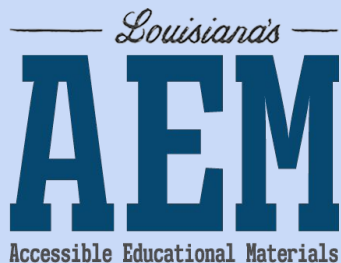


# Sensory Strategies



**Presented by:**  
**Theresa Robinson, M.Ed**  
[theresa@ssdla-aem.org](mailto:theresa@ssdla-aem.org)  
**936-499-8800**

**Created by:**  
**Josh Miller, ATP**

## **Agenda and Purpose**

- **Sign In**
- **Why Consider Sensory Needs of SWD**
- **Examples of Sensory Materials**
- **Hands on Activity - Make a Sensory Resource**
- **Questions and Answers**

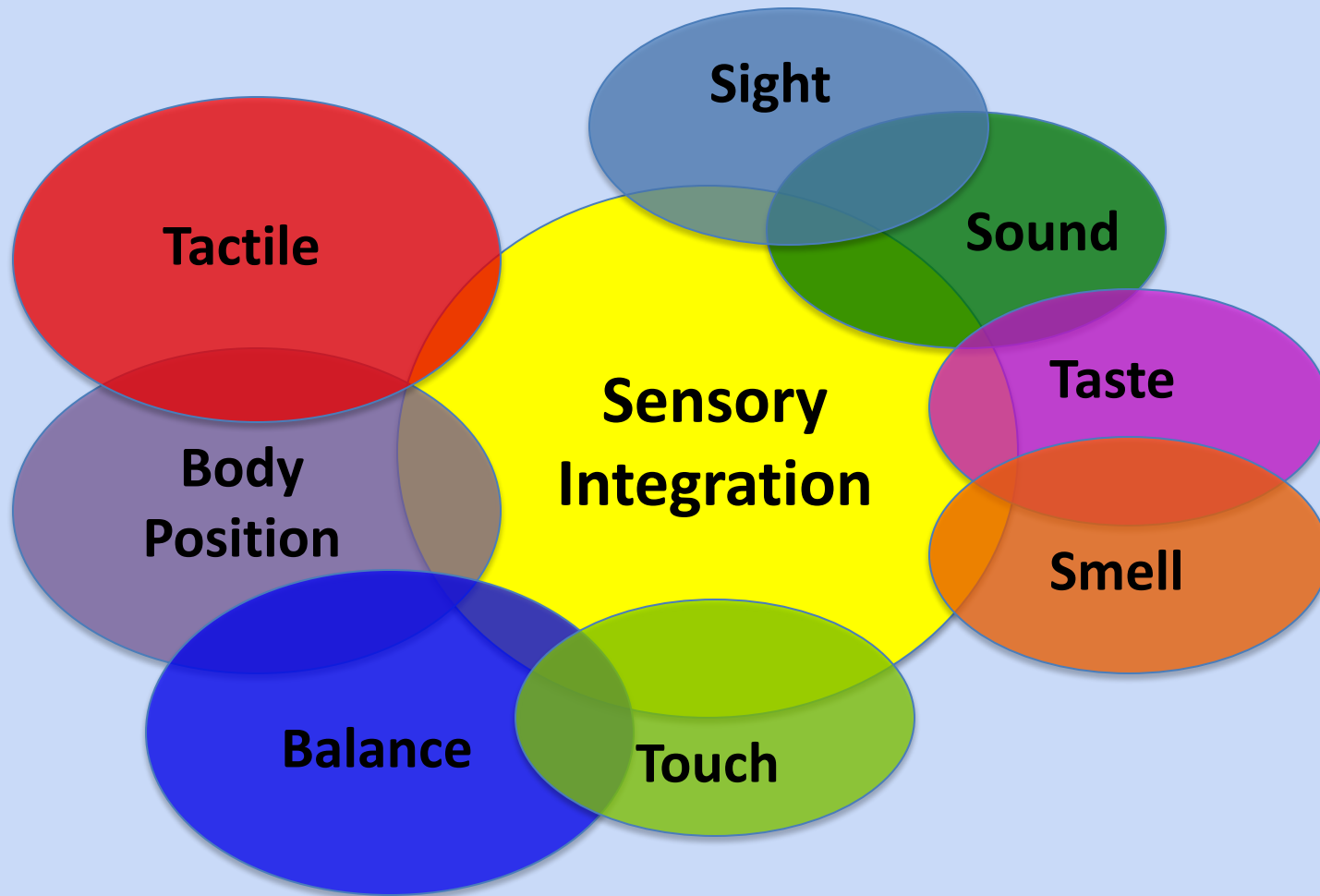
## **Statement of Purpose:**

**To increase the skills of those working with students with special needs to ensure sensory needs are considered and addressed in the least restrictive environment.**

# **Objectives**

- **Explore sensory issues that affect students with disabilities**
- **Apply best practice sensory integration strategies in the least restrictive environment**
- **Hands On time to learn with sensory tools presented**

# The Senses



# **Why consider sensory needs?**

- **Fine motor skill development**
- **Allows for multi-modal learning**
- **Helps with tactile/auditory  
defensiveness defensiveness**

# **Benefits of Active or Adapted Seating**

- **Improved muscle tone**
- **User control over sensory input**
- **Energy Burning**

# Peanut Ball



- Challenges students to stabilize their core
- Great floor activity for those in a wheelchair

**\$49.95**

# Wobble Chair



**\$59.99-79.99**

- **Great for those who wiggle and wobble while they work**
- **Available in 3 sizes**
- **Ages 4-10**



# Wobble Cushion



*Double-sided cushion offers students 2 tactile surfaces!*

**\$14.95**

- Super portable and can work in any room
- AKA “bumpy seat”
- Available in many colors
- Ages 3-11

# Comfy Floor Seat



- Lays flat for storage
- Gives back support

**\$49.99**

# Why Consider Specialized Lighting

- *Transition between levels of alertness*
- *Reduce eye strain (headaches)*
- *Calming effect*

