of the items, i.e. small pom poms vs. big pom poms.



**Image of young child's foot on a sensory bag**

# Tuesday

## Upper Body Strength & Mobility Part 1: Infants and Toddlers

Upper body strength is developed through a variety of movements and actions which usually start in infancy and progress through-out life. Children with vision loss or blindness often have low muscle tone and would benefit from a wide selection of activities that will motivate and enhance their upper body strength. This experience should be ongoing and will lead to success and enjoyment in physical movement, in play and future recreational and sport activities.

### Infants and Toddlers

Weight bearing and resisted activities build up proprioception, the sensation of where you are in space which helps with balance and future reaching and catching skills.

#### 1. See-Saw:

- Support your child's head with one hand and use your other hand to assist in a game of see-saw with your child pulling up close to you and then going back down. Make up a little song,  
*"Pull up, back down,  
see saw up and down we go,  
pull up, back down..."*

#### 2. Pull to Sit/Pull to Stand:

- Monitor the need for head and neck support and encourage your child to

reach for you when prompted with a clap and verbal prompt "up".

- Help your child to pull up by providing support at the arm pits; assist lifting your child to a sitting or standing position
- As your child gets stronger provide support from the elbows and gradually work toward just holding hands with your child; pulling against your hands to raise themselves up.



**Image of mother holding her baby by upper arms/elbows to help him stand**

#### 3. Tummy Time:

- Get on the floor and be the "carrot" or motivator; encourage your child to lift his/her head.
- Encourage reaching, pulling, shimmying, and wiggling the body towards a person and/or objects of interest such as a light-up or sound toy.

#### 4. Build a Resonance Board: (or recruit a friend or family member to make one up!)

##### Materials:

- 3 x 4' sheet of smooth one-sided plywood or panelling, 1/4 inch thick
- 2 x 3" frame

- Slightly counter sink screws on the top side).

The board allows for acoustic feedback and flex as the child rolls, moves and bangs his/her hands and feet.



**Image of young child laying on a resonance board with items placed around her.**

#### 5. **Shoulder and Neck massage-**

- Have your child on her/his tummy and provide a massage of the back, shoulders, and neck
- Provide reinforcement (lots of praise and an extra bit of massage!) when they lift their neck or move their upper body.

Another key movement strategy to start developing early for children with vision impairments **is the ability to move their weight forward in space without fear** ...another reason for doing lots of weight bearing through the arms early on.

**Crawling** extends to climbing activities to get weight bearing and strengthening of child's upper body

6. **Practice tripod sitting:** (child sitting on his/her bottom with hands down in front),
  - While supported by pillows on the sides. Present items in-front by the feet (bottle, soother, toys) encouraging your

child to reach, grasp and bring the items up for oral inspection.

#### 7. **Cruise and Climb:**

- Encourage cruising along the length of the couch with objects to check out at opposite ends.
- Take the cushions off the couch and set-up so the child can climb up to reach objects.
- Next have your child reach for the objects without the help of a cushion and pull themselves up to get at the toy or item at the back of the couch seat.
- Develop a pivot and hold on to the edge to lower back down to the floor.

#### 8. **Going shopping:**

- Load up a toy buggy or stroller with weighted cans or juice boxes under a doll or favourite toy and have the child push the stroller around the house.
- ***As always ensure that baby gates are securely closed***

#### 9. **Change the Chairs:**

- Have your child rearrange the location of chairs and highchair at the kitchen or dining room table. Encourage them to push one chair after another to a new spot at the table.

10. **Sit and Spin** - check in with friends and family who have older children to track down a classic Playskool sit and spin.

**Next Week Part 2 - Upper Body Strength and Mobility for Preschoolers!**



## Pool Noodle Fun Water Play!

Pool noodles are great for summer play and learning. They are inexpensive, versatile, lightweight, and brightly coloured making them the perfect supply for crafts, activities and learning materials. There are hundreds of ideas available to find online. ***Pinterest!!***

Water play give your child opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills across age ranges. Children increase their fine motor skills and hand eye coordination through actions like **pouring, squirting, scrubbing, stirring, and squeezing**. But above all, it encourages them to use their **imagination**, develops **creative thinking** which plays an important role in **problem-solving**.

