



## LET'S PLAY! PROJECTS

University at Buffalo • Center for Assistive Technology

Website: <http://letsplay.buffalo.edu/>

### ADAPTING TOYS

Modifying toys can make them easier to use. There are several types of materials to use for different needs:

#### Stabilizing

These materials support play by holding a toy within the child's reach or vision. Often toys that stay "in one place" can be easier to use. Use them to hold a jack-in-the-box in place or connect a communication device to a crib.

- Show loop (Commercial)
- Dycem (Kapable Kids, Fred Sammons, Abilitations)
- Grip Liner; mug mats (Rubbermaid; Commercial)
- Velcro; Dual Lock (Commercial)
- Suction cups (Commercial)
- Carpet squares (Commercial)
- Magnet tape on toy with cookie sheet as "table"



#### Extending/Building Up

These materials are used to build up certain access features. They help children press too-small buttons or keys, hold puzzle pieces or make markers easier to hold.

- Plasticine (Commercial)
- Magic Model Clay (Crayola)
- Popsicle sticks
- Cylindrical foam padding (Fred Sammons)
- Sponge rollers (Commercial)
- Knobs on puzzles





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### Highlighting Materials

These materials are used to highlight/enhance certain areas on toys, making them easier to locate. Change the appearance or feel of the toy pieces. Try highlighting certain areas or masking others. They help to simplify toy design and facilitate independent play by children.

- Tape: painters, colored vinyl, colored masking tape
- Colored Velcro tape
- Wikki sticks
- Glued yarn, colored glue
- Black or contrasting color cloth for masking; cardboard templates, etc.



### Attaching

These materials are used to bring items closer to the child, making reaching, grasping and playing less "work".

- Links (Right Start, Discovery Toys, Commercial)
- Snaps on fabric tape (Fabric store)
- "Stringers" or Magic Shoelaces
- Elastic Straps (Fabric store; other commercial)
- Attach-And-Play (Safety First; local)
- Colored Velcro straps (e.g. computer wire binders)



### Confining

These materials preventing a toy from moving too far away from a child-- out of the child's reach or vision. These items create boundaries to help a child to control his immediate play environment.

- hula-hoops (Commercial)
- box tops
- planter bases (Commercial)





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Other items can be used to create play areas which confine several toys. Their use may particularly benefit children with visual or physical impairments.

- inflatable boats
- tents
- play environments – e.g. gardens, forts, castle, etc.
- cribs, bathtubs, laundry baskets

### **Simplifying**

Try simplifying how play materials are presented to your child. Limiting the number of toy choices and pieces may make play easier.

- Remove distractions from the play area before play begins. Turn off the TV, remove clutter and provide good lighting to decrease distractions from play.
- Select 1-2 toys at a time. Place toys on a contrasting color surface
  - When playing with toys with multiple pieces and colors, lay all the pieces on a solid colored surface