# Specialized Lighting Terms

- ***Illuminance*** refers to the average light level in an area. Low illuminance has been linked to slower reading, reduced concentration, poor posture and long term weakened vision. An excessive variation of illuminance can also be an issue – this has been shown to actually reduce visual performance, causing discomfort and hyperactivity. A level of *uniformity* needs to be achieved to avoid excessive contrast and distraction.
- ***Glare*** occurs where a bright image or object that is not the one the pupil wants to see is perceived directly, or via reflected light. Although pupils will attempt to compensate, perhaps by squinting or turning their head, glare still interferes significantly with visual tasks and can result in headaches, eyestrain, reduced concentration and diminished productivity.

# Specialized Lighting

- ***Flicker*** is produced by certain lighting equipment and can result in discomfort or irritation. At a more serious level, it can lead to visual disturbance – for example, making moving objects or machinery appear stationary. Flicker can also trigger epilepsy and exacerbate various other conditions.
- ***Color*** also plays a vital role in the learning environment and good colour rendering performance is essential for effective learning, allowing pupils to make accurate colour judgements.

# Types of Lighting

- **Ambient** - *Light throughout the room so people can move safely. Light will be bouncing off the walls to fill the space.*

***Ex: Fluorescent fixtures in the ceiling.***

- **Task** - *Sheds light on a specific area where a job is taking place.*

***Ex: Counter lights in the kitchen.***

- **Accent** - *Used to draw attention to a certain area or achieve a desired effect.*

***Ex: Christmas decorations, lights above paintings in a gallery.***

# Specialized Lighting



**Light Covers \$24.56 x 4**



**Lamps**



# **Examples of sensory based activities**

- **Sensory bags**
- **Sensory bins**
- **Sensory bottles**
- **Busy Bags**



# **What are sensory bags?**

- **Small plastic bags filled with a variety of fillers such as hair gel, beads, rice or sand.**