Water play releases energy; it can be both invigorating or relaxing and calming for young children. It increases their ability to concentrate on one activity when presented as a tranquil and repetitive activity (**scooping, pouring, and running their hands through the water**).

Gentle water play allows children (**and adults!**) to unwind, order their thoughts and relax.

### Pool Noodle Water Wall

To make this water wall, you will need:

- 3 or more pool noodles
- zip ties, string
- peg board (optional)
- well secured trellis

- fence, outdoor wall
- funnels
- buckets
- variety of cups to pour

You can create your pool noodle water wall in any configuration or size you choose.



**Two images of toddler pouring water into a pool that leads to a small bucket**

Regardless of age or ability, encourage your child's participation, to the best of their ability, when assembling.

To make it easier to pour water into the noodle, add funnels to the top of each. Once it is assembled children can start pouring in water!

The opportunity for discussion, and the words/concepts your child will learn and have reinforced while having fun with water is ongoing and can include:

**In, up, down, wet, dry, empty, full, pour, warm, cold, long, short, big, small, beside, inside, under.**



**Image of pool noodle water wall attached to a patio rail and a young child pouring water into a funnel**

### **Adaptations:**

- Choose brightly coloured funnels, if using plain white funnel, outline the edge with black marker or bright coloured tape to help with visual targeting.
- Be aware of location when building the water wall. (avoid facing the sun)
- For infants and/or children with exceptionalities, cut a pool noodle into a variety of smaller sizes add them along with a funnel/s, to a bin with water or to their bathtub.
- Pool noodles are wonderfully flexible; for a child with mobility challenges attach the end of a noodle to their wheelchair tray in a position easy to access. Trail the noodle into a

container and if needed provide hand under hand support to pour water.



**Image of infant's hands exploring a bin with pieces of pool noodles, funnels, and water.**

**Next week: Pool Noodle Painting**



## All About Size

### Learning about **BIG**/Small

Size is a fantastic concept for children to learn about and is important in describing and comparing objects, referencing a landmark or destination, understanding how things and people can change and grow. A neat part about the concept of size is how size can differ depending upon what is being compared or referenced. You can have

**big, bigger, biggest,** and **small, smaller, smallest;** a **big** sister's shoe can look-feel **small** compared to Mom or Dad's shoe.

### Infants and Toddlers:

**Rub-a-Dub Talk and Touch:** explore body parts during bath time,

I.e.: *"let's wash your big toe and now your little toe",*

*"let's wash your big arm and now your little nose",*

*"let's make a big splash and now a little splash".*

**Compare** body part size, let your child see and feel:

- **your** big toe,
- your little toe
- his/her arm and your arm
- compare size of hands...



**Image of an infant, mother's and father's hands resting in each other's palms**

**Talk and Teach:** use size words to describe your infant's and toddler's actions, toys, and things.

I.e.:

- *"Oh, that was a BIG stretch"*
- *"Where is your little toy dog stuffy"*
- *"let's go down the BIG slide together"...*

### Compare body parts in terms of size

I.e.:

- *"Your hand is smaller than your arm",*
- *Your leg is bigger than your foot"*
- *"Your mouth is smaller than your head".*

This is also a great opportunity to practice naming of body parts.

**Movement and Actions:** make up little songs and guide your child through the actions, gradually fading physical prompts

I.e.:

*"Big and small - big and small,  
we move our legs big and small,  
Big and small - big and small,  
we open our arms up big and small"*



**Silly Dress Up:** Place Dad's hat on your child's head in readiness to go outside.

Comment:

*"NO that is to big- here is your hat that is smaller and fits just right"*

Try with different pieces of clothing. Have your child look and feel as you try to put her/his sock on your foot,

*"No that is to small, where is my big sock?"*

Continue to try with different pieces of clothing, eyeglasses, or sunglasses, etc.



**Image of a young child standing in his father's shoes**

**Story Time:** Read **the Three Bears**; check out the resource link for stories about Big and Small.

## **Activities for Preschoolers:**

**Check and Compare:** Have your child, or together with your child, gather three different objects; **give them to your child two at a time.**

- Identify and talk about which object is **bigger**, identify and talk about which one is **smaller**.
- Add a 3<sup>rd</sup> object and repeat activity.
- Compare and sort the three objects from **biggest to smallest** (go left to right).
- Now have the child sort from **smallest to biggest**, (left to right –

note that the middle object did not move).

