



Crafters with SEND

(Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Here at Craft Club we want to help you make grassroots craft activities as accessible as possible. We've put together this handy resource to help you deliver workshops and activities that people with SEND can get the most out of.



This resource was developed through training received by the HIT squad, which is a part of Hackney Ark children centre. Many thanks to KEEN London for facilitating this.



All about Accessibility

When we talk about accessibility, we aren't just talking about someone being able to get through the door! Accessibility is all about ensuring that a person can reach or use an item or area. It's also about adapting activities so that people with a wide range of abilities can engage in them.

While some people may not be able to join into all activities, inclusion means offering everyone a **real** chance to engage through a **choice** of activities.

Inclusion stresses the importance of including everyone by creating an environment or activity where diversity is valued and respected. This resource aims to help you **understand** the ways disability can affect how people participate; how we can adapt **environments** to make them more inclusive; how we can **communicate** best when leading activities; and finally how we can adapt these **activities** to allow people of all abilities to do their best.

"The lack of inclusive leisure activities often leads to disabled children becoming isolated, lonely and missing out on childhood activities"

National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services 2004

Understanding Additional Needs:

We all know everybody is different, and that's still the case for people with SEND! It's frustrating for people with cerebral palsy or Down's Syndrome when people assume they have learning difficulties, when that might not necessarily be the case.

Similarly, did you know that autism is actually a difficulty with communication, not learning? That means that for some people too much information at once is simply overwhelming, but it's easy if you didn't know that to keep repeating yourself if you aren't getting a reply and make things worse.

There are many, many different types of conditions under the SEND label and when delivering activities it's important to know the basics. We've listed some handy links at the end of this resource. Even with just a little bit of reading you can increase your understanding and help people with SEND get the most out of crafting!



Getting to Know Participants

It's important to get to know the person participating, and not get bogged down in diagnosis. Knowing what a person **can** do and what is important to them is so helpful when adapting activities and environments to be inclusive.

Many children will carry around 'Leisure Passports' (see example on right). These help activity leaders get to know the person. If you're working with people over 16, you can ask participants these questions, or (if appropriate) their support worker.

Understanding a person's physical needs can also help you safeguard participants and volunteers against accidents and injury.

Disability Discrimination Act (1995, 2004)

Leisure settings must make 'reasonable' adjustments to prevent discrimination by:

- Addressing physical features which make a service impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use;
- Changing practice, policy or procedures;
- Providing an auxiliary aid or service;
- Providing alternative ways to access the service.

All about Drew

Things I like: Swimming, singing, my brother is my best friend

Things I dislike: Loud noises, tuna, being different to others.

I communicate by: I am able to speak.

I learn by: Show me by moving my hands and giving simple instructions.

Help me join in by: Give me activities to take home and practise with my brother; a quiet space if I need to get away; you can help me move around using a walking frame or wheelchair.

Meeting physical needs

Perhaps the most immediate thing that springs to mind when it comes to accessibility is the physical environment you hold your activity in.


Most schools, libraries or community centres will be adhering to the minimum standards laid out in the Disability Discrimination Act (left), but when planning your activity it's also important to consider the points below, as small changes can improve the experience for participants with SEND.

Moving about: Is the space where you're holding your activity wheelchair accessible? Is it easy for someone with mobility problems to use and access the toilet? Is the space you're working in cluttered, with lots of obstacles?

Noises: Is your ability held somewhere hectic, with lots of noises? Someone with a hearing impairment, or with a sensory processing difficulty may find this environment hard to work in.

Light: Is there enough light in the space for people with visual impairments to adequately see what they're working on?

Somewhere to chill: Some people with SEND may need a space where they can sit quietly and have a break from others if they are feeling overwhelmed.



Communication

People with additional needs may have difficulty with such things as paying attention; understanding words or instructions; or expressing themselves. A great technique for helping people with communication is:

Observe

Wait

&

Listen

Observe: Only a small amount of communication is verbal. If someone is non-verbal, they could still use body language and tone of voice to communicate with you.

Wait: Don't be afraid of silence! Pausing gives a chance for someone to respond. Count to ten in your head before repeating the instruction or question.