# **Why make a sensory bag?**

- **Provide the child the opportunity to use many of their senses to explore and learn with.**
- **Thematic bags provide a learning opportunity to include literacy and word work through a sensory experience.**
- **Conduct a brief assessment**
- **Provide sensory experience to use as a calming tool.**

# Example of a sensory bag



# **How to Make a Sensory Bag?**

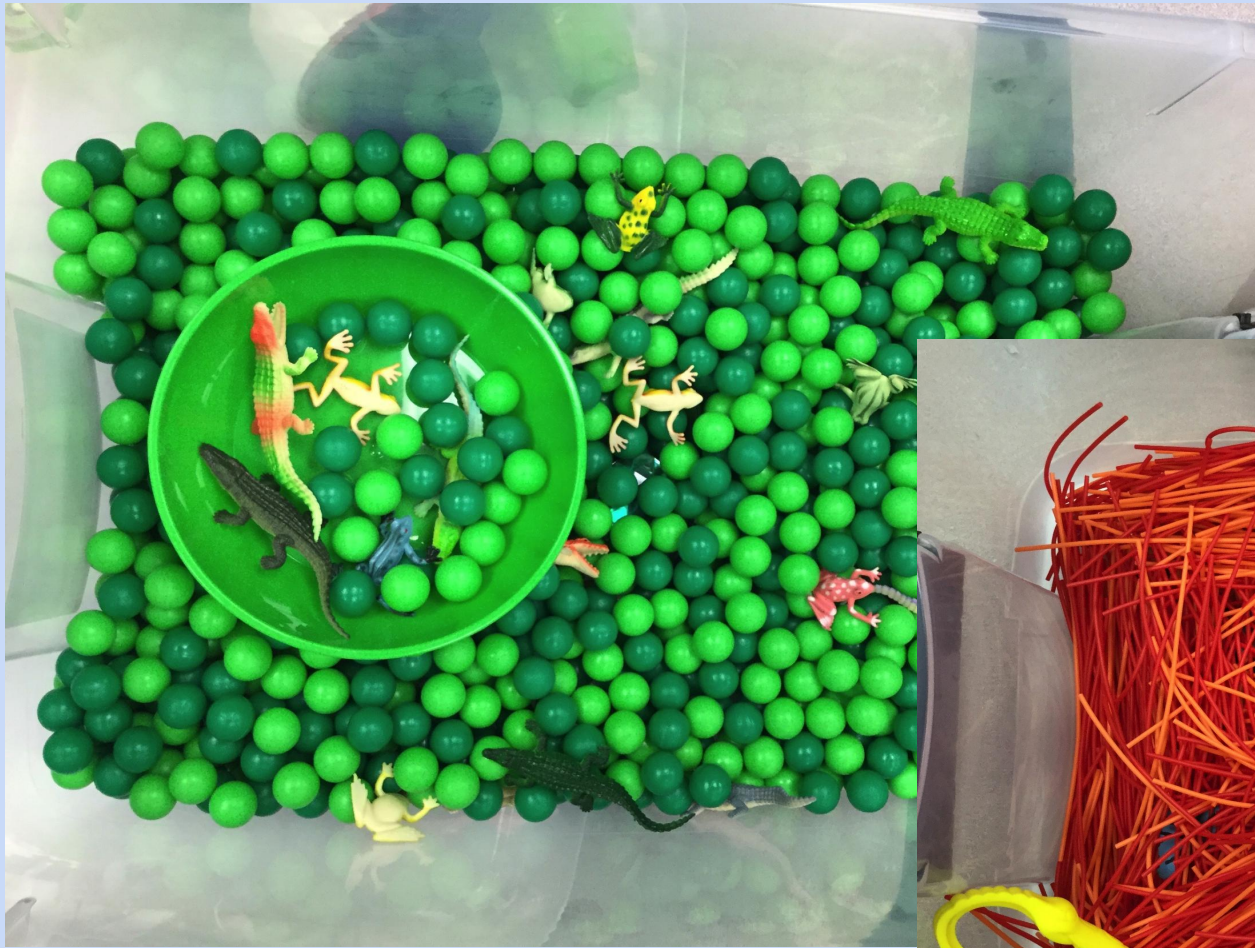
- **Double sandwich ziplock bags**
- **Fill with 1 cup hair gel**
- **Put in filler items such as: beads, confetti, glitter and food coloring**
- **Reinforce with duct tape**