- **Introduce the concept of 'the middle'**. Some objects are not too big and not too small, they are in the middle. Gather another three objects, and help your child determine which one is in the middle in terms of size. Repeat with different objects.
- Discuss that **bigger does not always mean heavier**, some objects are big and light, or small and heavy. Search for small and heavy item in the pantry, canned good versus big and light (paper towel rolls).

**Simon Says:** This is great to practice actions in relation to big/small/medium. Below are a few suggested actions to practice.

- Simon says, *"Take one big step, two small step and one medium size step"*

## **Construction and Drawing:**

- Build a big tower, small tower, medium tower
- Draw a big circle, small circle, medium circle

## **Size scavenger hunt:**

### **Indoors:**

- Find the biggest and smallest thing in your bedroom.
- Find something that is small in the living room.
- Line up your stuffed animals, smallest to biggest.
- Find something that is small and heavy.
- Line up family shoes by size.

**Outdoors:**

- Find a big, small, medium sized rock
- Check out a small car and big truck.
- Compare sizes of playground equipment (usually two sizes on school grounds)

**Descriptive Words:** Make up a **fun word list** and then identify objects by one of the words.

I.e.:

- big, enormous, massive, monstrous, huge, gargantuan!
- little, teeny, tiny, miniature, minuscule.

**Wash Time Helper:**

Sort clothes by size before they go into the wash.

Sort clothes by size to identify whose room the clean laundry items go to.

**Resources:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAMtgyiUhIo> – Nursery song about size

<https://www.prekinders.com/size-books/>  
stories about big and small

Google: [Roving Genius big and small](#)  
YouTube for kids about big and small.



**Image of a young child sitting on a park bench beside a giant teddy bear**



## Making an Experience Book!

### Purpose:

Creating an experience book is a fun and engaging way to turn any experience into a literacy event! The experience book is also a great way to develop a concrete reference to a favourite event, memory, or routine so that you and your child can go back and touch, talk and remember it together.

### Materials:

Use materials that are highly relevant to your child, collected things while enjoying a new or favourite experience or outing.

For example:

- A walk in the park (e.g., leaves, flowers, bark, pebbles)
- Bath time! (sponge, face cloth, bubble wand)
- A trip to the grocery store or food, (scented packaging, various bags and labels, eggshells, orange peel)



Image of two children and an adult gather materials at the beach for an experience book.

### Ideas for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers

- For infants, parents/caregivers can help collect objects during the experience and explore each object with your child as it is collected. You may also want to review all items afterwards to build connections between items.
- For toddlers and preschoolers, make sure that they are involved in the process of selecting materials. Gather them in a bag or a box so that they can be reviewed later when making the book.
- If your child is engaged by a surface or object that can't be glued or fixed into a book (e.g., round handle of the shopping cart), try finding some material that looks/feels like that object (e.g., paper towel roll, piece of plastic tubing)
- Let everyone have an opportunity to call out objects & item features to search for.
- **For a child with multiple exceptionalities**, start with his/her strength, such as favourite toys or objects used during favourite activities. (bubble wand from bathtub).

## Book Making

- Book pages should be a sturdy material such as cardstock or cardboard.
- Pages can be bound by punching holes in the pages and threading string or open/close metal rings.
- Prior to gluing down, let your child design and organize the materials on the page.
- Add print and braille (where relevant) to the page. If your child does not want to include text, that is fine! Maybe she can add a sticker.
- Hot glue works best for affixing materials to the page – be careful!!
- You may staple zip lock bags on the page that contain hard to glue items like eggshells, sand etc.

## Book Sharing

- Use the objects in the book to make tangible connections to the experience (e.g., “Here’s a smooth tube, just like the shopping cart handle you felt when you helped me push the cart at the store”)

## Resource:

[Tactile Experience Books from Paths to Literacy](#)



**Image of a birthday experience book that shows one page with small bags of unpopped and popped corn and second page with a carnival bead necklace**