Listen: Give the person your full attention and listen to and acknowledge everything that they are saying. You can repeat what is being said to reinforce that you understand.

- Use visual support to help people understand. For children, this could be using a **visual timetable** using symbols to demonstrate each stage of the activity. For adults, this could be including **examples** of what can be done with materials, i.e. a collage next to magazine cuttings or a model next to some modelling clay.

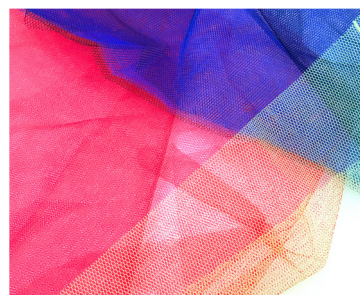
- Keep language simple, and **jargon-free**. Try not to use too many words for one thing, i.e 'string/yarn/wool'.

Sensory Craft

Some children with SEND can be either over sensitive to sensory information, actively seek out sensory stimulation or have sensory impairments.

Craft activities, which are full of things to touch and squish, are a great opportunity for sensory exploration.

Activities can be graded to encourage young people to explore new things e.g. by starting familiar textures or interacting with new items using utensils.



Sensory Craft

Sand castles: Use modelling clay mixed with sand to make sand castles.

Playing in the sea: Finger painting activities using lots of paint and glitter!

Collecting shells: Press shells into modelling clay and use to make block prints.

Wave sounds: Use cellophane and cardboard tubes to make sea sounds.

Understanding ability

When adapting activities for participants it's important to consider someone's abilities, not their age. If you're grouping participants into ability during an activity, you can use these three loose groups:

Dependent: This means a person will need help with all of the activity

Assisted: This means a person might need help with some things.

Independent with set up: This means that given the right adapted equipment or instructions, a person can complete the activity.

Example:

Here is how you might adapt a block printing activity according to ability:



Dependent: Participants work in pairs with a volunteer to work on the project.

Assisted: Participants have help with carving the block, and are shown how to print, then have a go themselves.

Independent with set up: Participants are given choice between pre-marked blocks to carve, and pre-carved blocks.

Making Changes to Activities

When thinking of ways to adapt your activities, you could consider:

Can you combine some steps? Can you make a design less complicated? Can you use self-adhesive materials instead of sewing? Can you pre-cut paper or fabric? Can you provide templates? Can you provide more instructions? Can you use images with your instructions?



Teaching Techniques

Try different techniques and see which ones get the best results from your participants. Learning styles vary from person to person, so it's great to have all of these in your toolkit:

Modelling: the participant learns by watching the teacher complete the task.

Grading: the participant learns the task by having it broken up into steps.

Coaching: supporting the participant to identify what to do next.

Hand-over-hand: the teacher physically guides the participant through the task.

Backwards Chaining: the teacher starts the task and the participant finishes it. Gradually the teacher reduces the amount they do.





Things to Think About:

When planning activities, consider whether you would like to instruct your participants in a specific task, or simply assist them in tapping into their creativity, by helping with techniques but not being too prescriptive.

There's a real joy in giving a group of participants a pile of materials and seeing the crafts that come out of them. You might want to provide prompts, such as:

- Draw a shape and ask participants to work inside it.
- Think of a dream you had recently, try to make something from that dream.
 - Bring in a favourite photograph and use it for inspiration
- Make a self portrait
- Bring in examples of different crafts for participants to handle and discuss. Ask participants how they would personalise that item, and suggest they try to make their own.

Further Reading

Mencap:

www.mencap.org.uk

KEEN:

www.keenlondon.org

Scope:

www.scope.org.uk

Kinder Art:

www.kinderart.com/blog/special

HIT Squad:

shortbreakshackney.com/hit-squad

Action Space:

www.actionspace.org

Workshop 305:

www.workshop305.com/workshops

SEND workshops at TATE:

www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/workshop/artist-residence-workshops-send-schools

OutsideIn:

www.outsidein.org.uk

The Art Barn

barringtonfarm.com/art_centre.html

IntoArt

www.intoart.org.uk

Craft Club is a national campaign that champions craft in schools, galleries, libraries and anywhere else you can bring people together to share craft skills.

www.craftclub.org.uk

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