# **What is a sensory bin?**

- **A simple container filled with a filler  
(Ex: rice, beads, beans, sand, balls,  
water etc.)**



# Examples of sensory bins





# Sensory Bins cont.



# **Why make a sensory bin?**

***To teach:***

**Practical Life Skills- let the learner explore and using practical skills such as scooping, dumping and filling**



# **Why make a sensory bin?**

***To teach:***

**Play Skills- social and independent play  
are possible**

# **Why make a sensory bin?**

***To teach:***

**Language Development-experiencing  
with their hands all there is to see and  
do leads to great conversations and  
opportunities to model language.**

# **Why make a sensory bin?**

***To teach:***

**Understanding Body Senses-Children  
can experience sensations in several  
senses at a time.**

# **How to make a sensory bin?**

- 1. Choose a bin**
- 2. Choose a filler**
- 3. Add a scoop or shovel**
- 4. Choose a theme**

# **How to make a sensory bin?**

**Step 1: Choose a bin- clear storage containers work well. A good size is 25 qt with measurements of 24" long, 15" wide and 6" deep. This does not have to be exact.**

# **How to make a sensory bin?**

**Step 2: Choose a filler- Examples include rice, sand, water, gel beads, aquarium rocks and birdseed.**

# **How to make a sensory bin?**

**Step 3: Add a scoop- All kinds of kitchen stuff works well here. Other examples include containers, beach toys and funnels.**

