



MOVEMENT AND SENSORY PLAY FOR CHILDREN WITH DEAFBLINDNESS: A CAREGIVER'S TOOLKIT

Introduction

Children with deafblindness benefit greatly from leisure and recreational activities, just like any other child. These activities support physical development by strengthening muscles, stimulating sensory pathways, and enhancing cognitive growth. Play also promotes communication, social interaction, and confidence. Most importantly, it creates joy, freedom, and a sense of belonging.

Materials & Activities

1. Rolling Play

Materials Needed:

- Roller, tire, or jerrycan (ensure safe edges and manageable weight)

Preparing for Rolling:

- Assess the child's sensory and physical abilities (residual vision, hearing, mobility, and communication methods).
- Choose a clean, quiet space free from obstacles.
- Use a padded surface, mat, or soft grass for safety.
- Introduce the roller to the child using touch and familiar cues.

During Rolling:

- Gently use touch to signal your presence.
- Use hand-under-hand guidance to help the child explore the roller.
- Let the child feel how the roller moves; roll it gently over safe body parts.
- Support the child in pushing or rolling the item independently.



- Vary the speed (slow/fast) to stimulate excitement.
- Communicate throughout using their preferred method.
- Use a consistent tactile cue to signal the end of the activity.

2. Sensory Tray Play

Materials Needed:

- Plastic tray or shallow container
- Natural items: sticks, feathers, soft stones, leaves
- Safe household objects: cups, spoons, plastic plates
- Small, clean toys

Preparing the Sensory Tray:

- Choose items with different textures, sizes, and shapes.
- Ensure all materials are clean and safe for children who may explore with their mouth.
- Place the tray on a stable, reachable surface.

During Play:

- Use hand-under-hand support to guide the child in exploring the tray.
- Let the child move at their own pace.
- Describe the items as they touch them (e.g., “This is a spoon; we use it to eat”).
- Offer reassurance if they seem unsure or hesitant.
- Use touch cues to end the activity and guide handwashing if needed.

3. Ball Rolling / Pacing Game

Materials Needed:

- Ball (made from polythene bags and ropes, or a store-bought ball with texture)

Preparing to Play:

- Choose a clean, safe surface (mat or soft flooring).
- Introduce the ball using touch and verbal/tactile cues.



During Play:

- Sit behind or beside the child with legs apart to support them securely.
- Help them feel the ball, then guide their hands to push or roll it.
- Encourage back-and-forth play, gradually reducing assistance.
- Introduce a second player to promote turn-taking and social interaction.
- Use consistent tactile signals to indicate “your turn” or “wait.”
- Vary the speed of rolling to build anticipation and excitement.

Tips for Success

- Always prioritize safety and hygiene of the play environment and materials.
- Supervise all play activities closely.
- Use consistent routines and repetition to support learning.
- Keep sensory trays simple and rotate items regularly.
- Be observant, patient, and responsive to how the child reacts.