

Chart by Kirsten Haugen. Modes for adapting toys based on materials from the "Let's Play" Project at the University of Buffalo (<http://letsplay.buffalo.edu>).

| Steps for Adapting Materials for Use by All Children | | | | | |
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| | Blocks | Dramatic play | Art | Reading | Balls |
| Examples of Universal Design | Blocks with texture, sounds or color-coding by size | Costumes with large openings and simple closures | Scented playdough | Books with sound, textures, high contrast, and/or easy-to-turn pages | Choose balls with textures, tails, scents, sounds and/or lights |
| Ways to Adapt | | | | | |
| Build it up <i>Make handles, buttons, and knobs easier to use</i> | Experiment with blocks of different sizes and shapes | Use large handles and knobs; make sure doll cradles, etc. are at useable heights | Wrap crayons or paint brush handles with foam to make them easier to grip | Add page fluffers or tabs for turning pages | Inflate or deflate a ball as needed; add a tail |
| Stabilize it <i>Keep things from sliding or tipping so a child can focus on play</i> | Try blocks that stick together with Velcro® or magnets | Use clay to temporarily stabilize a pan on a toy stove so a child can stir | Drawing and painting on vertical surfaces helps kids position their hands more naturally | Use a book stand, clip board or bean bag snake to hold a book open and steady | Add water to an inflatable ball to slow it down and alter the play experience |
| Simplify it <i>Make a task easier or more obvious</i> | Use fewer blocks; start a tower for a child | Keep the space organized and predictable, even when changing themes | Work in stages, with fewer materials at a time | Add picture symbols to the page to correspond to the words | Try <i>slow</i> balls, such as those made of cloth; put a basket on the ground to play basketball |
| Contain it <i>Keep an activity within range; help a child know where to be</i> | Play with blocks on a table with a raised edge | Use different color flooring to designate the housekeeping area | Paint using bingo markers, squeeze bottles, or other no-spill containers | Provide a cozy place for reading — a bean bag chair, or even an indoor tent – to block distractions | Use a tether ball, or roll a ball inside a hoola hoop placed on the floor |
| Add sensory cues <i>Use color, sound, texture, symbols, or scents to make materials more useable or fun</i> | Some blocks have different colors and textures; some make sound when shaken | Add 3-D labels onto shelves where materials go – an outline of a shirt on the shirt drawer | Add clove or mint oil to playdough | Provide textures on the pages, or add a box of props; use removable highlighter tape to emphasize words or pictures | Try knobby or webbed balls, balls that light up or make sounds |
| Use alternatives <i>Incorporate special devices and equipment into daily activities</i> | Stack bean bags instead of blocks | Provide communication devices in dramatic play areas so children can add sound effects, comments and more | Use an ability switch to operate a spin art; paint a child's wheelchair tires and drive across butcher paper; roll painted marbles on paper in a box | A child can turn pages and listen to stories using electronic books; the words of a story can be recorded on a communication device | Play <i>catch</i> with a toy car or balloon instead of a ball |
| Encourage cooperation <i>Everyone does their best; everyone gets what they need</i> | One child can build a tower for another to knock down | A child who uses a wheelchair can be a truck driver, train engineer, etc. | One child can decorate paper with spin art; another child can cut out designs | The repeated lines of a story can be recorded into a communication device | Let a child push a ball down a ramp instead of rolling or throwing it; another child can catch it and set it up again |