# **How to make a sensory bin?**

**Step 4: Choose a theme- Add toys or accessories to match your theme.**

**Example theme: “Pirates”- suggested materials include beach toys, doubloons, ocean animal toys and boats.**



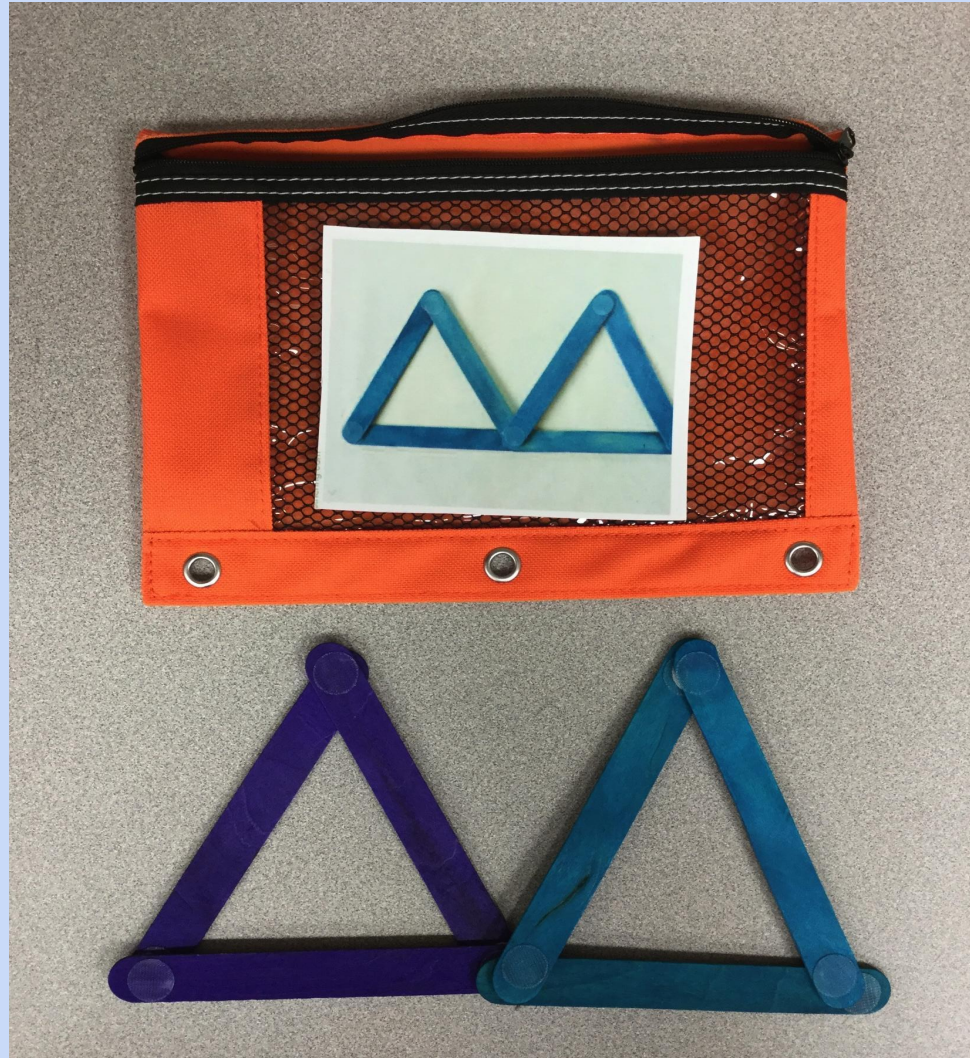
# **What is a busy bag?**

- **A bag containing a specific activity and it's directions designed to incorporate certain body senses.**
- **Busy bags are self-contained educational toys and Montessori - inspired learning ... special needs that need to be developed such as those with autism, sensory ..**

# **Examples of Materials Used**

- **Popsicle sticks**
- **Velcro**
- **Wood clothes pins**
- **Instruction cards**

# Example of a Busy Bag



# **What is a calming bottle?**

- **A bottle containing liquid designed to slow the effects of gravity and movement on objects placed in the bottle.**
- **The bottle can contain toys, glitter, glow sticks and anything that swirls or reflects light works well.**

# **How to make a calming bottle?**

- Fill a plastic bottle with a liquid that may contain glue to slow the flow.**
- Insert toys, glitter etc. into the bottle**
- Seal the lid on the bottle using glue to avoid spills.**

# Examples of Calming Bottles





# Chew Stixx



**\$6.99**

- Non Toxic
- Durable
- Latex Free
- Multi Textured
- Many shapes and colors available
- Flavors available

# Helping Hands Fine Motor Tool Set

## Learning Resources



- Build motor skills
- Builds muscles for writing
- Great for sensory bins
- Occupational therapy exercise aid
- Ages 3+/PreK+

**\$10.99**



# Easy Squeeze Scissors



**\$2.79**

- From Lakeshore Learning
- **Easily broken**
- Available from Lakeshore Learning

# Weighted Fidget Lizard



- For busy hands that need an outlet
- Travel friendly
- Ages 4+

**\$19.99**

# Weighted Vest



- Calming aid that provides sensory input
- Weights are added or removed as needed
- Made of warm fleece
- Ages 4+

**\$82.95**

# Abilitations Weighted Fidget

- Tactile discrimination
- Finger strength
- Motor planning
- 9x10 inches

**\$46.09**

*Set of 5*



# Light and Touch Circuit



*Kids complete the circuit—setting off lights and sounds!*

- Great for circle time
- Fun, fun, fun

**\$24.99**

# Switch Adapted Wrap Around Massager



- Works with a huge variety of switches
- Students who don't respond to much may react to this

**\$74.95**

# Mad Mattr Sensory Dough



- Defies gravity
- Won't dry out
- Available from Lakeshore Learning

**12.99**

# Feel and Match Sensory Fish



- Works on matching skills
- Introduce textures
- Available from Lakeshore Learning

19.99



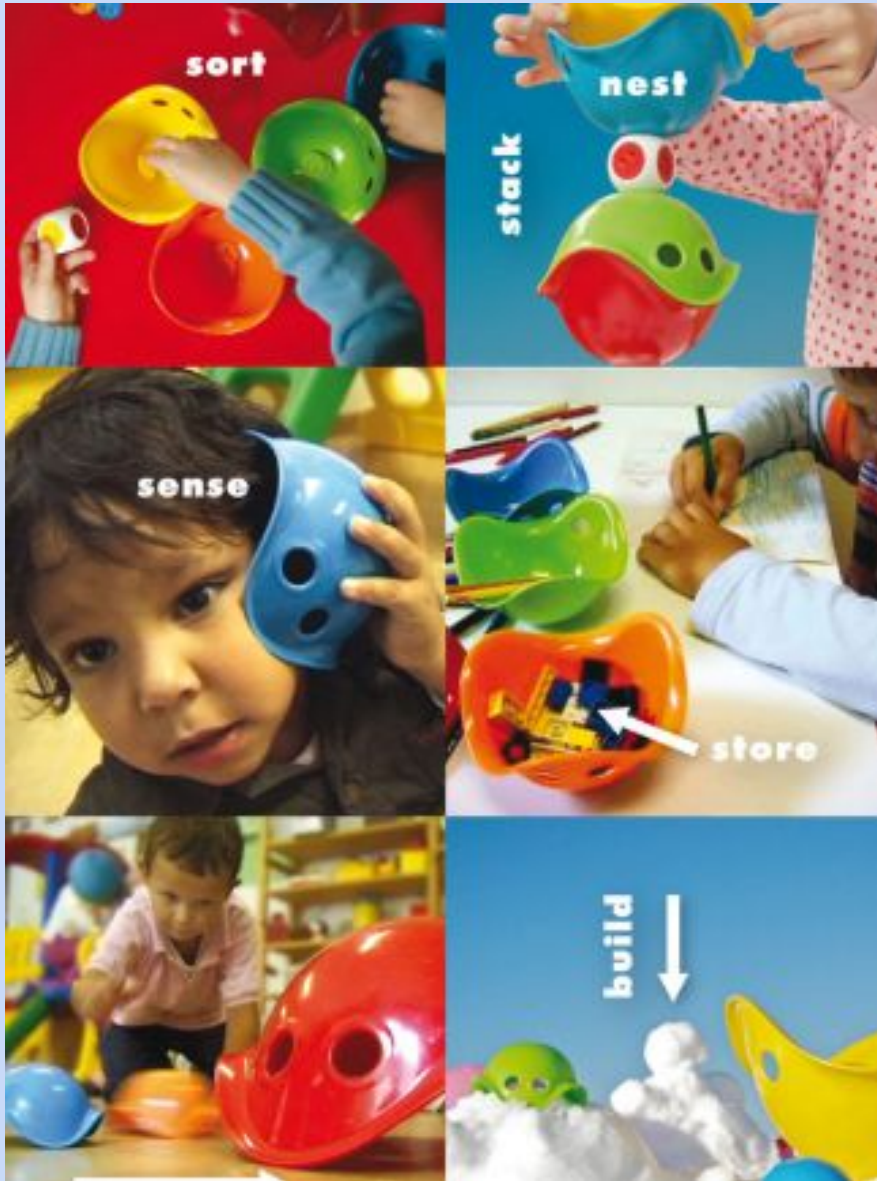
# Teachable Touchable Texture Squares



- Introduce textures
- Useful for students with a visual impairment

**\$21.75**

# Mini Bilibo



- Versatile toy
- No wrong way to play
- Available from Lakeshore Learning

**19.99 per  
6-pack**

# Pencil Topper Fidget

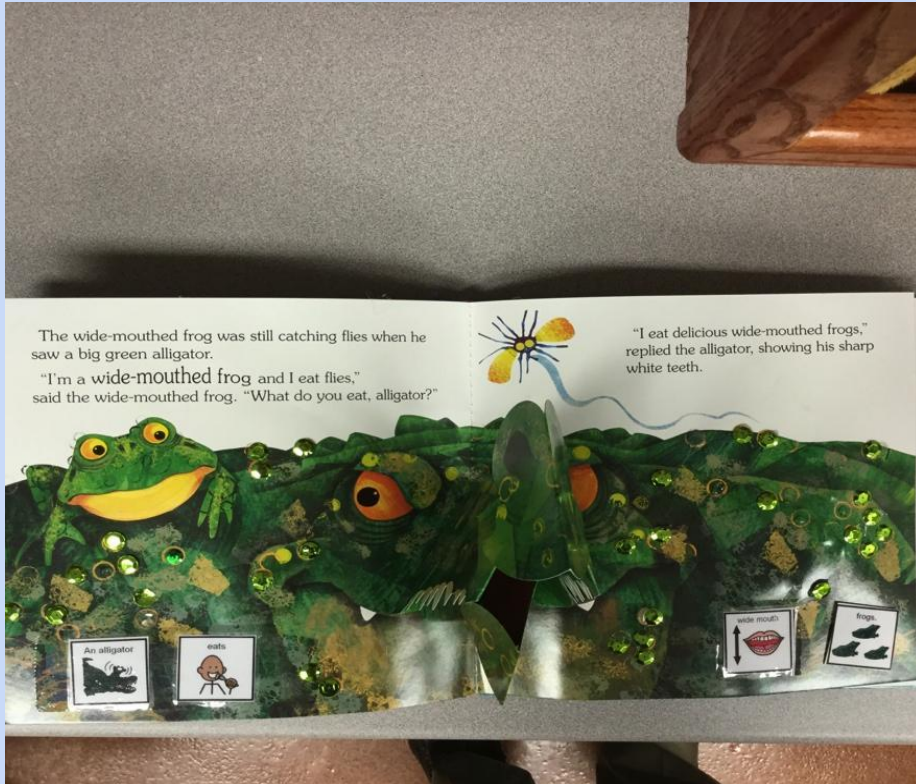


- Can be moved to another pencil
- Good for fine motor development
- Silent

**1.89**

# Adapted Books

- Include numerous textures to engage the student
- “Page fluffers” make it easier to turn the page for students with dexterity issues



# Useful Web Resources

*Link to: Adapted Books and Sensory Kits LiveBinder:*

<http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1857995>

*Link to: Learn and Explore with Task Boxes LiveBinder:*

<https://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=2203337>



*Perceptions on deafness and autism: (article about sensory impairment)*

[https://www.advancedbionics.com/content/dam/ab/Global/en\\_ce/documents/libraries/SupportLibrary/Newsletters/LoudandClear Newsletter/Loud%20and%20Clear!%20Newsletter%20Issue%202%20-%20Perspectives%20on%20Deafness%20with%20Autism.pdf](https://www.advancedbionics.com/content/dam/ab/Global/en_ce/documents/libraries/SupportLibrary/Newsletters/LoudandClear%20Newsletter/Loud%20and%20Clear!%20Newsletter%20Issue%202%20-%20Perspectives%20on%20Deafness%20with%20Autism.pdf)

*Snomezelen Adapted Play Resources - Southeastern University*

[http://www.southeastern.edu/acad\\_research/depts/teach\\_lrn/programs/snoezelen/index.html](http://www.southeastern.edu/acad_research/depts/teach_lrn/programs/snoezelen/index.html)